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GME(2024)1

AD HOC MULTIDISCIPLINARY GROUP ON THE ENVIRONMENT (GME)

Terms of Reference of the
Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME)

Document prepared by the Secretariat

Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME)

Draft Terms of Reference proposed by the Secretary General

Item considered by the GR-H at its meeting on 9 July 2024

Terms of Reference of the

[Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment \(GME\)](#)

Set up by the Committee of Ministers under Article 17 of the Statute of the Council of Europe and in accordance with Resolution [CM/Res\(2021\)3](#) on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

Category: *Ad hoc* committee

Duration: 10 July 2024 - 31 December 2025

Programme: Advancing social justice, good health and a sustainable environment

Sub-programme: Protection of the environment and human rights

[Main tasks](#)

Under the authority of the Committee of Ministers, the GME is instructed to prepare a draft Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and a related Action Plan for its implementation in accordance with the Reykjavík Declaration, focusing on areas where the Council of Europe has a comparative advantage and/or unique legal instruments and expertise, ensuring an inclusive consultation process, and leveraging synergies with partners and stakeholders with a view to providing added value.

In the context of preparing the Strategy and Action Plan, the GME should:

- i. take due account of the Reykjavík Declaration¹, in particular its Appendix V on “The Council of Europe and the Environment”, in submitting proposals for its implementation as appropriate;
- ii. take account of the Declaration and decisions adopted at the 133rd Session of the Committee of Ministers, as well as the follow-up decisions of the Ministers’ Deputies on continued implementation of the Reykjavik Declaration adopted at their 1500th meeting (5 June 2024);
- iii. take account of Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)20 to member States on human rights and the protection of the environment;
- iv. take account of relevant ongoing work in the Council of Europe, in particular the study on the need for and feasibility of a further instrument or instruments in the field of human rights and the environment prepared by the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) and the draft Convention on the protection of the environment through

¹ [Reykjavík Declaration - United around our values.](#)

- criminal law under preparation in the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC);
- v. take account of the relevant key findings and challenges set out in the Secretary General's 2023 Report on the state of democracy, human rights and rule of law "An Invitation to Recommit to the Values and Standards of the Council of Europe" as well as the Secretary General's 2024 Report, "Our rights, our future";
 - vi. bear in mind the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and the Council of Europe Manual on Human Rights and the Environment;
 - vii. bear in mind Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2211 (2021) on "Anchoring the right to a healthy environment: need for enhanced action by the Council of Europe" and the Committee of Ministers' reply to it adopted at its 1444th meeting on 27 September 2022 (CM/Del/Dec(2022)1444/4.7), as well as Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2272 (2024) on "Mainstreaming the human right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment with the Reykjavík process" and Resolution 2565 (2024) on "Safeguarding human rights for future generations";
 - viii. promote co-operation among member States to pursue a human rights-based approach to countering the impact of the triple planetary crisis (pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss) and to develop common responses;
 - ix. ensure a multidisciplinary and transversal approach, also by coordinating its work with other intergovernmental committees and Council of Europe entities addressing environmental issues in their respective field of activity;
 - x. raise awareness about and visibility of Council of Europe standards, monitoring and co-operation in the environment field in member States and in other international fora where relevant;
 - xi. hold a regular exchange of views in order to evaluate its activities and advise the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General on progress with the development of the Strategy and Action Plan, including possible institutional set-up once the Strategy has been adopted;
 - xii. take due account of the following mainstreamed perspectives in the performance of its tasks: gender, children's rights, rights of persons with disabilities, and Roma and Traveler² issues, and pursue an intersectional approach;
 - xiii. integrate a youth perspective in its work, consulting the youth sector as appropriate;
 - xiv. integrate intergenerational solidarity;
 - xv. where relevant, engage with civil society organisations and national human rights institutions, in particular specialised organisations and bodies specialised in the field of the protection of the environment, in its work;
 - xv. where relevant, contribute to the achievement of, and review progress towards, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Main deliverables

Under the authority of the Committee of Ministers, the GME is instructed to complete these deliverables, within the following deadlines:

	Category ▼	Priority ▼	Deadline ▼
1. Compendium on existing activities, planned activities, and proposals for new activities on the environment	C	1	31/12/2024

² The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

2. Draft Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and a related Action Plan	C	1	31/03/2025
3. Progress report on the implementation of the Council Europe Strategy on the Environment	C	1	31/12/2025
Key			
C: newly proposed deliverable			

Composition

• Members

Governments of member States are invited to designate one or more representatives of the highest possible rank in the field of protection of the environment and countering the impact of the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity on human rights.

The Council of Europe will bear the travel and subsistence expenses of one representative from each member State (two in the case of the state whose representative has been elected Chair).

Member States may send other representatives without defrayal of expenses.

Each member of the Committee shall have one vote. Where a government designates more than one member, only one of them is entitled to take part in the voting.

• Participants

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and at the charge of their corresponding administrative budgets:

- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
- Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe;
- European Court of Human Rights;
- Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe;
- Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe;
- Committees or other bodies of the Council of Europe engaged in related work, as appropriate.

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and without defrayal of expenses:

- European Union (one or more representatives, including, as appropriate, the European Environment Agency (EEA) and/or, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA));
- Observer States to the Council of Europe: Canada, Holy See, Japan, Mexico, United States of America;
- non-member States with which the Council of Europe has a neighborhood partnership including relevant co-operation activities;
- non-member States participating in the Bern Convention (Burkina Faso, Morocco, Senegal, Tunisia);
- international organisations including: the United Nations and its agencies; the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE); the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); other international organisations.

• Observers

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and without defrayal of expenses:

- International Union for Conservation of Nature
- World Wide Fund for Nature
- Youth and Environment Europe
- International Young Naturefriends
- ClientEarth
- Greenpeace
- Wild Legal
- Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime
- Wildlife Justice Commission
- European network of national human rights institutions
- Amnesty International
- International Commission of Jurists
- International Federation of Human Rights

Observer status may be requested in accordance with Article 8 of Resolution [CM/Res\(2021\)3](#) on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

Working methods

The rules of procedure of the Committee are governed by Resolution [CM/Res\(2021\)3](#) on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

The Bureau of the GME will consist of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, and three further members.

	Plenary meetings ▼			Bureau Meetings ▼		
	Members incl. chair	Meetings per year	Days per meeting	Members	Meetings per year	Days per meeting
2024	47	2	3+2	5	1	2
2025	47	3	2	5	4	2+2 online

The GME will appoint from amongst its members up to 5 Rapporteurs on mainstreamed perspectives, including a Gender Equality Rapporteur.

Budgetary information*

	Meetings per year	Days per meeting	Members reimbursed	Plenary in €K	Bureau in €K	Working groups in €K	Secretariat (A, B)
2024	2	3+2	47	155	7	-	1A; 1B
2025	3	2	47	207.2	41.5	-	1A; 1B

*The costs include the per diem, travel costs, interpretation, translation and document printing. These costs are calculated on the basis of standard costs.