

International Conference Multilevel Governance Approaches to Reinforce Democratic Resilience and Build Public Trust



29 April 2026
MIMI Hotel, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

Background

In turbulent times where democratic foundations are challenged, the Council of Europe is working towards a New Democratic Pact for Europe to restore citizens' faith in democratic institutions. In the Reykjavík Declaration "United around our values", Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe reaffirmed their commitment "to securing and strengthening democracy and good governance at all levels throughout Europe" and underlined the essential role of multilevel governance in achieving these aims.

In 2026, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe prepared a set of Parameters to facilitate application and implementation of the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy, building on Council of Europe standards to protect, promote and strengthen democracy.

This Conference, organised under the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, aims to contribute to the New Democratic Pact; pursue the commitments undertaken in the Reykjavik Declaration; and build on the conclusions of the Multilevel Governance Conference organised in Gozo in June 2025, under the Maltese Presidency of the Committee of Ministers.



This initiative is a contribution towards the
New Democratic Pact for Europe

Context

Across Europe, democratic backsliding and declining citizens' trust in democracy and its institutions, constitute major challenges for democratic governance. Addressing these challenges requires co-ordination and co-operation between different levels of government and depends on mobilisation and engagement of relevant actors and stakeholders.

How can member states pursue multilevel governance and territorial administrative reforms that enable them to engage citizens, improve service delivery, and strengthen participation to ensure that democratic institutions truly serve all citizens?

The Conference will showcase innovative policy approaches to strengthen vertical and horizontal coordination between national, regional, and local authorities in preparation and implementation of reforms. It will highlight examples of good practice in inclusive stakeholder engagement and effective participation in decision-making processes. It will demonstrate that effective consultation, coordination and meaningful participation lead to measurable improvements in the delivery of services to citizens.

Objectives of the Conference

The Conference, organised by the Centre of Expertise for Multilevel Governance at the Congress, with the involvement of the CDDEM, aims to:

- **Showcase** good practice in consultation, participation and co-operation between public authorities, civil society and communities.
- **Promote** structured, inclusive, and sustainable consultation mechanisms as a basis for strengthening democratic legitimacy, accountability and public trust.
- **Strengthen** citizen participation in public decision-making, including through innovative, deliberative and digital tools, in line with Council of Europe standards.
- **Explore** coherent frameworks for the distribution of competences and responsibilities across levels of governance to enhance policy coherence, coordination and public service delivery.
- **Demonstrate** how to use the Parameters for application and implementation of the Reykjavik Principles for Democracy in support of democratic governance reforms.



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9:00 – 09:30 | Welcome coffee

9:30 – 9:50 | OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

- **Mr Alexei Buzu**, Secretary General of the Government, Republic of Moldova
- **Mr Andrew Boff**, Vice-President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

9:50 – 10:10 | Keynote speech

***Multidimensional Democracy:
The Importance of Focusing on Citizens***

- **Dr Marta Wojciechowska**, King's College London

10:10 – 11:00 | 1st PANEL DISCUSSION

International perspectives on multilevel governance reforms: improving service delivery and strengthening participation to build resilient democratic institutions at local level.

- **Ms Laura Bretea**, Directorate-General for Enlargement and the Eastern Neighbourhood (DG ENEST), European Commission
- **Mr Yves Dejaeghere**, Federation for Innovation in Democracy Europe
- **Ms Margaux Vincent**, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Moderator: Ms Stela Untila, Journalist NewsMaker

11:10 – 11:15 | Coffee Break

11:15 – 11:30 | Keynote speech

Territorial reforms in practice: addressing challenges to strengthen both democracy and governance

- **Mr Daniel Popescu**, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities



11:30 – 12:30 | 2nd PANEL DISCUSSION

Multilevel governance and territorial administrative reforms: national perspectives from recent reforms in Finland, Ireland, Armenia, and Albania

- **Ms Christa Carpelan**, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
- **Ms Lilit Saroyan**, Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Republic of Armenia
- **Mr Tim Carey**, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Ireland
- **Mr Arbjan Mazniku**, Special Parliament Committee on Territorial Reform, Parliament of Albania

Moderator: Ms Stela Untila, Jurnalist NewsMaker

12:30 – 13:30 | Lunch

13:30 – 15:00 | Break Out Groups

Advancing multilevel governance: reform, service delivery and participation

Participants will split into three facilitated breakout groups to explore key challenges and strategic priorities related to multilevel governance reform, public service delivery, and inclusive participation. Discussions will focus on responsibilities, co-operation mechanisms, and practical solutions to strengthen coordination across levels of governance and with civil society.

Reimagining territorial administration to strengthen multilevel governance

Rapporteur: Ms Ana-Maria David, DG ENEST

Facilitator: Ms Senida Mesi, CEMG Expert

Strengthening public service delivery through intermunicipal and interregional co-operation

Rapporteur: Mr Georgios Chrysafis, CDDEM

Facilitator: Ms Veronica Cretu, CEMG Expert

Promoting inclusive, accessible and meaningful civil participation in multilevel governance frameworks

Rapporteur: Ms Ana-Maria Botnarescu, Congress Youth Delegate

Facilitator: Ms Emanuela Pisano, CEMG Expert

15:15 – 15:30 | Coffee Break

15:30 – 16:00 | Feedback from breakout groups

16:00 – 16:30 | Plenary public consultation: ***Critical success factors for democratic governance reforms***

Facilitator: Ivo Čarapina, CEMG Expert

16:30 – 16:45 | Presentation of key takeaways and closing remarks

- **Mr Alexandru Iacub**, Deputy Secretary General of the Government, Republic of Moldova

