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AD HOC MULTIDISCIPLINARY GROUP ON THE ENVIRONMENT (GME)

Compendium on the Council Europe's environment activities

Foreword

Further to the Reykjavík Summit Declaration and its Appendix V, the Inter-Secretariat Taskforce was created by the Secretary General in January 2024 to help focus, streamline and coordinate the Organisation's activities, making the environment a visible priority, with a view to promoting co-operation among member States.

The Task force has held five meetings, and conducted a mapping exercise of existing, planned and proposed activities relating to the environment, according to the 2024-2027 Programme and Budget, in the form of contributions. The Secretariat compiled these contributions into the present document, the Compendium on the Council Europe's environment activities (Compendium).

The GME considered the Compendium at its 1st meeting and requested an updated version for the 2nd meeting. The Compendium has been updated taking into account the latest developments within the Council of Europe.

Action required

The GME is requested to take note of the updated Compendium and transmit it to the Committee of Ministers as per the Terms of Reference of the GME.

Document prepared by the Secretariat

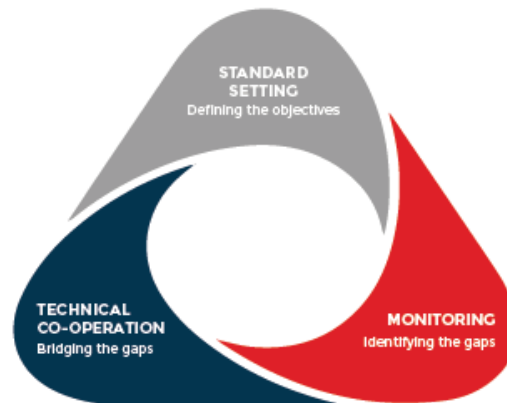
SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Existing activities linked to the environment in the framework of the 2024-2027 Programme and Budget
2. Future activities linked to the environment in the framework of the 2024-2027 Programme and Budget
3. Which could be your proposals for new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan?
4. What cross-sectoral activities within the environmental field are you currently implementing, and with which other sectors?
5. What would you propose as cross-sectoral initiatives for the future, and with which other sectors, which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan?
6. Do you have any other comments?

LEGEND

This compendium uses two tags within each contribution, represented as follows:

The first category (in beige) reflects the parts of the Council of Europe's strategic triangle: standard setting, monitoring of Member States' commitments in implementing standards, and corresponding cooperation programmes.



The second category (in green) concerns the crisis that each contribution aims to mitigate the effect of. Some of these challenges can be cumulative (pollution, climate change, and loss of biodiversity), and when this is the case, it is indicated as "triple planetary crisis." Additionally, a fourth category was included regarding Human Rights and the Environment.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACFC	Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
AIG	Access Info Group
CCPE	Consultative Council of European Prosecutors
CDADI	Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion
CDCJ	European Committee on Legal Co-operation
CDDH	Steering Committee for Human Rights
CDDH-ENV	CDDH Drafting Group on Human Rights and the Environment
CDEDU	Steering Committee for Education
CDENF	Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child
CDMSI	Steering Committee on Media and Information Society
CDPC	European Committee on Crime Problems
CEB	Council of Europe Development Bank
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEMG	Centre of Expertise for Multilevel Governance
CEPEJ	European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (also known as Washington Convention)
CM	Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
CMJ/CCJ	Joint Council on Youth/Advisory Council on Youth
CoE	Council of Europe
Congress	Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
COP	Conference of the Parties (to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)
CPT	European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CRC	United Nations Committee on the Rights of Child
DEJ	Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights
DGA	Directorate General of Administration
DGI	Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law
DGII	Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity
DGS	Directorate of General Services
DHR	Directorate of Human Resources
DLAPIL	Directorate of Legal Advice and Public International Law
DPAER	Directorate of Political Affairs and External Relations
DPC	Directorate of Programme Co-ordination
ECCD	Economic Crime Cooperation Division
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights

ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
ECSR	European Committee of Social Rights
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EDC/HRE	Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education
EDPA	European Diploma for Protected Areas
EDQM	European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines & Health Care
EDURES Toolkit	Education Resilience in times of emergencies and crisis toolkit
ELoGE	European Label of Governance Excellence
ENPE	European Network of Prosecutors for the Environment
ESC	European Social Charter
ESD	Education for sustainable development (UNESCO's education sector)
EU	European Union
EUFJE	European Union Forum of Judges for the Environment
EURIMAGES	European Cinema Support Fund
EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement	European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement
EUROPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
EYF	European Youth Foundation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
FIDH	International Federation for Human Rights
GEDD	Sustainable Development Study Group
GEC	Gender Equality Commission
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GME	Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment
GR-DEM	Rapporteur Group on Democracy
GRECO	Group of States Against Corruption
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
HELP Program	Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (CoE program)
ICWC	International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMPEL	European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law
INGOs Conference	Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations of the Council of Europe
INTERPOL	The International Criminal Police Organization
ITEM	Interpreting, Travel, Events and Multimedia Department
KPI	Key performance indicator

Lanzarote Committee	Committee of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse
Lanzarote Convention	Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse
L.I.N.K.E.D.	Guiding principles for an integrated approach to culture, nature and landscape management
MAE	Major Administrative Entity
MAF	Common Procurement and Finance Department
MONEYVAL	Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism
MS	Member State (of the Council of Europe)
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OCEAN	Open Council of Europe Academic Networks
ODGP	Office of the Directorate General of Programmes of the Council of Europe
OHTE	Observatory on History Teaching in Europe
OMCL Network	Official Medicines Control Laboratories
OSCE/ODIHR	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
Oviedo Convention	Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PC-ENV	Committee of experts on the protection of the environment through Criminal Law
PCRA	Physical climate risk assessment
PGG	European Union/Council of Europe Joint Programme “Partnership for Good Governance”
PMM	Council of Europe Project Management Methodology
PPP	Public-Private Partnerships
REACH	Registration, evaluation and authorization of chemicals (EU regulation)
RFCDG	Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture
SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal
SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
SLAPP	Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation
The Commissioner	Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights
TPI	Third-party intervention
UN	United Nations
UN Human Rights	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Venice Commission	European Commission for Democracy through Law
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Institutions and organs of the Council of Europe

1. The European Court of Human Rights and its Registry

- Monitoring

- Human Rights
and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

Processing of applications raising human rights issues in relation to pollution, environmental disasters, climate change and just transition.

Future activities (question 2):

Processing of any future applications raising human rights issues in relation to pollution, environmental disasters, climate change, just transition and possibly other issues.

Points out the following cross-sectoral activities within the environmental field currently being implemented (question 4):

- Regular exchange of information on hard and soft law in the field of the environment: environmental defenders (Commissioner), biodiversity protection regimes (Bern Convention), climate change and disasters (EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement).
- HELP - providing expertise for the course on Human Rights and the Environment and for the CoE's projects.
- Regular exchange of information with EXECUTION of judgements.
- Participating in CDDH_ENV, CDPC-ENV, TFE and GME.
- Knowledge Sharing (ECHR-KS): Environment, including the Guide on ECtHR's case-law concerning the Environment, open to the public.
- Contact with Communications Office on content.

2. Commissioner for Human Rights

- Monitoring

- Triple planetary
crisis
- Human Rights
and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

- Raising public awareness about human rights and the environment.
- Supporting the work of environmental human rights defenders, their protection and the development of an enabling environment for their activities.

Future activities (question 2):

Specific future activities will depend on the decisions of the Commissioner, who will start his mandate on 1 April 2024, but are likely to include the following:

- Addressing issues related to environment and human rights as part of the Commissioner's country and thematic work.
- Possible third-party interventions (TPIs) in cases lodged before the Court in environmental matters.

3. Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| - Standard setting | - Triple planetary crisis |
| - Monitoring | - Human Rights and Environment |
| - Technical cooperation | |

Existing activities (question 1):

Political driving force: alert and advocacy role.

PACE is committed to supporting the Council of Europe's strategic efforts by raising awareness among parliamentarians of their primary responsibility in the effective implementation of its environment-related texts, which are addressed to Council of Europe member States and their relevant authorities. By adopting national legislation, reviewing the compatibility of national governments' actions with international standards, and allocating adequate resources, national parliaments play a key role in the Organization's Strategy and the protection of human rights, including social rights, in Member States. Because of their privileged access to the national population, parliamentarians are ideally placed to raise awareness of CoE standards at national level and can help to increase acceptance of international and national measures taken in the general interest of environmental protection.

PACE encourages parliamentarians from member States to engage in the implementation of the Court's judgments and the conclusions and decisions of the European Committee of Social Rights. By learning from other countries' experiences with violations of the Convention and the (revised) European Social Charter, parliamentarians can help address similar challenges in their own countries. This approach also extends to environmental issues covered by the Convention and the Charter.

PACE action is multifaceted: adopts reports and resolutions calling on member States to reflect continuously at national level on the nature, the content and implications of the right to a healthy environment so that, in the near future, this right would be recognised in law as an autonomous human right in each member State; and to step up their efforts to promote, in all governance bodies, the legitimacy and added value of the Council of Europe playing a leading role in drawing up a binding legal instrument recognising an autonomous right to a healthy environment and engaging in innovative projects to transform environmental governance.

Networking and interparliamentary dialogue.

In 2022, PACE set up a Network with the aim of actively mobilising parliamentarians on issues related to the right to a healthy environment (Parliamentary Network for a Healthy Environment). Its work is dedicated to the acquisition and sharing of multidisciplinary knowledge and good practices as well as to the establishment of alliances and partnerships in the areas identified by PACE in its portfolio of resolutions and recommendations relating to the environment. Through field visits, it is in contact with civil society and participates in the validation on the ground of the legal and political issues identified by PACE.

List of the reference resolutions and recommendations by PACE

Texts adopted:

2024

- Resolution 2577 (2024) and Recommendation 2286 (2024) "Guaranteeing the human right to food".
- Resolution 2565 (2024) "Safeguarding human rights for future generations".
- Resolution 2545 (2024) and Recommendation 2272 (2024).
- Mainstreaming the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment with the Reykjavik process.
- Resolution 2546 (2024) and Recommendation 2273 (2024) Towards Council of Europe strategies for healthy seas and oceans to counter the climate crisis.

2023

- Resolution 2477 (2023) and Recommendation 2246 (2023).
- Resolution 2493 (2023) and Recommendation 2251 (2023) Political strategies to prevent, prepare for, and face the consequences of natural disasters.
- Resolution 2521 (2023) "Mental health and well-being of children and young adults"

2022

- Resolution 2415 (2022) and Recommendation 2219 (2022) Inaction on climate change – a violation of children's rights.

2021

- Resolution 2399 (2021) and Recommendation 2214 (2021) The climate crisis and the rule of law.
- Resolution 2396 (2021) and Recommendation 2211 (2021) Anchoring the right to a healthy environment: need for enhanced action by the Council of Europe.
- Resolution 2401 (2021) Climate and migrations.
- Resolution 2397 (2021) and Recommendation 2212 (2021) More participatory democracy to tackle climate change.
- Resolution 2398 (2021) and Recommendation 2213 (2021) Addressing issues of criminal and civil liability in the context of climate change.
- Resolution 2402 (2021) and Recommendation 2215 (2021) Research policies and environment protection.
- Resolution 2400 (2021) Combating inequalities in the right to a safe, healthy and clean environment.

2019

- Resolution 2307 (2019) A legal status for "climate refugees".
- Resolution 2285 (2019) Sustainable urban development fostering social inclusion.
- Resolution 2286 (2019) Air pollution: a challenge for public health in Europe.
- Resolution 2272 (2019) Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: synergy needed on the part of all stakeholders, from parliaments to local authorities.

2018

- Resolution 2241 (2018) Nuclear safety and security in Europe.
- Resolution 2210 (2018) Climate change and implementation of the Paris Agreement.

- Resolution 2152 (2017) "New generation" trade agreements and their implications for social rights, public health and sustainable development.
- Resolution 2140 (2016) The exploration and exploitation of non-conventional hydrocarbons in Europe.
- Resolution 2115 (2016) Forced migration: a new challenge.

Reports under preparation

- Analysis and guidelines for a sustainable and socially just energy transition
- Analysis and guidelines to guarantee the right to housing and to decent housing

Initiatives for future work

- Access to drinking water
- Food security

Current and future activities (question 2):

Project funded by voluntary contributions:

As part of Project 3787 ("PACE and the Reykjavik Process on Human Rights and the Environment 2024-2027"), funds are being mobilized to monitor PACE texts on the environment. Events are scheduled for 2025 in collaboration with the Dutch, Luxembourg, and French parliaments to follow up on the implementation of Resolution 2545 (2024) "Achieving the Human Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment through the Reykjavik Process" and Resolution 2577 (2024) "Ensuring the Human Right to Food." The objective of these visits is to strengthen the capacity of parliamentarians to contribute to the monitoring of the various measures requested by the resolution, and to review existing best practices to address the challenges facing the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and France in integrating the right to a healthy environment and ensuring the human right to food across sectors.

The funds are also allocated towards the following objectives: 1. Normative and strategic aspects of the Council of Europe's work on protecting the right to the environment: This involves informing PACE parliamentarians on the issues at stake so that they can effectively contribute to the debate on the development and subsequent implementation of a new legally binding instrument and a new strategy recognizing the right to a healthy environment. This will also help raise awareness of the added value and current implementation status of the Council of Europe conventions on environmental protection, with the goal of increasing their ratification and improving their application. 2. Reflection on governance in environmental decision-making: To this end, the project will seek to encourage citizen participation, especially among youth and children, both within national parliamentary work and PACE initiatives related to the environment (citizen participation, consultation with youth and grassroots groups, and the protection of environmental defenders).

Other activities

- Follow-up to the High-level Conference on the European Social Charter (Vilnius, July 2024). Preparation by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development of a roadmap to strengthen synergies between PACE and the European Social Charter in the follow-up to the Vilnius Conference; speech by the President of the European Committee of Social Rights on 6 December before the Commission.
- Follow-up to the EDQM 60th anniversary "Today, Tomorrow, Together for Public health" (Strasbourg, 11-12 June 2024).

- Follow-up to the side-event on the Council of Europe and the Environment at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (New York, July 2024).

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Working methods:

To build on PACE's Parliamentary Network for a Healthy Environment and on the activities of PACE Project 3787 on the Environment to raise awareness, guide working methods and contribute to the implementation of the elements of the Strategy. See above.

Integrate the voice of young people , particularly those from disadvantaged areas, in all decision-making processes, in particular by following the pilot project implemented in 2024 by the Assembly with the young Food Resilience Ambassadors in Bagnolet, in the Paris suburbs.

Develop a platform for sharing knowledge on the protection of environment based on the expertise available within the Council of Europe.

New activities:

Follow up to the PACE recommendation on the theme of the right to food as an autonomous right linked to the right to a healthy environment, by seeking to include it in the elements for the CoE strategy on the environment (PACE Recommendation 2286(2024) Ensuring the human right to a healthy environment). The ultimate goal would be the adoption of a European instrument that can guide the transition to sustainable and inclusive food systems based on the right to food. This objective is in line with the position of the member States of the Council of Europe and the European Union on the international scene. For the contents, the Organisation can rely on the legal framework developed in international law and on the strengthening of links between PACE and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in order to guide member States in their strategies to be adopted for the realisation of this right and in the inclusion of this human right in their constitutions.

- Follow PACE's recommendations expressed in Resolution 2545 (2024) and Recommendation 2272 (2024) "Mainstreaming the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment through the Reykjavík Process " and Resolution 2565 (2024) "Safeguarding the human rights of future generations ": Provide a framework for introducing effective citizen participation mechanisms at national level, such as citizens' assemblies on climate.
- Innovate in promoting social acceptance of environmental policies.
- Provide a framework, structure and support for local initiatives targeting the populations most vulnerable to environmental problems, such as programmes designed to mobilise young people from working-class backgrounds.
- Support the creation of specialised environmental teams in all branches of governance.

Include among the priorities the responsibility of private sector actors in environmental matters. There are many international legal references that the Council of Europe can build upon, such as standards on responsible business conduct (United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)3 on Human Rights and Business, and the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on responsible business conduct).

Points out the following cross-sectoral activities within the environmental field currently being implemented (question 4):

PACE gives visibility to and guidance on the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights and the European Committee of Social Rights in environmental matters. PACE actively participates in the work of the CDDH-ENV (and the CDDH in November 2024) in the framework of the study on the need for and feasibility of an additional instrument or instruments on human rights and the environment; the Committee of Experts on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law (PC-ENV) in the framework of the revision of the Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law (ETS No. 172), and of the Environmental Task Force and the GME.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

Appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary General for the Environment.

Strengthen synergies between PACE and the European Social Charter Department, the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

4. Monitoring Committee of Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

- Standard setting
- Monitoring
- Technical cooperation

- Triple planetary crisis
- Human rights and Environment

Local and regional authorities, through their direct and daily actions, are best placed to respond to local realities, such as the management of natural resources, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions or adaptation to climate disasters. UN-Habitat has pointed out that among the most important measures to mitigate climate change are transport, construction and waste collection, which fall within the remit of local and regional authorities^[1].

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, as the voice of 130000 local and regional authorities in Europe, is committed to strengthening the capacity of sub-national authorities to implement ecological transition strategies by ensuring that national and international policies take account of the specific needs of territories. For example, it supports the development of innovative local initiatives to reduce climate impacts, while raising awareness of sustainability and resilience issues in cities and regions.

The Congress also serves as a platform to facilitate international co-operation between cities and regions, promote the exchange of best practices, and ensure that the voice of local and regional authorities is heard during international conferences such as the United Nations Forums on Sustainable Development.

^[1] ONU-Habitat (2020), [Enhancing Nationally Determined Contributions through Urban Climate Action](#).

Existing activities (question 1):

Statutory activities

- Adoption of the report on "[Local and regional responses to natural disasters and climate hazards: from risk preparedness to resilience](#)" (CG(2024)46-17) at the 46th session of the Congress (March 2024).
- Adoption of the [European Urban Charter III - Urban living in the era of transformations](#) (integrating the principle of "Sustainable development, environmental protection and climate change")
- Adoption of the report on "**Fostering a circular economy at local and regional levels**" (CG(2024)47-14) at the 47th session of the Congress (October 2024).
- Approval of a report on "**Water resources under stress: towards better local and regional governance**", on 15 October 2024, by the Governance Committee.
- Preparation of a report on **costal erosion's** impact for local and regional authorities (title to be finalised) by the Governance Committee.

Co-operation projects (Centre of Expertise for Multilevel Governance CEMG)

Projects strengthening participatory democracy and human rights at local level:

- delivering recommendations;
- awareness-raising on ecology for the youth;
- Improving public infrastructure by rendering it more green and ecological;
- Resilience Building Strategies addressing the capacity of a community to withstand, recover, adapt, and persist in face of environmental, natural, or human-made crises;
- **ELoGE Benchmark** helps measure democratic governance practice at local level and is currently applied in 19 member States. A revised benchmark, taking into account

recommendations from the CDDG [Green Public Administration Report](#) and the [Congress Human Rights Handbook Volume 3](#) will add “green” dimension to the measurement criteria thus served to promote and disseminate good democratic governance practice that promotes a human-rights-based approach to the protection of the environment as a responsibility of local and regional policy makers.

International action

- Promoting the localisation of Agendas of the United Nations, notably the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) n°13 on climate action.

Future activities (question 2 and 3):

- Elaborating a draft ***Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government*** requiring member states to:
 - o increasing awareness of local and regional authorities on the protection of environment in the framework of their existing competences and finances;
 - o establishing a legal and institutional framework allowing local authorities to integrate green criteria in the stages of the planning, implementing and evaluating their activities, including in respect of green public procurement;
 - o encourage and enable the use of ICT and all other measures needed to reduce the footprint of the administrations themselves.

Points out the following cross-sectoral activities within the environmental field currently being implemented (question 4):

- [Handbook on Human Rights for Local and Regional representatives and their administrations focusing on environment and sustainable development \(Volume 3\)](#).
- The Chamber of Local authorities held a thematic debate on "[Environment: what responsibilities for local authorities?](#)" on 27 March 2024.
- Participation in the United Nations High-Level Political Forums on sustainable development ;
- On 13 September 2024, the Conference of national associations of local and regional authorities, organised by the Congress, adopted a [final declaration](#) and committed to take coordinated action in the protection of the environment;
- Strengthening co-operation and synergies with internal partners within the Council of Europe (Committee of Ministers and intergovernmental committees, PACE, major administrative entities, etc.) and external partners (international and European organisations of local and regional elected representatives) working in this field.

5. Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations (CINGO)

- Standard setting
- Monitoring

- Triple planetary crisis
- Human Rights and Environment

Existing activities (question 1)

CINGO¹ brings together, through biannual general assemblies, work in thematic committees and other means, the INGOs (more than 300) which enjoy participatory status with the Council of Europe – some of which also enjoy observership status and participate directly in sectoral work of the CoE. Although, because of its nature, CINGO has no environment-related mandate under the programme and budget 2024-2027, the environment features prominently in its work and contributions to the action of the Council of Europe.

In earlier triennial work plans such as the [Strategic plan 2021-2024](#), the environment was one of the five thematic priorities (“acting against environmental degradation and climate change and health risks”).

Besides the organisation of events and debates, the action of CINGO and its responsible committee comprises the issuing of position papers and recommendations released in the run-up to major international events and/or addressed to Council of Europe bodies. Most recent examples include:

- COP28 (Dubai, 2023) : ["Call for urgent, local and systemic action" from the Environmental and Health Crisis Committee](#)
- Recommendation of the Conference of INGOs to the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (2023)
- COP 27 (Sharm el Sheik, 2022) : ["Together with implementation" Resolution from the Environmental and Health Crisis committee](#)
- COP 26 (Glasgow, 2021) : ["Climate Change and Health: Call for solidarity and urgent action by States, economic actors and civil society for the safeguard of the common house](#)

For further information, see [here](#) and [here](#).

Future activities (question 2)

The [Strategic plan 2024-2027](#) adopted at CINGO's Autumn general assembly (October 2024) has retained the environment as one of the thematic work priorities “Promoting civil society action on the Triple Planetary (Environmental) Crisis and the human rights consequences.” The main objective is hereby to “Promoting environmental sustainability and action on climate justice across the work of CINGO and promoting strong commitment to action in CoE.” The actions planned are the following:

- Promote adoption of an additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights on the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment within the CoE, and support all activities to react to the triple planetary crisis with all the instruments available to the CoE.

¹ Information provided by the Secretariat (Civil society Unit, DG II). It does not prejudice of the content of direct exchanges to be held between CINGO representatives and the GME especially as regards questions 3, 4, 5, 6

- Ensure expert CINGO representation in the CDDH-ENV.
- Ensure environmental protection and the climate crisis are represented in the work of CINGO committees, as a dedicated and cross-cutting theme. Help develop a coherent system of standards and draw attention to economically weak regions with little resistance to environmental looters.
- Integrate support for the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across our work including in actions on the Triple Planetary Crisis.

CINGO's dedicated body dealing with the environment is the [Committee on Inclusive territories, environment and health](#), established in April 2024. Its terms of reference adopted in April 2024 provide that its activities are aimed at the following:

- to enable the Conference of INGOs to stimulate and contribute to the work of the various bodies of the Council of Europe
- to identify ethical practices and policies of inclusion and sustainable development, based on democratic governance at all levels, starting with the level closest to citizens;
- to propose joint actions in particularly affected areas such as social cohesion, living environment, food security, economic activity and resource management;
- to encourage the signature and ratification of relevant Council of Europe conventions and accession to appropriate Council of Europe Partial Agreements.

Securing human rights and fundamental freedoms

6. Execution Department

- Monitoring

- Pollution
- Human Rights
and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

The execution of environment-related cases (see also thematic factsheet on the environment prepared by the Execution Department). Currently four cases under the Committee of Ministers' enhanced supervision and one case under standard supervision concerning the protection of the environment.

Future activities (question 2):

The scope of the Department's relevant activities and the relevant challenges of its work may significantly increase in light of the outcome of the Court's 2024 climate cases / further important environment-related cases.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Cooperation activities with other Task Force participants as well as specialised NGOs for the targeted enhancing of the execution of pending environment-related judgments. In light of the Court's coming decisions in climate change / other environment-related cases, these cooperation activities may need to be intensified.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

It is to be noted that the scope of the Department's relevant activities and the need for cooperation with other departments / MAEs may increase in light of the outcome of the Court's 2024 climate cases / further important environment-related cases foreseen.

7. Implementation of Human Rights, Justice and Legal Co-operation Standards Department

- Technical cooperation

- Human Rights and Environment

Existing activities(question 1):

- Projects on environment and human rights (with the focus on the promotion of the relevant ECtHR case law among legal professionals) were included into the Action plans on Armenia (2023-2026), Azerbaijan (2022-2025) and Georgia (2024-2027).
- The HELP distance-learning course on Environment and Human Rights. The course was developed under the Project "Online Platform for Business and Human Rights", implemented by the Council of Europe HELP Programme in cooperation with CDDH.
- Launch (and now inclusion in the curricula) of a course on Business, Environment and Human Rights in the University of Jyväskylä in Finland in 2023. The course incorporated the materials from the two respective HELP courses with some adaptations for students. The course will run again in 2024, supported through HELP and through guest lectures.
- Support in organising a joint workshop together with CDDH on Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence in 2022.
- Round table on Human Rights and Environment in International Development Financing in April 2023.

Future activities (question 2):

- The launch of a 24-month pilot regional project "Human Rights and Sustainable Environment in South-East Europe" (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia Serbia, Kosovo*). The project is aimed at raising awareness among legal professionals on the relationship between the protection of human rights and the environment under the ECHR; equipping legal professionals with skills on how to litigate environmental cases, as well as knowledge on admissibility requirements before ECtHR.
- The development of a country-specific, Action plan-level, project in Georgia on Environment and Human Rights (and afterwards possibly in other countries where the topic is in the action plan).
- Exploring the possibility to develop a country-specific project on environment and human rights in Türkiye.
- The development of a multilateral project on Human Rights and Business, with a strong focus on Human Rights and environment (aimed at supporting the implementation of CM recommendations on HR and Environment and HR and Business).
- Exploring possibilities of strengthening the capacities of national human rights institutions/ombudspersons institutions to act on human rights and business and human rights and environment.
- Development of a new [OCEAN](#) academic network on Human Rights and the environment.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

- Support to legal professionals (lawyers, judges, prosecutors) and civil society in getting knowledge and skills on how to apply the ECtHR approach to environmental cases); on how to build an environmental case before national courts using Convention-based arguments and on admissibility to the ECtHR.
- Human rights and business, with a strong focus on environment (including the questions of (1) effective remedies for environmental violations and (2) use of ECHR and other CoE standards as reference points for environmental due diligence).
- Support to human rights institutions to monitor, report and provide policy recommendations on human rights and business and environment.

Points out the following cross-sectoral activities within the environmental field currently being implemented (question 4):

The HELP distance-learning course on human rights and environment was developed in cooperation with the Steering Committee for Human Rights.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

Development of co-operation initiatives with member States aimed at: a) execution of the Court's judgments on environmental matters (in co-operation with DEJ); b) setting up effective national remedies for environmental violations (in co-operation with the Court and DEJ); c) implementation of other CoE standards relevant to environmental due diligence (in co-operation with the CDDH and relevant standard-setting bodies) (in line with Annex IV of the Reykjavik Declaration).

8. Human Rights, Justice and Legal Co-operation Standard Setting Activities Department; Human Rights Intergovernmental Co-operation Division

- Standard setting
- Monitoring

- Human rights and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

Preparation of a CDDH study on the need for and feasibility of a further Council of Europe instrument or instruments in the field of human rights and the environment.

Monitoring of the Parties' implementation of the Tromsø Convention through preparation of a first baseline evaluation report on the first 11 Parties by the Access Info Group (AIG), to be followed by possible recommendations to the Parties.

Future activities (question 2):

Depending on the results of the CDDH feasibility study and subsequent CM decisions, possible preparation of a further Council of Europe instrument or instruments in the field of human rights and the environment.

Possible thematic focus by the AIG on access to official documents containing information on environmental issues in the course of future evaluation rounds, and/ or possible cooperation with bodies established under the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention).

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Depending on the results of the CDDH feasibility study and the nature and content of any possibly resulting new instrument: new cooperation projects to support member States' implementation of new standards could be developed.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

See above re cooperation activities on implementation of standards contained in any new possible instrument.

Advancing social justice, good health and sustainable environment

Effective implementation of the European Social Charter

9. Department of Social Rights,
Collective Complaints Division

- **Monitoring**
- **Technical**
- **cooperation**

- **Pollution**
- **Climate change**
- **Human Rights**
- **and Environment**

Existing activities (question 1):

- The Report on the transition to a green economy: A review of the distributional effects in Europe. The report refers to the transition and the EU's green new deal and its fall-out effect on non-EU CoE member states. It provides quite concrete recommendations addressed to CoE and to MS which can be transformed into cooperation activities, if a proper follow-up is given.
- CM declaration on preserving social cohesion in the transition to a green economy.
- Applying efforts to be environmentally conscious when planning and preparing cooperation activities. Currently in Armenia and in Ukraine, support to develop a housing strategy in line with the European Social Charter and European standards is provided.
- New collective complaint No. 240/2024, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) v. France. The complaint concerns the deprivation of drinking water in Guadeloupe, an island in the French West Indies. FIDH alleges that this situation amounts to the violation of several provisions of the Charter, namely: Articles 11 (the right to protection of health), 17§1 (the right of children and young persons to social, legal and economic protection), 30 (the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion) and 31 (the right to housing) as well as Article E (non-discrimination) read in conjunction with each of the aforementioned provisions of the revised European Social Charter.
- **High Level Conference on the European Social Charter - Vilnius 4 July 2024.** During the first session of the HLC, the participants discussed contemporary social rights-related challenges such as the future of work and industrial relations, digitalisation, artificial intelligence, youth rights and climate change.
- Research project on 'Green social inclusion of vulnerable people in low-density areas: governance models for home healthcare services and renewable energy communities in Piedmont's and South-West French territories' (GREENCARE) which will be carried out by the University of Turin over three years, and the Department of Social Rights will provide input with regard to older persons' rights enshrined in the European Social Charter.

Future activities (question 2):

- In the context of **monitoring activities**, possible **targeted questions** on the consequences/impact of environmental degradation, climate change on social rights could be addressed to States within the next monitoring cycles; for example, targeted questions in the context of the next monitoring cycle 2025 have been addressed to the States regarding measures taken to ensure the supervision of implementation of health and safety regulations concerning workers exposed to environmental-related risks such as climate change and pollution.

- Moreover, environmental related topics could be key issues addressed under the **ad hoc reports** during the next monitoring cycles.
- In the context of monitoring activities, another future variable activity could be filing of **new collective complaints** on environmental issues in relation to social rights, such as climate change, pollution, environmental degradation, life in the proximity of polluted or non-yet decontaminated industrial sites, etc.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Technical cooperation projects in States Parties to the European Social Charter related to environment and social rights, in relation to:

- adequate standard of housing;
- in relation to transition to a green economy, a country by country or region by region impact assessment of the effects of the green transition could be done;
- dialogue with civil society and non-State actors, including trade unions and employers' organisations, on inclusive approach to transition to a green economy (such as access to the labour market, impact on jobs of those who would be affected by the transition to a green economy) and their involvement in decision making;
- education and consultation of children/future generations on environment-related aspects that affect them;
- impact and social consequences of climate change and environmental degradation for vulnerable groups, such as children, persons with disabilities, older persons;
- On the basis of needs and feasibility assessments (which should first be conducted), a specific line of country-specific or regional cooperation projects could be developed on the environment as a factor in the upholding and realisation of specific social rights (e.g. safe and healthy working conditions (Article 3 of the Charter), the right of children to special protection against physical risks (Art 7.10), rights of persons with disabilities or older persons (Articles 15 and 23), the right of families and children to social, legal and economic protection (Articles 16 and 17), protection against poverty and social exclusion (Article 30) and the right to housing (Article 31)).

Points out the following cross-sectoral activities within the environmental field currently being implemented (question 4):

Cooperation with colleagues across the organisation, in particular with the Department on the Reykjavik Process and the Environment, the PACE, the CDDH, the Court, etc. on the protection of rights under the European Social Charter.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

Cross-sectoral projects on:

- housing of an adequate standard, for example, when the Council of Europe Development Bank is developing projects on social housing, environment-related matters could be considered;
- inclusive social dialogue and broad and meaningful participation in the context of transition to a green economy and other environment-related matters (Conference of INGOs, PACE, Children's Rights Division and others).

Quality of Medicine and Healthcare

10. European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines and HealthCare

- Standard setting
- Technical cooperation

- Human Rights and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

- To align its activities to environmental priorities:
 - o Revising Analytical Procedures in the European Pharmacopoeia: introducing, developing, and revising analytical procedures that reduce or eliminate the use of environmentally detrimental substances. This includes avoiding hazardous reagents and solvents, Mercury (Hg) and mercury compounds, and substances identified as (very) high concern or subject to bans under the EU REACH Regulation, for example.
 - o Transitioning to digital: the 12th edition of the European Pharmacopoeia, currently under preparation, will only be available in digital format, reflecting EDQM's commitment to reducing paper use and the associated environmental impact.
 - o Adherence and promotion of the 3Rs concept (Reduction, Replacement, Refinement) in animal testing by promoting non-animal testing: recognising the environmental harm caused by animal testing and promoting alternative testing methods for the quality assurance of medicinal products in the context of the European Pharmacopoeia. This effort is also supported through activities within the Official Medicines Control Laboratories (OMCL Network) and the Biological Standardisation Programme.
 - o To further embrace environmental sustainability, environmental sustainability has been added as a strategic goal on the European Pharmacopoeia Commission and OMCL Network programmes. In addition, the EDQM supports the International Meeting of World Pharmacopoeias, coordinated by World health Organisation (WHO), which has also started discussing sustainability efforts.
- In aligning its internal operations with environmental priorities, the EDQM is undertaking several initiatives including the following:
 - o Waste management in the EDQM laboratory and manufacturing areas.
 - o Reduction and replacement of some greenhouse gases of concern. This includes the replacement of the fluids in refrigeration systems with a view to reduce the Organisation's carbon footprint.

Future activities (question 2):

In its Medium-Term Strategy 2024-2027, the EDQM has defined "ensuring the sustainability of the EDQM by future-proofing its operations and activities" as one of its 7 strategic objectives. This objective includes contributing to environmental sustainability. To achieve this, the EDQM intends launching 2 specific projects:

- **Project 1: Enhancing Internal Environmental Practices** - will focus on improving the EDQM's own environmental footprint, with initiatives including but not limited to reducing the impact of shipment of Reference Standards, greening of premises, as well as energy savings and emission reduction.
- **Project 2: Promoting External Environmental Responsibility** - will focus on encouraging and guiding EDQM's stakeholders and users towards adopting more

environmentally responsible approaches, in particular EDQM's work related to access to and availability of medicines and health products.

The EDQM coordinates OMCL Network, a group of laboratories independent from pharmaceutical companies. This network supports regulatory authorities by ensuring the quality of medicinal products. To promote environmental responsibility, the EDQM has begun mapping the existing and planned activities of the Network. These activities aim to reduce or eliminate the use or generation of hazardous substances in the design, manufacture, and application of chemical products, a practice known as Green Chemistry as well as to consider general lab practices and logistics to optimise use of resources and reduce environmental impact.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

Internal cross sectoral initiatives in the field of Information Technologies and Building/infrastructure would be welcome.

Protection of the Environment and Human Rights

11. EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement

- Standard setting
- Technical cooperation

- Pollution
- Climate change
- Human Rights and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

Acting *inter alia* on EUR-OPA Secretariat proposal for International Landscape Fire Management Framework (following the example of the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity), a Global Fire Management Hub was set up under the auspices of FAO and UNEP.

Projects focusing on the identification and follow up of potential risks, inherent and amplified by the climate crisis, have been implemented with a view to reducing vulnerability through awareness-raising campaigns as well as scientific expertise. Such projects address questions of wildfires and urban heat as well as erosion in coastal areas caused by raising sea levels and changing precipitation patterns.

The new Greek Code on Seismic assessment and retrofitting of masonry structures (ΚΑΔΕΤ) was applied to preserved historic structures in Ohrid and Bitola in North Macedonia in the framework of a joint project between the European Centre on the Vulnerability of Industrial and Lifeline Systems (North Macedonia) and the European Centre on Prevention and Forecasting of Earthquakes (Greece).

The BeSafeNet project specifically targets secondary schools across the EUR-OPA member States (<https://besafenet.net/hazards/#natural>).

In cooperation with UNDRR, the Agreement engaged in thematic work with the aim to improve heat and wildfire risks governance, to ensure evidence-based communication and to reinforce community engagement in disaster risk reduction.

Future activities (question 2):

Within the very limited budget available, the future activities will continue to concentrate on themes identified within the Network of Scientific Centres as priority areas, such as forest fires, urban heat waves and erosion caused by rising sea levels and changing precipitation patterns.

The Committee of Permanent Correspondents will concentrate on priority themes identified in the Medium-Term Plan 2021-2025 such as use of social media and mobile phone networks to support national measures for successful disaster risk reduction, reducing the exposure of vulnerable persons to hazards, as well as developing risk assessment tools for the protection of cultural heritage.

In 2024, the Agreement will reflect on its contribution to promoting the right to living in a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for the current and future generations.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Currently, the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement's impact is limited by the limited scope of its membership (20 member States of the CoE, 2 non-CoE member States) and limited resources.

With greater resources, the Agreement could significantly develop its awareness raising activities, such as the BeSafeNet Olympiad (<https://olympiad.besafenet.net/olympiad>) in national languages of high-school pupils. Further development and expansion of projects in

thematic areas related to natural and technological hazards and disasters provoked or amplified by the climate emergency (such as forest fires, floods, landslides, coastal erosion, etc) could be envisaged.

It would be befitting for the Agreement to develop targeted projects to improve disaster resilience capacity of civil defence personnel and the population at large. Expertise available in the fields such as natural landscape management, risk communication, community engagement, disaster medicine would benefit both the professional actors and the population at large when facing threats and disasters through all the PPRR stages (prevention, preparedness, response and recovery), in particular taking into account: disaster risk reduction (minimising residual risks), emergency management (building capacity of the civil defence personnel and the population at large) and community development (creating social capital for disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery).

Points out the following cross-sectoral activities within the environmental field currently being implemented (question 4):

The award ceremony for the laureates of the 2023 BeSafeNet Olympiad was organised in cooperation with the Education Department on 1 December 2023, in the framework of the 3rd OHTE Annual Conference.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

The European Landscape Convention speaks of landscape protection (Article 5) and of scientific assistance in landscape matters (Article 8). The Bern Convention obliges the contracting parties to take steps to promote national policies for the conservation of wild flora, wild fauna and natural habitats. Climate change increases the frequency and severity of natural disasters which significantly impact the landscapes and conservation of fauna, flora and habitats. EUR-OPA should further develop cooperation with both Conventions.

Joint campaigns should be developed with the Education and Youth Departments aimed at raising awareness on the necessity for environment protection and on prevention, preparedness, response and recovery from natural disasters.

12. Council of Europe Landscape Convention

- Monitoring

- Triple planetary crisis
- Human Rights and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

- 8th Session of the Council of Europe Landscape Award.
- Draft CM Recommendation on “landscape and health”.
- Updating the information system on the Council of Europe Landscape Convention.
- 12th Conference on the Council of Europe Landscape Convention.

Future activities (question 2):

- 9th Session on the Council of Europe Landscape Award.
- Draft CM Recommendation on “landscape as a living environment”.
- Event to mark the 25th anniversary of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention in 2025.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Organisation of:

A) meetings/reports/CM recommendations on the impact on landscape of the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity.

Pollution, climate change and the loss of biodiversity can have a negative impact on the quality of the landscape dimension of a territory. There are many examples of this.

As far as pollution is concerned, we need only to think of the contamination caused by industrial activities, the effect of acid rain, the pollution of inland and marine waters, the acoustic impact of motorways and smog in cities.

Fires, floods, the effects of intensive agriculture, desertification and speculation linked to the installation of renewable energy sources come to mind when we think of the negative effects on the landscape caused by climate change.

The loss of biodiversity is often at the root of the standardisation of the agricultural landscape, the disappearance of habitats, villages, human communities and/or local cultures linked to species or natural resources that have disappeared or are in danger of disappearing.

These few examples are enough to give an idea of the importance of tackling the triple global crisis of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss also from the angle of its effects on the landscape. Our individual and social well-being, our identity, our sense of belonging to a community, our personal and professional activities, our quality of life as residents, our psycho-physical health and many other aspects that contribute to our quality of life can all be jeopardised by a damaged landscape.

Meetings which could be organised on a regular basis by the Council of Europe in cooperation with the States Parties of the Landscape Convention, would enable specific situations such as those described above by way of example to be examined in greater depth. Where appropriate, these workshops could be organised with reference to a specific area, selected as an example on the basis of the negative impact of pollution, climate change and/or loss of biodiversity on its landscape dimension.

Points out the following cross-sectoral activities within the environmental field currently being implemented (question 4):

The Landscape Convention can be considered as an *ante litteram* application of the Guiding principles for an integrated approach to culture, nature, and landscape management ("L.I.N.K.E.D.").

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

B) meetings/reports/CM recommendations on landscape-related human rights, such as:

- the right to well-being and quality of life;
- the individual and collective right to the landscape as a public good or common resource;
- the right to health;
- the right to take part in cultural life;
- the right to information, right to participation;
- the right to education;
- the right to privacy, family life and home;
- the protection of property;
- the right to housing;
- the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion;
- the right to dignity and non-discrimination.

These meetings would make it possible to examine in greater depth the relationship between the provisions of the Landscape Convention and those of the treaties guaranteeing fundamental rights, in particular the European Convention on Human Rights (hereinafter: the ECHR) and the European Social Charter (hereinafter: the ESC).

The proposed meetings would provide an opportunity for an exchange of information and good practice on the rights in question between, on the one hand, representatives of the States party to the Landscape Convention, including representatives of the competent national judicial bodies and, on the other hand, representatives of the European Court of Human Rights and/or the European Committee of Social Rights.

Each meeting could be devoted to one or more human rights. Highlighting the correspondences between the various relevant provisions of the treaties in question would be beneficial in two ways: on the one hand, the monitoring activities of the Landscape Convention could provide the European Court of Human Rights and the European Committee of Social Rights with up-to-date information on developments in the consideration of landscape, as a human dimension of the environment, in the States concerned; on the other hand, the case law of the Court and that of the Committee - in addition to the direct effects on the cases judged - could guide, or even consolidate, the results of the States' co-operation in the monitoring of the Landscape Convention.

And has the following comments (question 6):

The specific contribution of the Landscape Convention to strengthening the link between human rights and the environment, one of the main objectives of the Reykjavik Process, needs to be emphasised.

This link is based on the very essence of landscape, as defined by the Landscape Convention (Article 1a.). According to this definition, landscape could not exist without the establishment

of a sensitive relationship between a human being (or a community of human beings) and a territory. It is also through the satisfaction of this relationship that human beings realise fundamental rights related to their living environment (health, housing, family life, dignity, protection from poverty and discrimination, etc.).

The Landscape Convention, by protecting and promoting the territorial dimension of human rights, contributes to their realisation. As rightly observed, a high quality of landscape, a high quality of living environment for everyone, through the enhancement of landscape, is an essential pillar of human rights.

In particular, the implementation of the right to landscape that underpins the landscape Convention represents a contribution to the realisation of many rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the European Social Charter (ESC) and other instruments guaranteeing fundamental rights at national, European and global level.

The explicit recognition of the Landscape Convention in the Reykjavik Declaration is due to what is stated in the Convention itself: a) in the Preamble: landscape contributes to human well-being, is an essential component of human being's surroundings, is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere and is a key element of individual and social well-being; b) in Article 5a: Each Party undertakes... to recognise landscape in law as an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity. And that's probably why the Committee of Ministers, in its Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)7 to member States on the contribution of the European Landscape Convention to the exercise of human rights and democracy in a sustainable development perspective, adopted in September 2017, highlighted the importance of the link between the quality of the landscape dimension of the territory and the exercise of human rights.

13. Council of Europe Bern Convention

- Standard setting
- Monitoring
- Technical cooperation

- Triple planetary crisis
- Human Rights and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

All the activities implemented within the frame of the 2024 – 2027 Programme and Budget of the Bern Convention are related to nature conservation (See Programme of Activities and budget for 2024 - T-PVS(2023)21).

This concerns:

- Meetings of the statutory bodies of the Bern Convention (Annual meeting of the Standing Committee, late November – early December; 3 meetings of the Bureau per year, in March, June and September).
- Monitoring: biennial reporting in compliance with Article 9 of the Bern Convention.
- Monitoring of the implementation of obligations by Parties by examination of cases dealt within the framework of the Bern Convention's case-file system and of the European Diploma for Protected Areas (EDPA) of the Council of Europe: On the spot appraisal visits for case-files and yearly meeting of the Group of Specialists on the EDPA and visits to EDPA sites.
- Conservation status of populations of species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention: work and meetings of the Group of Experts on the illegal killing of birds, Group of Experts on the Conservation of birds, Group of experts on large carnivores, National Focal Points for the conservation of the Sturgeon, Working Group on the conservation of marine turtles, Expert Meeting on the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck.
- Conservation of natural habitats: work and meetings in the context of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest in Europe, and of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks, Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change.
- Assistance to Parties in the implementation of their obligations through capacity building or trainings.
- Assistance to Parties in communicating on the biodiversity advantage and benefits and development of awareness-raising campaigns and materials.

Future activities (question 2):

Within the frame of the Programme and Budget 2024 – 2027, the Bern Convention will continue addressing the drivers of the triple planetary crisis referred to in Annex V of the Reykjavik declaration.

To combat the loss of biodiversity, activities encouraging Parties to the Convention to implement conservation or restoration measures concerning threaten species or groups of species are planned on a recurrent basis: Amphibians and reptiles, large carnivores, bird species, plant species etc. The programme of activity of the convention will also continue tackling Invasive Alien Species.

The programme of activity of the convention will continue supporting the Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change and provide technical and scientific assistance to the development of the Emerald Network of special conservation areas.

To combat pollution, the legal framework of the protection of habitats (article 4 of the Bern Convention) will be reinforced to assist Contracting Parties to manage in an exemplary way their protected areas and to decrease the number of related case files in the near future.

In order to ensure better implementation of the Bern Convention, case-files will continue to be processed by the Bureau and the Standing Committee. Options to strengthen the efficiency of the case-files system will be considered.

Within the frame of the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the European Diploma for Protected Areas (2025), a round table bringing together the managers of the 66 protected areas awarded the European Diploma will be organised.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

- Work on climate change should be strengthened. There is already a Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change, under the Bern Convention. Its mandate could be expanded to cover other issues than “only” biodiversity.
- Renaturation of sites (public spaces, enterprises/industries’ spaces, industrial wastelands, ...).

Points out the following cross-sectoral activities within the environmental field currently being implemented (question 4):

Transversal activities have already been implemented with the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Partial Agreement, in particular on the role of protected areas and nature-based solutions for mitigating the effects of Climate Change and reducing natural disasters.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

- Contribution to the Policy Guidelines for an integrated culture, nature and landscape management, in collaboration with the Landscape Convention and the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement, to foster a multidisciplinary and integrated approach for the sake of human well-being.
- Activities focused on the opportunities and impacts of renewable energy infrastructure (e.g. wind turbines, solar farms, hydroelectric power plants), in collaboration with the Landscape Convention, could be considered.
- Forced migration due to climate change / environmental reasons, with the SG Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees.
- Wildfires and their consequences on ecosystems, biodiversity and human settings, with the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement.
- Forced departure of inhabitants due to recurrent flooding (social and financial support needed) and creation of wetlands (including in connection with rising sea levels), with the European Social Charter and the Council of Europe Development Bank.
- Awareness raising and formal and non-formal education on environmental matters (including capacity building and democratic/political participation), in cooperation with Youth and Education Departments.
- Reinforcement of dialogue with the Committee of Ministers, through, for example, a yearly hearing of the Chair of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention by the relevant CM Group of rapporteurs.
- Awareness-raising actions, studies and capacity building activities in the framework of normative work and/or cooperation projects, which would tackle the topic of the increase of sexist and sexual violence against women in the context of climate change are proposed.

While climate change is a threat to all, it does not affect everyone in the same way. Its effects, particularly in the context of post-disaster conditions or migration processes, perpetuates and amplifies structural inequalities, especially those affecting women. Women and girls are even more vulnerable to all forms of gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence (such as rape), trafficking in human beings, reduced access to education, child marriage, economic dependence (during periods of drought and erratic rainfall, women, as agricultural workers and primary procurers in many regions, work harder to secure income and resources for their families. This adds pressure on girls, who often have to leave school to help manage the increased burden. These situations can increase sexist violence as women may find themselves economically vulnerable and other forms of violence). Therefore, it is crucial to recognise these interconnections and implement appropriate policies and programmes that integrate a gender perspective to mitigate the risks of violence linked to climate change and promote inclusive and equitable responses.

This work could be envisaged with sectors dealing with these issues and mainly the Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department which include GREVIO (responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention), the Gender Equality or the Children's Rights Division and/or any other relevant team in the Organisation.

And has the following comments (question 6):

A dedicated Group of Rapporteurs on the environment could be created within the Committee of Ministers, instead of having several GRs dealing with some aspects of the issues (GR-C, GR-H, GR-SOC, ...), in order to increase the awareness of Deputies / Member States on the work carried out by the Council of Europe on the environment.

14. Animal Welfare Conventions

- Standard Setting

- Triple planetary crisis
- Human Rights and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

- European Convention for the Protection of Animals during International Transport (Revised) (ETS No. 193) and European Convention for the Protection of Animals during International Transport (ETS No. 065).
- European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes (ETS No. 087).
- European Convention for the Protection of Vertebrate Animals used for Experimental and other Scientific Purposes (ETS No. 123).
- European Convention for the Protection of Animals for Slaughter (ETS No. 102).
- European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals (ETS No. 125).

There have been no dedicated activities or secretariat structures in charge of their follow-up for years and the conventions are left in the hands of states parties. One of them (Farming) foresees in theory a standing conventional committee which should meet regularly at the CoE, but the Committee has not been convoked for at least 10 years. The others foresee periodical consultations of the parties upon request by States parties or by the SG.

Future activities (question 2):

Some of these Conventions – Farming, Experimentation and Transport at least - can have an obvious relevance in environment-related terms both for the impact of these activities on pollution and for health-related aspects. The EU has a very prominent role in some of the areas covered by the above-mentioned conventions. It is therefore unclear – since these Conventions are mostly ratified by EU or EEA States - whether there would be enough interest for the States parties and for the CoE in ensuring some active follow-up thereof.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

It may be proposed to call a consultation of the parties to these Conventions (or at least those on Farming, Experimentation and Transport) to discuss with States parties the possible interest of a renewed active follow-up to these Conventions at CoE level. Budgetary implications are to be considered as no activity and no staff are currently foreseen to this effect in the Programme and Budget 2024-2027.

Secretariat of the Council of Europe Development Bank

15. Partial agreement: Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)

- Technical cooperation

- Triple planetary crisis

Existing activities (question 1):

The CEB Strategic Framework 2023-2027 singles out two specific sectors of action related directly to the environment: "Natural and ecological disasters" and "Protection of the environment". The CEB assesses climate-related issues, including climate risks, within the design and implementation of the social projects it finances in other sectors of action (within its Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy).

"Climate action" is also identified as one of the cross-cutting themes because many other sectors of action of the CEB also concern environmental issues, including projects having climate co-benefits (such as energy-efficient restoration of buildings). In line with its mandate as a social development bank, the CEB addresses the social consequences of climate change and environmental degradation by focusing on the most vulnerable.

The physical climate risk assessment (PCRA) is an approach used by the CEB that was designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of climate-related risk at the level of each operation and to determine how and to what extent identified physical climate risks are reduced or mitigated.

In November 2021, the CEB's Administrative Council endorsed the Paris Alignment Framework and Roadmap^[1], which streamline the CEB's commitment to aligning its activities with the principles and goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement^[2] and to enhancing the integration of sustainability and climate change considerations in its operations.

Future activities (question 2):

The CEB will continue implementing its own Strategic Framework and related policies. The Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy is currently under revision and will be presented for approval to the CEB's collegial organs in 2025.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

It is suggested that the Council of Europe and the CEB have an initial exchange if and how the CEB could contribute to the relevant Council of Europe Action Plan.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

If a bankable project is identified with member States, the CEB financing could link several sectors of the CoE; for example, clean energy or prevention of natural disasters in many different sectors.

^[1] [CEB's Paris alignment framework and roadmap](#)

^[2] A legally binding international treaty adopted by 196 Parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in December 2015.

Acting for equality, diversity and respect

16. Human Dignity and Gender Equality Department

- Standard-setting

- Human Rights and Environment

Existing activities (question 1)

Gender equality is one of the “mainstreamed perspectives” of the Organisation. The Gender Equality Division supports the integration of a gender equality perspective in all areas of work of the Organisation and in this context, works with many sectors through the provision of training, advice and support.^[1]

25th meeting of the GEC (April 2024): the GEC held an exchange of views with Ana Peláez Narváez, Chair of Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), on General Recommendation No. 40 on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems (currently being prepared, with a view to its adoption in October 2024). Among other topics, the GR focuses on sustainability and climate change, the consequences of climate change for marginalised women, and the participation of women in decision-making related to climate change and reduction of disasters.

GEC Annual Conference “United around gender equality: making space for women and girls” (30 May 2024): the first panel focused on “A youth perspective on gender-equality implications of crises linked to conflict, migration, public health and climate change”. The discussions focused on how young women consider climate change and their approach to climate change and its consequences, and emphasized that the vast majority of climate migrants are women, underscoring the critical need to adopt an intersectional approach when addressing climate change in the context of women’s rights.

“Study on equal participation of women and men in political and public decision-making” (by 31/12/2026): the environmental dimension of decision-making will also be explored, in particular:

- the need to ensure that policy decisions in environmental matters account for how they impact women and men differently and serve women and men equally;
- the importance of applying a gender perspective to environmental decision-making and addressing gender gaps in environmental leadership, with a view to advancing environmental action and achieving sustainable development.

^[1] See for example the role of Gender Equality Rapporteurs and the HELP course on gender equality and gender mainstreaming:

- [Gender Equality Rapporteurs - Gender Equality \(coe.int\)](https://www.coe.int/t/e/gender_equality_rapporteurs/)
- <https://rm.coe.int/gender-equality-course-brief-english/1680ae6e30>

Future activities (question 2)

The GEC will hold a *tour de table* on good practices in relation to gender equality and the environment and climate change at its next plenary meeting (19-21 November 2024). This discussion will set the stage for the GEC’s future actions in this area as it will not only aim to identify effective approaches that member States are adopting to integrate gender equality issues into environmental and climate policies, but also consider potential activities.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Further information in this regard can be provided following the 26th meeting of the GEC (see above).

Points out the following cross-sectoral activities within the environmental field currently being implemented (question 4):

Gender equality being a transversal priority of the Council of Europe, our work is necessarily undertaken in cooperation with all sectors, as outlined in the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029. The Strategic Objective 6 of the Strategy (“Achieving gender mainstreaming and including an intersectional approach in all policies and measures”), underlines that “the Council of Europe will ensure that new initiatives and standards are gender transformative, taking into account the diverse situations of women and men, girls and boys, and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination”. In this context, any activity undertaken by the Council of Europe in relation to the environment should integrate a gender equality perspective and the Gender Equality Division stands ready to support all sectors in this effort.

And has the following comments (question 6):

The Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029 acknowledges the growing economic difficulties, exacerbated by recent crises, including the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, and the triple planetary crisis. These factors highlight the urgent need to address the human, social and economic aspect of gender inequality. The Strategy emphasises that the ongoing geopolitical challenges disproportionately affect women and girls, exacerbating existing gender inequalities and creating new vulnerabilities related to violence, discrimination, and social exclusion. Climate change, migration, and economic downturns are particularly impactful. It underlines that adaptation to climate change and mitigating its impact, in particular regarding climate-driven disasters, still demands the application of a gender and an intersectional lens. The Strategy notes the correlation between sex, gender, equality and climate change. It therefore includes the exchange of practices on the disparate effects of climate change and the links between women’s empowerment and effective, global climate action.”

The Strategy further notes that achieving gender equality is linked to significant societal benefits, including economic growth, enhanced well-being, and effective climate change mitigation. It also underlines that a gender and intersectional lens is essential for adapting to climate change and mitigating its impacts, especially regarding climate-driven disasters. The Strategy emphasises the correlation between gender equality and effective climate action, and that a gender-responsive approach in the prevention and mitigation of crises, including those related to climate change. In this regard, it foresees that Council of Europe action will support the systematic integration of a gender equality perspective, including consideration of increased intersectional vulnerabilities in policies and measures regarding public health, conflict resolution, climate change and economic downturn, for example through awareness and training activities for relevant stakeholders, and carry out activities addressing the adverse effects of climate change on gender equality, including increased (intersectional) vulnerabilities to all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, and socio-economic inequalities.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)17 on Protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls underlines that, in situations of climate change-related crises, among others, member States should take into account the increased risk of gender-based violence

for migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls the recognition of climate change-related crises as a cause of gender-based violence for migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls.^[1]

The Preamble of Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)20 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on human rights and the protection of the environment recalls the “obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and emphasis[es] the vital role of women in matters concerning the environment and sustainable development and, in this respect, the need to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.” The Recommendation emphasises that member States should “take adequate measures to protect the rights of those who are most vulnerable to, or at particular risk from, environmental harm, taking into account their needs, risks and capacities.” The explanatory memorandum underlines that these could include women and girls, and that member States “should take the necessary action to address the specific situation of such persons, recognising that in this context, the prohibition on discrimination may require the implementation of positive measures in favour of [these] persons”.^[2] It further underlines that member States “should ensure equality between women and men and the systematic integration of the gender equality dimension in the framework of securing a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. They should mainstream this dimension into the planning, developing, implementing and monitoring of their environmental legislation, strategies, policies and actions. Member States should take all appropriate measures to ensure greater participation of women in environmental matters.”^[3]

^[1] Paragraph 43.

^[2] Paragraph 21.

^[3] Paragraph 33.

17. Anti-discrimination Department,
Steering Committee on Anti-
discrimination, Diversity and
Inclusion (CDADI)

- Standard Setting

- Climate change
- Pollution

Current activities (question 1)

Exchange of views on the environment and equality at the 10th CDADI meeting in November 2024.

Future activities (question 2)

Preparation of a study on the environment and equality as of 2025 regarding the impact of the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity on equality, possibly in co-operation with other CoE services.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Preparation of the aforementioned study with recommendations for further action.

18. Council of Europe minority rights and anti-racism monitoring mechanisms

- Monitoring

- Climate change
- Human Rights
and Environment

Brief overview of the findings and recommendations of two Council of Europe monitoring bodies, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC) and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), about groups of concern that are particularly vulnerable to environmental harm, namely Roma and Travelers, indigenous peoples and national minorities.

Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC)

The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC) has addressed environmental issues, in particular through its recent findings on the adverse impact of environmental degradation and climate change on the lives of persons belonging to national minorities.

Environmental concerns are usually brought forward in the context of Article 5 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities ([FCNM](#)), arguing that the extraction of natural resources, large-scale industrial projects, or tourism threaten the preservation of cultural identity of national minorities.

The Advisory Committee:

- has expressed itself on the destruction of Sorbian villages due to lignite mining in Germany^[1], various environmental threats to Sami fishing and reindeer-herding in the Nordic Countries^[2], or the damaging effect of mining on the traditional cultures and religion of indigenous peoples in the Russian Federation^[3] (a link is usually made to the right to effective participation in decision-making enshrined in Article 15 FCNM in such considerations);
- observed cases where the curbing of economic activities as part of transition to a greener economy leads to socio-economic challenges for persons belonging to national minorities, for instance through a loss of employment^[4];
- observed that the construction of wind farms and the extraction of minerals required in the manufacturing of components for renewable energy sources, while essential for the green transition, limits the use of traditional lands for reindeer herding by indigenous people^[5];
- invited the authorities to address the economic, social, cultural and other consequences of climate change and the potential negative effects of the transition to the green economy on those groups impacted^[6];
- took note of the fact that Roma are often disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards such as pollution through industrial plants or landfills^[7] and urged the state authorities to pay particular attention to ensuring safe living conditions^[8];

- published its [13th Activity Report](#) in 2022, that noted how climate change affected national minorities².

The Advisory Committee is also mindful of the international policy developments^[10] on human rights and the protection of the environment which underlines the disproportionate impact of environmental damage on those segments of the population that are already in vulnerable situations, including indigenous people and takes inspiration from the policy guidance they offer. In this regard, it is noteworthy to highlight the specific considerations on indigenous children and children belonging to minority groups made in the recent General Comment No.26^[11] of the UN Committee on the Rights of Child (CRC). This instrument also calls for measures for protecting their rights whose way of life and cultural identity are intimately related to nature.

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

In its sixth report on [France](#) (§ 94), ECRI found that in addition to reports of generally deplorable living conditions in some Traveller sites and Roma settlements, these were also often located in either areas of heavy pollution and/or on sites at risk of industrial hazards. ECRI noted that associations condemned the deplorable conditions prevailing in Travellers' stopping sites and that standards of decency only applied to sites built after the adoption of the standards, not to existing sites. As a result, the sites were often poorly equipped and located in isolated and insanitary places. ECRI was informed that more than half of the designated sites (i.e., 698 sites out of 1 358 identified in France) were still located in areas of heavy pollution and that 40 were close to factories that involve major industrial hazards (Seveso-classified factories). The associations concerned also reported difficulties in accessing water and electricity owing to the refusal of municipalities to connect up the sites or to deterrent pricing (see also § 95).

The findings of several ECRI reports indicate that many Roma and Travellers are living in unhealthy environments and that their dwellings lack access to clean water or electricity, or the sewage or waste disposal system, even if pollution or other environmental issues are not specifically mentioned. For example, in its fifth report on [Bulgaria](#) (§ 73), ECRI noted that Roma often experience difficult housing conditions, including substandard housing, some of it ramshackle, with very limited access to basic infrastructure, security of tenure or essential services, such as public transport, emergency medical aid, waste collection, and, for some, even electricity and water supplies. It cited (§ 74) a study referring to continuing dire conditions in some Roma settlements. According to a report carried out by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), a pan-European network of green NGOs, about 60 000 people are estimated to live in the district of Stolipinovo, Europe's largest Roma settlement, in Plovdiv. Many are cut off from the piped water and sanitation services which serve the rest of the city.

² “[...] climate change has affected the situation of national minorities’ rural communities and indigenous peoples in two ways[...]. On the one hand, climate change affects agriculture as well as traditional occupations such as reindeer herding, hunting, and fishing. This puts rural communities and indigenous peoples in a vulnerable position. On the other hand, measures to combat climate change can, in turn, negatively affect economic activities that are traditional for certain communities of national minorities and indigenous peoples. Therefore, certain communities of national minorities and indigenous peoples need assistance to adapt their economic activity to new situations to keep their community life, culture and language. In any event, it is indispensable that persons belonging to national minorities have the possibility to effectively participate in all decisions affecting them and have a substantial influence on decisions taken.” – [Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities](#), page 16

^[1] ACFC, [First Opinion on Germany](#), 2002.

^[2] All monitoring cycles.

^[3] ACFC, [Fourth Opinion on Russian Federation](#), 2018.

^[4] ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on Estonia](#), 2022.

^[5] ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on Norway](#), 2022.

^[6] ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on Sweden](#), 2023.

^[7] ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), 2022; ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on Kosovo*](#), 2023.

^[8] ACFC, [Fifth Opinion on Albania](#), 2023, paras.182-185.

^[9] ACFC, [13th Activity Report](#), 2022, pp.15-16.

^[10] See United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC) [Resolution 48/13](#) of 8 October 2021 and UN General Assembly (GA) [Resolution 76/300](#) of 28 July 2022; [Appendix V of the Reykjavik Declaration](#) of the Council of Europe.

^[11] [General Comment No.26](#) on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change by the UN Committee on the Rights of Child (CRC), see in particular para. 58.

19. Children's Rights

- Standard Setting
- Monitoring

- Climate change
- Pollution
- Human Rights and Environment

Current activities (question 1)

Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027):

- Strategic Objective 2: Equal opportunities for all children
 - Objective 2.2.1: Addressing the root causes of child poverty, preventing situations of extreme child poverty, while trying to mitigate the outcomes, as well as tackling poverty caused by **environmental degradation** and conflict.
- Strategic Objective 4: Child-friendly justice for all children
 - Objective 4.2.10: Zooming in some specific topics, such as (...) children's access to justice in relation to **environmental harm**.
- Strategic Objective 5: Giving a voice to every child
 - Objective 5.2.2: Empowering children to access information and to participate in decisions related to **the environment**, at different levels of decision making, leading to the co-designing of **environmental policies**.
 - Objective 5.2.6: Protecting and empowering children acting as defenders of human rights and of **the environment**.
- Strategic Objective 6: Children's rights in crisis and emergency situations
 - Objective 6.1.3: Upholding the right to an education with respect for nature and which raises awareness of **natural hazards and environmental risks**.
 - Objective: 6.2.6: Recognising the human rights obligations as they relate to the enjoyment of a **safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment**.
 - Objective 6.2.7: Facilitating children's access to justice against **environmental harm**.

Many of these objectives are being addressed by Council of Europe entities and bodies, but it provides an overview of some of the key challenges as presented in the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child.

Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF)

- ["Children as defenders of human rights: a study on Council of Europe member states"](#) (2023) concerns also the situation of children defending the environment.
- In 2023, CDENF held a thematic exchange on children's rights and the environment where it discussed the relationship between future generations and children's rights, the connection between efforts being made under International Environmental Law and International Human Rights Law, the role of the COE in relation to the right to the healthy environment.
- Of note to the CDENF is the adoption of the **UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 26** on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change. The CDENF delegations welcomed the implementation of the European Social Charter, the CDDH as a potential for harnessing the main human rights instruments such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the ESC for work around children and the environment in the Council of Europe context.

Future activities (question 2) and Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Following the meeting of the CDENF Bureau on 2 and 3 of October, the following has been proposed to be addressed by the GME.

In line with the [Terms of reference](#) of the GME, which foresees that the Strategy and Action Plan should take due account of children's rights as a mainstreamed perspective, it is proposed that **children's rights be included as a cross-cutting issue** in the future Strategy and Action Plan on the Environment. This implies that, under all actions and activities developed in the framework of the Strategy, irrespective of which Council of Europe body/institution will be in charge of its implementation:

- a. The views and perspectives of children be taken into account through child consultation processes when decisions affecting them are being taken at all levels; and
- b. The particular impact on children's rights needs be addressed, through specific children's rights impact assessments at regional, local and national level.

It is important to acknowledge and demonstrate that children should not only be considered as a group in a heightened vulnerable situation with regards to climate change, but rather as **human-rights holders and agents of change** that need to be protected and empowered to participate in decision-making processes related to the environment.

If it should not be possible to involve children directly in the development of the Strategy on the Environment, it is even more important that they should be duly informed about the upcoming Strategy through a child-friendly version and be actively involved in its implementation, for examples through activities targeted at children.

The following specific objectives and/or actions could be proposed under the framework of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment or its Action Plan:

1. To mainstream the Rights of the Child across all sectors of the Strategy for the Environment; this implies not only to provide protection of children as a vulnerable group, but to acknowledge children's agency as promoters of change;
2. To actively engage children in the implementation of the Strategy, starting by the elaboration of a child friendly version of the Strategy and possibly of the relevant Conventions, and to encourage member States to incorporate children's views in the development and implementation of national strategies and policies;
3. In the context of the current thematic review of the Council of Europe Guidelines on Child-friendly justice to consider examining children's access to environmental and climate justice;^[1]
4. To support member states in the implementation at national level of the recommendations contained in the report "[Children as defenders of human rights: a study on Council of Europe member states](#)", in respect of children as defenders of the environment.^[2]
5. To strengthen education on the environment.

^[1] Under its terms of reference, the CDENF, together with the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ) and the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC), will conduct a thematic review of the [Council of Europe Guidelines on Child Friendly Justice adopted in 2010](#).

^[2] [Children as defenders of human rights: a study on Council of Europe member states](#), p. 42.

Cross-sectoral activities (question 4)

Reflected in the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child, which is a transversal organisation wide strategy.

Comments (question 6)

Children were involved in the preparation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child and presented their findings and recommendations at the launching conference in Rome in 2022.

The following recommendations from the children can be used in the elaboration of the CoE Strategy on the Environment:

- [Rome Conference Report](#) – “Deep dive conversation B – Recognising and enforcing children’s environmental rights” (page 11).
 - o Conclusions:
 - Children are key players. They have power to act but should be further empowered.
 - Children can trigger positive developments by changing their behaviour and influencing the behaviour of people surrounding them.
 - Children should express their concerns and their anger and stand up for their rights.
 - o Governments should:
 - Enact national legal and policy frameworks which address climate change and environmental protection from a child-rights approach.
 - Create safe spaces for children to express themselves, protecting children and adult human rights defenders from reprisals.
 - Ensure access to justice for children in climate cases.
 - Ensure that environmental education happens at all levels, both for children and professionals (e.g. prescribing it through law).
 - Raise awareness of children and adults to induce new behaviours and mind-sets (inter-generational justice).
- [Report on child consultations informing the formulation of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child](#) (2022), which contains proposals related to children’s rights and the environment.
 - o “The ecological topic is very much felt by young people. Concern about the current environmental crisis is widespread and also comes back up in the discussions of the consultation. Discouraging non-essential travel by favouring online communication, promoting platforms for reuse and exchange of second-hand goods, giving impetus to education for sustainability on the web are ideas that the network can enable to counteract the environmental decline in progress”.
 - o Children’s expectations of their governments and actions to be taken
 - Organise activities in kindergartens and schools that will teach children to protect the environment, not throw garbage around, etc.
 - Dispose of plastic from use, in order to protect the environment.
 - o Child quote: “In this moment my generation is the most well prepared to the future. However, unhappily it is necessary to remember that if we don’t change there’s no future, so it is really important to be conscious about the climate changes and to end up the consumerism, the greed of power and to start acting for the wellbeing of our planet.”

Building trust in public institutions

Independence and efficiency of justice

20. European Commission for the efficiency of justice (CEPEJ)

- Monitoring
- Technical
cooperation

- Climate change
- Human Rights and
Environment

Future activities (question 2):

Development of a tool on sustainability in the judiciary by the CEPEJ to create awareness among judges, court administrators and staff on the importance of sustainability practices and thereby ensure that courts while delivering justice do it in a sustainable way.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Set up support mechanisms for judicial systems to enable a better legal response to environmental damage and to manage the environmental effects of the digitalisation of justice.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

Development of implementation tools targeting the judiciary following the adoption of new CoE instruments in the field of environment, with for example CDCJ, CDDH, and CDPC.

Development of a module on justice and environment with HELP.

21. Legal Co-operation Division and
European Committee on Legal Co-
operation

- Standard setting - Climate change

Future activities (question 2):

Study on national climate litigation (deadline 31/12/2025)

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

This will depend in great part on the results of the above-mentioned study, and what the CDCJ identifies as the way forward. For the time being, within the remit of the CDCJ, the Convention on Civil Liability for Damage resulting from Activities Dangerous to the Environment (ETS 150) was opened for signature on 21/06/1993 but never entered into force. The CDCJ already expressed the view that revisiting this convention would not be a desirable option. Whether a new legal instrument should be contemplated at this stage and, if so, what type of instrument, will be dependent on the analysis contained in the study and a possible feasibility study.

Prisons - Police - Deprivation of liberty

22. European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) Secretariat (DGI)

- Monitoring

- Human rights
and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

Establishment of a CPT Working Group on Environment during the plenary session of November 2022, to explore the relationship between the ecological crisis and the CPT's mandate.

Re-shuffling of the CPT Working Group into a Rapporteur on Environment under the responsibility of two CPT members since July 2024. One/two CPT secretariat member(s) are designated to assist the Rapporteurs.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

Possibility to work with the CoE Development Bank around the construction of less environmentally harmful prisons, with agreed loan arrangements with member states.

Upholding safety, security and integrity of society and persons

Corruption – Money laundering – Economic Crime

23. Economic Crime and Corruption Department; Economic Crime and Co-operation Division

- Technical cooperation

- Triple planetary crisis
- Human rights and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

Through the regional component of the EU/Council of Europe Horizontal Facility III (2023-2026), a review of the intersection of environmental crime typologies and corruption/money laundering in the Western Balkans is underway. The resulting paper will seek to enhance the understanding on financial aspects of environmental crime and to support the countries in the Western Balkans in improving their anti-corruption and anti-money laundering policy relating to environmental crime and introduce appropriate operational responses. As part of this effort, a multi-country conference took place in March 2024, in Tirana, Albania, to stimulate discussion on money laundering, organised crime and corruption risks associated with environmental crime, identify case studies in this domain in the Western Balkans and share approaches and comparative practices from the European Union Member States.

Future activities (question 2):

Building on the results of the above-mentioned regional review of the intersection of environmental crime typologies and corruption/money laundering, the ECCD will provide a comprehensive framework of inter-linked technical assistance activities in support of the anti-corruption and anti-money laundering efforts in this field such as:

- Policy and operational solutions and cross-border cooperation avenues for tackling money laundering from environmental crimes and related corruption risks.
- Regional multi-agency information exchange including environmental agencies, financial intelligence and law enforcement authorities to promote co-ordination to effectively counter financial flows from environmental crimes.

As part of its tailored assistance in several beneficiary countries, the ECCD will conduct an impact assessment of key legislation on management of public funds and laws with major environmental impact (e.g., Law on public procurement, Law on special procedures for linear infrastructure projects).

Similarly, activities to enhance capacities to tackle environmental crime related to corruption and money laundering are foreseen in the EU Member States.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

- Increasing understanding and awareness on corruption and money laundering typologies related to environmental crime.
- Enhancing integrity and corruption mitigation measures in environment-related projects.
- Developing law enforcement capacities to investigate transnational environmental crimes, pursue financial investigations and identify the financial flows linked to the

proceeds of those crimes, including promote good practices of inter-agency cooperation between financial investigators and environmental crime agencies.

- Providing guidance for implementing risk-based preventive measures to environmental crime-related money laundering/terrorist financing (ML/TF) risks.
- Promoting good practices for asset recovery and management of proceeds of crime related to environmental crimes.
- Providing thematic regional platforms for cooperation and exchange between the authorities, private sector, civil society and youth organisations on protection of environment from the impact of economic crime.

Points out the following cross-sectoral activities within the environmental field currently being implemented (question 4):

Review and outreach with regard to the intersection of environmental crime typologies and corruption/money laundering in the Western Balkans, which also involves law enforcement, judiciary, corruption prevention agencies, segments of the financial and non-financial sectors, civil society.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

a. Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)

Reviewing regulation on public-private partnerships and integrity frameworks for officials involved in PPP projects to establish a baseline analysis and mapping on measures to provide policy and operational recommendations in this area.

b. Real estate sector

Technical assistance for robust preventive measures against money laundering and support to introduction of registration of illegally built objects to facilitate their potential confiscation, to discourage illegal construction and have a long-term positive effect on environment.

c. Financial and non-financial businesses and professions

Support for the development and application of anti-money laundering and integrity measures targeting environmental crime cases.

d. Law enforcement and judiciary

Guidance on the strengthening of cooperation among environmental crime agencies, corruption prevention authorities, anti-money laundering and financial investigation sectors in law enforcement and judiciary.

24. Group of States against Corruption
(GRECO)

- Monitoring

- Pollution

Future activities (question 2):

GRECO might be consulted on an ad hoc basis to give an Opinion on specific alleged corruption cases in the environmental field, as this involves huge sums of money (including as regards the green transition where large sums of money are being invested), in the form of bribes and excessive influence on senior civil servants, politicians and law enforcement agencies. Private sector corruption is also a concern.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Permanent watch on possible cases of corruption linked to environmental obligations. Possible opinions to be requested on alleged corruption cases in the environmental field and/or the setting up of controlling mechanisms.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

Fight against organised crime and environment.

Criminal law – Terrorism

25. European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC), Criminal Law Division

- Standard setting

- Triple planetary crisis

- Human rights and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

I.A. Replacement of the existing Convention on the protection of Environment through criminal law by a new Convention.

Future activities (question 2):

Awareness raising and lobby for signature/ratification and monitoring the implementation of above-mentioned new Convention once adopted.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Dissemination and integration in Environment-related cooperation interventions (projects, programmes, individual actions) of the Council of Europe HELP (6-hour) online course on “The Environment and Human Rights”. Since its publication in 2021, the course has been contextualised to 8 national systems (legislation and context) benefitting up to 400 participants attending tutored courses. An audio-book version also exists that can be good for youth dissemination.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

See answer in question 9. The experience of integrating the Council of Europe HELP online course on The Environment and Human Rights -alongside the course on Business and Human Rights – in an MBA of a Finish university can be replicated for other MBA students.

26. Counter-terrorism and Secretary of the Committee of experts on the protection of the environment through Criminal Law (PC-ENV), Criminal law Division

- Standard setting

- Triple planetary crisis
- Human Rights and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

Draft Convention superseding and replacing the European Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law (ETS No. 172).

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Tackle environmental crime through 3 main new activities, to be developed in synergy with the new Convention:

- a. Establishment of a Network of national investigators and prosecutors on environmental crime

The objective of the proposed “Environmental Crime Network” is to strengthen international co-operation in criminal matters to combat environmental crimes. Conceived as a simple, agile, and cost-effective mechanism to facilitate the immediate exchange of key information.

By facilitating the exchange of first-hand accounts of the difficulties on the field, it would contribute to future CoE work, notably on prevention of environmental crime.

In coordination with the monitoring mechanism of the Convention, the Network could also be a valuable tool to assess the implementation of the provisions of the new Convention on national strategies, domestic and international co-operation, gathering of data and sharing of information.

- b. Capacity-building on environmental crime

Capacity-building on environmental crime at the CoE could be done as a platform to promote dialogue, information exchange and lessons learned in this field, for the development of best practice knowledge tools, provision of trainings and technical assistance seminars with national, regional and international experts. The CoE could organise a number of events, including seminars and workshops, and by regional settings to gather together regional policy makers, prosecutors, law enforcement (including customs service) officers, trade and industry experts, and civil society.

This could mean, for example, a Project on “Preventing and combatting environmental crime”, designed to primarily provide technical assistance and support to member States and to State Parties to the new Convention. Such a project could provide a gap analysis of the legal and procedural issues related to environmental crime.

- c. Promotion of the Convention

Launching of a Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) course on environmental crime and the new Convention.

Points out the following cross-sectoral activities within the environmental field currently being implemented (question 4):

Work on the new Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law involves several other sectors of the Council of Europe:

- Registry of the European Court of Human Rights.
- Parliamentary Assembly, in particular the Committees on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, and on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development.
- Secretariat of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.
- Secretariat of the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats.
- CCPE (Consultative Council of European Prosecutors), owing to its Opinion No. 17 on the role of prosecutors in the protection of the environment.
- CDDH-ENV.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

- Congress of Local and Regional Authorities:
 - o Local and region authorities embody the necessary “think globally, act locally” approach in environmental issues. They will benefit from the future Convention’s set of tools to respond against environmental disasters caused by criminal activities, and could help raise awareness and bring visibility to the challenges of environmental crime and the importance of the new Convention.
 - o This dialogue can help provide an account of those with most direct contact with the challenges and efforts at local and regional levels concerning the prevention and combatting of environmental crime, and to help set up specific strategies, with concrete objectives, tailor-made to the local and regional realities.
- The need for a definition of environmental crime was highlighted at the 29th edition of the Lisbon Forum in 2023 addressed the theme “Human Rights, Environment and Economic Crimes: Youth at the forefront”. According to its report, “fraudulent environmental impact assessments can lead to water and soil contamination and, eventually, public health issues”. The new Convention will most likely not provide the definition. Future work on this topic could be envisaged.
- Communications:
 - o increase the visibility of Council of Europe standards, studies, guidelines, projects, events and their results in the area of environmental crime and related offences;
 - o raise awareness on issues and misconceptions and contribute to changing attitudes, mentalities and behaviours;
 - o increase the research and data available in the field of environmental crime;
 - o give visibility to good practices and data collected at national, regional and local levels;
 - o harmonise the terminology related the protection of the environment through criminal law within the Council of Europe and its member States.
- Establish and strengthen synergies with partner organisations such as UN and the EU on the field of environmental crime:
 - o The partnership with UNEP, UNODC, INTERPOL and the European Commission should be encouraged to continue after the conclusion of the drafting committee and into the subsequent work of raising awareness on the importance of the new Convention and its outreach. Particular emphasis should be placed on the

- universal character of the new Convention, which will be the first international treaty of potential global reach on preventing and combating environmental crime.
- Workshops, panels and similar activities at the climate and biodiversity COPs and the UN Summit of the Future to be held in September 2024 could be organised to build and maintain momentum on the upcoming Convention.
 - At EU level, the four European environmental crime enforcement networks: the European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL), the European Union Forum of Judges for the Environment (EUFJE), the European Network of Prosecutors for the Environment (ENPE), and EnviCrimeNet, regularly hold joint Four Networks conferences. The new Convention could be the object of a lecture in an upcoming event of the Four Networks. Other institutions such as EUROPOL, INTERPOL, UNODC, ICCWC, CITES, and the new Nature Crime Alliance could also be partners for events like workshops, seminars and conferences in the future.
 - Actively involve civil society in the promotion and implementation of the new Convention and the intersectional approach to preventing and combatting environmental crime.

Anchoring democratic values in European society

Freedom of Expression and information – Safety of Journalists

27. Freedom of Expression and Steering
Committee on Media and Information
Society (CDMSI) Division

- Standard
setting

- Human Rights
and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

[Anti-SLAPPs recommendation](#), which offer guidance for the protection of critical voices against abusive lawsuits; such critical voices also include environmental activists.

Activities related to the Committee of Ministers Recommendation on Countering Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation (SLAPPs):

- ensuring translation in other national languages;
- raising awareness through participation in key events and relevant platforms;
- printing and making available hard copies of leaflets, Rec and EM, in different formats;
- continuing strict cooperation with EU colleagues involved in the transposition of the Directive in EU Member States;
- co-organising the second European Conference on anti-SLAPP, to be held on 14 November in the Council of Europe, together with ECPMF and the CASE Coalition, gathering a large number of participants with diverse background and mainly focusing on implementation of the CM/Rec.

28. Enlarged Partial Agreement,
Eurimages, Directorate for
Democracy

- Monitoring
- Technical
cooperation

- Climate change
- Human rights
and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

In December 2021, the Board of Management of Eurimages adopted an Environmental Sustainability Strategy for the Fund’s activities and operations. A three-point action plan was subsequently adopted and implemented. These actions include those set out below.

In January 2023, Eurimages introduced an additional selection criterion for the core activity of the Fund, the Co-Production Support Programme. This criterion is used to assess the existence of measures put in place to reduce the environmental impact of the film co-production projects applying for support. The aim is to raise awareness amongst applicants, and to create a leverage effect.

The introduction of the criterion has allowed Eurimages to collect data on the tools and services currently being used to reduce the environmental footprint of international co-productions – for example, on the use of carbon calculators and green consultants. This data is currently for internal use only, but it supports the work of a dedicated study group established by the Eurimages Board of Management.

In 2022, Eurimages commissioned an evaluation of the GHG output of its activities as a Fund from specialised consultant Impacti. The final report is available online [here](#). This calculation was not renewed in 2023 and 2024.

Future activities (question 2):

The Board of Management of Eurimages decided in December 2023 to finance the creation of an on-line learning tool for film professionals, to enhance knowledge of methods of reduction of environmental impact of film co-production across all Eurimages member States, to be operational in early 2025.

Following a call for proposals, French non-profit Ecoprod, working with a range of international partners, has been selected to develop both the tool itself and the course content, in collaboration with Eurimages. Participants will learn how to implement a sustainable approach in the development, production and promotion of their film projects.

29. Division for Co-operation on Freedom of Expression

- Standard setting
- Technical cooperation

- Pollution
- Climate change

Existing activities (question 1):

The CEGG (Centre of Expertise, now in the Congress) took over from the CDDG to implement green public administration.

Implementation of the [Anti-SLAPPs recommendation](#), which offer guidance for the protection of critical voices against abusive lawsuits; such critical voices also include environmental activists. Specific training on green SLAPPs (one pilot already implemented in Kosovo*).

Training programmes on quality journalism, including green journalism, investigative journalism, safety of journalism.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Promote implementation of the recommendations of the GPA Report prepared by the CDDG.

Education

30. Education Department/
Division for Formal and
Non-formal Education/
Non-formal Education and Co-operation Unit

- Standard setting
- Technical
cooperation

- Climate change
- Human Rights and
Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

"Education in times of emergencies and crisis toolkit - EDURES", a new policy-making tool for education actors developed to implement the ministerial resolution on Education at times of Emergencies and Crisis, promotes a holistic understanding of the role of education in community resilience and robustness. On the one hand, it enables public authorities to assess the resilience of education systems under stress and to identify relevant actions to improve it. On the other hand, the competencies and assets of education systems should complement resilience-based contingency and strategic planning at the community level. In that respect, the environmental crisis is seen as the lasting or permanent crisis impacting the education systems. The implementation of the ministerial resolution and of the toolkit will contribute towards building more resilient education systems.

Currently, the Toolkit is piloted in Friuli-Venezia-Giulia (Italy) and Albania and the results and findings stemming from the piloting will be presented to the CD-EDU in Spring 2025.

Future activities (question 2):

EDURES could address a number of long-lasting crisis situations, including the environmental crisis and climate change.

Education Strategy 2024-2030

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Co-operation with the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement in the implementation of the ministerial resolution on Education at times of Emergencies and crisis.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

Furthering co-operation with PACE, the Congress and Youth Department to promote greener education, including within the context of the Education Strategy 2024-2030.

Co-operation with the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement with regard to the topic of natural & technological disasters in the context of the implementation of the EDURES Toolkit.

31. Education Department/ Division for Formal and Non-formal Education/ European Space for Citizenship Education Unit

- Standard setting
- Technical cooperation

- Triple planetary crisis

Existing activities (question 1):

In 2023, the Education Department launched a new initiative to develop guidance on the integration of the [Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture \(RFCDC\)](#) and its associated 'butterfly' of competences with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). A Working Group, composed of education experts from 20 member States and observer organisations of the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU), was formed to contribute to this [initiative](#). This collaborative effort is expected to continue throughout 2024 and 2025.

Furthermore, the Council of Europe has launched the [European Space for Citizenship Education](#), a new initiative aimed at providing a framework for ensuring quality citizenship education across Europe. This initiative, introduced by member States during the 26th session of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education, will help address the current and future challenges facing European societies. It seeks to foster a higher level of commitment among member States, promoting a culture of democracy and preparing active, responsible citizens for participation in democratic life. ESD will be integrated into this initiative. On 17-18 October 2024, the Council of Europe, in cooperation with the German Federal Foreign Office and other key partners, launched the preparatory phase at an international conference in Berlin.

Future activities (question 2):

Further development of activities to support ESD.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Specific activities to fight against environmental degradation and climate change could be envisaged in cooperation with the North-South Centre, the Bern Convention Secretariat and the Youth Department to encourage and support youth activism and the implementation by member States of the Recommendation on climate action and young people.

Points out the following cross-sectoral activities within the environmental field currently being implemented (question 4):

Exchanging with the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, which published the "Global Education Guidelines", and the Youth Department.

Youth

32. Youth-Education, Training and Co-operation Division

- Technical co-operation

- Climate change
- Human Rights and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

Study sessions held at the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest; educational resources on human rights and environment.

Study session - Right to a healthy environment, a young activist's perspective - in co-operation with Youth and Environment Europe (YEE), European Youth Centre Budapest 27 May - 1 June 2024

Future activities (question 2):

Study sessions held at the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest - organised in co-operation with youth organisations on the basis of open calls.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Conference or symposium on supporting/defending youth action and activism related to climate change and environmental human rights.

33. European Youth Foundation (EYF)

- Technical co-
operation

- Climate change
- Human rights and
Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

The EYF provides grants and advice to youth civil society organisations for their projects that address the impact of the climate crisis and environmental degradation on young people and democracy, and the right of young people to benefit from a healthy environment. In 2024, the EYF is funding projects from national and international youth NGOs in Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, France, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain that promote youth activism and youth climate action, or help young people become aware of the importance of their participation in the public debate so that they can become active citizens capable of taking action in the face of climate change. Some EYF-supported projects focus on understanding the impact of climate change on young people's mental health, the psychological aspects of eco-anxiety, its potential consequences and strategies to address it. Others promote the involvement and empowerment of young people from marginalised or rural backgrounds in local decision-making processes for environmental protection and action within local communities. Some initiatives address climate change with a gender-sensitive approach, focusing on the realities of LGBTQ+ young people.

Future activities (question 2):

The EYF is in the process of upgrading its grant programmes. In order to strengthen the sustainability of youth projects and the outcomes of the EYF grants, the Foundation will increase its efforts to incentivise environmentally responsible practices and promote greener alternatives in the implementation of activities.

The Foundation will continue to fund youth projects and educational activities of youth NGOs, addressing environmental issues, the climate crisis, supporting youth participation and protecting environment.

34. Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ),
Youth Department, Youth Policy
Division

- Standard setting

- Human Rights
and Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

Draft CM recommendation on young people and climate action, adopted by the CMJ at its 50th meeting (9 and 10 April 2024).

Future activities (question 2):

Will depend on the adoption of the CM rec; dissemination of the recommendation is foreseen in the CMJ's deliverables.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Possible study session in 2025 linked to the theme, depending on applications submitted by youth organisations and the decisions taken by the co-managed youth statutory bodies.

Points out the following cross-sectoral activities within the environmental field currently being implemented (question 4):

None currently by the youth statutory bodies, however, see the symposium on Young people, democracy and climate, organised by the Youth Partnership on 24-26 September 2024.

35. EU-CoE Youth Partnership

- Technical
cooperation

- Climate change
- Human Rights and
Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

The Youth Partnership is a long-term co-operation programme between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the youth field. It has been working on the topic of climate since 2017: [T-kit on sustainability and youth work](#), Greening the youth sector [Sustainability checklist](#) (including the [video](#) and podcast), analytical paper [Disobedient youth: Lessons from the youth climate strike movement](#) (2022) and videos [What's up with the youth climate strike movement?](#) and [Zero waste movement and young people](#). The Youth Partnership has also published an issue of [Coyote youth work magazine issue #35 on sustainability](#) (2023) and has conducted research on [Sustainability and learning mobility](#).

Within its current workplan, it is implementing activities related to the Symposium: [Young people, democracy and climate action](#) (24-26 September 2024, Strasbourg), including the publication of the [Youth Knowledge Book "Youth and democracy in the climate crisis"](#), research papers on [youth and climate litigation](#), and on [youth climate emotions and eco-anxiety](#).

Future activities (question 2):

The Youth Partnership will continue working on this topic with the promotion of the Youth Knowledge book and resources arising from the Symposium, including the Compendium of practices related to young people, sustainability and climate change, the report of the symposium and the recording of a podcast on youth climate action.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Training activities for youth organisations based on sustainability checklist and activities focused on intersectionality and climate crisis.

Culture and cultural heritage

36. Culture and Cultural Heritage Unit, Democratic Institutions and Freedoms
Department, Culture and Heritage
for Democracy Division

- Standard setting

- Triple planetary
crisis

- Climate change

Existing activities (question 1):

Follow-up of the "[L.I.N.K.E.D](#)" - guiding principles for an integrated approach to culture, nature and landscape management.

Future activities (question 2):

Collection of existing good practices in member States related to the LINKED guidelines.

Points out the following cross-sectoral activities within the environmental field currently being implemented (question 4):

Continuing the collaboration with the Landscape sector and the Bern Convention secretariat, pertaining previously to the same Department than Culture and Heritage, due to the obvious link between the concerns of all these three sectors.

Common services and general administration

37. Legal Advice and Litigation Department – Legal Advice Division (DLAPIL)

- Support service

- Triple planetary
crisis
- Human Rights
and Environment

DLAPIL's main responsibility is to advise the Secretary General and the major administrative entities on all legal matters, especially on such theoretical and practical problems of international and national law as may arise. Against this backdrop, DLAPIL does not carry out activities related to the environment as such. That said, in fulfilling its mandate, DLAPIL may be requested to provide advice on matters which may relate, directly or indirectly, with the Council of Europe activities in the environmental field and, more broadly, on issues connected with environmental matters.

As part of its mandate, DLAPIL also coordinates the work of the Committee of Legal Advisers on Public International Law (CAHDI) and provides its Secretariat. The CAHDI serves as a forum for the discussion of public international law issues, including environmental issues. For example, at its September 2023 meeting, the CAHDI held an exchange of views with a member of the International Law Commission on "Sea level rise in relation to international law". In addition, the CAHDI prepares opinions at the request of the Committee of Ministers on matters within its remit, which may include issues related to international law and the environment.

38. Directorate of Human Resources

- Support service

- Triple planetary crisis

Existing activities (question 1):

- Recruitment - a maximum of remote interviews minimise travel and reduce carbon footprint of the Organisation.
- Flexratio for office allocation - supporting change management; ultimately save on space, heating, etc.
- Working conditions – teleworking.
- Performance - diversity and inclusion form part of top management's standard objectives.
- Equal opportunities - giving equal opportunities to staff as reflected in rules, policies and practices.
- Drastically reduced the number of training related missions (for staff and trainers) via increased use of virtual classrooms.

Future activities (question 2):

(for consideration in People Strategy 2024-27)

- Diversity and inclusion - improve our inclusion of vulnerable populations (socially disadvantaged origins, migrants, disabled persons...).
- Training - potentially provide further support in terms of environment-related training needs.
- Teleworking - finalise rule on teleworking (contribute to less travel by staff commuting, allowing for more flexibility regarding teleworking outside of duty station, thus reducing travel to and from headquarters to other locations in member countries).
- Performance and encouraging the right "tone from the top" - ensuring that top management's standard objectives include contributions to sustainable development goals of the CoE, and addressing social objectives such as inclusion.

39. Directorate of General Services

- Support service**- Triple planetary
crisis****Existing activities (question 1):**

- GEDD - Working Group on Sustainable development (DGA).
- Lead by example: for this challenge, the main contribution of the DGA is the implementation of the sustainable development roadmap within the CoE and the reduction of the carbon footprint, coordinated by the GEDD.

Future activities (question 2):

- Carbon footprint of the activities monitoring.

40. Interpreting, Travel, Events and
Multimedia Department

- Support service

- Triple planetary
crisis

Existing activities (question 1):

Measures taken to reduce the carbon footprint of the Organisation related to travel and to meetings (hybrid and fully online).

Future activities (question 2):

An events policy that includes a travel policy to provide a framework for the most environment-friendly format of meetings, depending on their purpose and expected outcome.

Proposes the following cross-sectoral initiatives for the future which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 5):

An event policy including a travel policy that applies to all events and participants in events of the Organisation.

41. Procurement Unit (Common
Procurement and Finance
Department - MAF)

- Support service

- Triple planetary
crisis

Existing activities (question 1):

DGA - Outcome 5 - "Percentage of providers having approved the sustainable procurement charter". This KPI will enable Procurement Unit to follow the number of providers, working with the Organisation, that support the sustainable procurement charter.

Future activities (question 2):

Opportunities to add new/more detailed criteria to CoE call for tenders.

42. Directorate of Communications

- Support service

- Triple planetary
crisis
- Human Rights and
Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

A special web page on protecting the environment using human rights law was created in 2020 as a first attempt at a central point for accessing information, news and reference documents on the topic from across the organisation ([Protecting the environment using human rights law - Portal \(coe.int\)](#)).

A new section on human rights and the environment, including ten different cases-studies and a new animation, was also added to the website highlighting the impact of the European Convention on Human Rights. The website exists in five languages ([Human rights and the environment - Impact of the European Convention on Human Rights \(coe.int\)](#)).

A thematic X account created in 2023 offers targeted content on the Council of Europe and the environment. Both the main account and the thematic account are posting information about the Council of Europe's activities on the environment.

Future activities (question 2):

A thematic page on the Council of Europe and the environment is being prepared, bringing together all elements in order to make relevant content easier to find. The aim is to continuously update it in the light of political developments and to include draft positions and "lines to take", in co-operation with MAEs.

The Directorate of Communications will maximise the opportunity of the upcoming strategy on the environment and its related action plan as a forward-looking occasion to promote the organisation's role in defending the right to a healthy environment.

It will prioritise the promotion of topics with political relevance and newsworthiness, including new legal instruments, to show how existing tools have benefitted millions of citizens across the continent and to promote success stories on social media.

Proposes the following new activities linked to the environment which could be included in the CoE Strategy or the related Action Plan (question 3):

Work with member states' authorities, diplomats, parliamentarians, young people and a range of other stakeholders will continue to provide content demonstrating the role and added value of the Council of Europe in the field of environment.

Encourage Member States to organise events to raise awareness of the organisation and its work on environment in the framework of the 2025 Council of Europe Visibility Days.

43. Department of the Directorate
of Programme Co-ordination

- Technical
cooperation

- Triple planetary
crisis
- Human Rights and
Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

DPC tries to approach environmental questions from three angles:

- Supporting projects which have environmental issues as a main topic, typically approaching the issue from a human right perspective.
- Mainstreaming an environmental approach in all cooperation projects.
- Implementing projects in an environmentally sound manner (e.g., reducing printing or producing visibility items in an environment-friendly material).

A specific project in the field of environment is currently being implemented – PMM3080 – Human Rights and Sustainable Environment in South-East Europe (DGI).

Future activities (question 2):

Numerous project proposals are presented above in the sections on PACE, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, DGI, DGII and EDQM. DPC stands ready to support such projects, in line with the Project Management Methodology.

44. Directorate of Political Affairs
and External relations (DPAER)

- Support service

- Triple planetary
crisis

- Human Rights and
Environment

Existing activities (question 1):

DPAER is responsible for providing the Secretary General, the Organisation's statutory organs, other bodies and Secretariat departments with advice and proposals for political and co-operation priorities as well as for relevant action, and it also provides policy planning support. DPAER, in line with CM decisions, thus contributes to the promotion and implementation of the CoE standards (which includes environment-related issues) and of the Reykjavik Declaration.

Appendix: Intergovernmental structure for 2024-2027

The table below includes intergovernmental committees established by the Committee of Ministers and operating in the course of the current programming cycle.

<p>SECURING HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS</p> <p>CDDH Human Rights · DH-SYSC ECHR System · « 46+1 » (as appropriate)</p>	<p>ACTING FOR EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND RESPECT</p> <p>GEC Gender Equality · GEC/ADI-AI Artificial intelligence, equality and discrimination · GEC/PC-eVIO Tech-facilitated violence</p> <p>CDADI Anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion · ADI-ROM Roma and Travellers · ADI-INT Intercultural inclusion · ADI-SOGIESC Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics</p> <p>CDENF Rights of the child · ENF-VAE Prevention of violence · ENF-JUS Multidisciplinary and interagency services</p>	<p>UPHOLDING SAFETY, SECURITY AND INTEGRITY OF SOCIETY AND PERSONS</p> <p>CAI Artificial intelligence</p> <p>CDPC Crime problems · PC-OC Co-operation in criminal matters · PC-RAC Criminal asset recovery</p> <p>CDCT Counter-terrorism</p> <p>CAHAMA Anti-doping</p>
<p>ADVANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE, GOOD HEALTH AND A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>CDBIO Human Rights in biomedicine and health</p> <p>EDQM · CD-P-PH Pharmaceuticals and pharmaceutical care · CD-P-TS Blood transfusion · CD-P-TO Organ transplantation · CD-P-COS Cosmetics and consumer health · CD-P-MCA Food contact materials and articles</p> <p>CDDH <i>Human Rights</i> · DH-ENV Human Rights and environment</p> <p>CDPC <i>Crime problems</i> · PC-ENV Environment and criminal law</p> <p>GME Multidisciplinary Group on environment</p>	<p>BUILDING TRUST IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS</p> <p>CCJE Judges</p> <p>CCPE Prosecutors</p> <p>CDJ Legal co-operation · CJ/ENF-ISE Best interests of the child · CJ-AV Protection of lawyers · CJ-OR Access to origins</p> <p>CDPC Crime problems · PC-CP Penological co-operation</p>	<p>ANCHORING DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN EUROPEAN SOCIETIES</p> <p>CDMSI Media and Information Society · MSI-eSEC Online safety and empowerment · MSI-AI Generative AI and freedom of expression</p> <p>CDDEM Democracy</p> <p>CDEDU Education</p> <p>CDEJ CCJ CMJ Youth Co-management system · CPJ Programming Committee on Youth</p> <p>CDCCP Culture, cultural heritage and landscape</p> <p>SUPPORTING AN EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE AND VISIBLE ORGANISATION</p> <p>CAHDI Public international law</p>

As an integral part of the Programme and Budget of the Organisation, the intergovernmental structure covers the quadrennium whilst keeping the current flexibility of the Committee of Ministers to create ad hoc or subordinate bodies over the period. Some structures (in particular sub-committees) might have terms of reference for a shorter period according to the tasks that will be entrusted to them.

The Committee of Ministers approved the terms of reference in the framework of the adoption of the Programme and Budget for 2024-2027 at the Deputies' 1481st (Budget) meeting on 21-23 November 2023.

The structure and terms of reference may be adjusted as necessary in the light of the mid-term review of the four-year programme (mid-2025).

The terms of reference of the steering and ad hoc committees, and their subordinate bodies, going beyond the period of the first biennial period of the quadrennium, were approved for the first biennial period 2024-2025. For the second biennial period 2026-2027, they were approved on a provisional basis, subject to confirmation of their renewal in the framework of the adoption of the Budget for 2026-2027.

Key features of the intergovernmental structure

Why an intergovernmental structure?

The intergovernmental structure lies at the heart of the Council of Europe and allows the direct participation of governmental experts in its work. It significantly contributes to the Organisation's core mission, which is "to achieve a **greater unity between its members** for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress", as stated in Article 1 of its Statute.

It is the main tool to develop **common policy instruments and legal standards**, thus supporting member States in building a common pan-European legal space, anticipating and addressing challenges in the field of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It enhances **co-operation** between member States through the exchange of knowledge, experiences and good practices and analysis of common and emerging issues.

It ensures a comprehensive multilateral and multi-disciplinary approach. It is the bedrock of the Council of Europe "**dynamic triangle**" structured around three dimensions (standard setting, monitoring and co-operation), a unique process in which each dimension complements the others. Intergovernmental work builds *inter alia* on the findings of the monitoring bodies and knowledge gathered through co-operation activities, and conversely provides acknowledged sources of guidance for monitoring and co-operation activities.

What is the intergovernmental structure?

The intergovernmental structure is composed of intergovernmental committees set up by the Committee of Ministers by virtue of Article 17 of the Council of Europe Statute. A first category includes committees directly answerable to the Committee of Ministers – **steering and ad hoc committees** composed of member State representatives of the highest possible rank in the relevant field. While steering committees have planning and steering functions, ad hoc committees have a more focused task. A second category includes **subordinate bodies** of steering committees with specific expertise on selected matters, composed of member States' representatives and/or independent experts.

Intergovernmental committees involve relevant international and regional organisations, civil society and other partners in their work.

How does the intergovernmental structure work?

The make-up of the intergovernmental structure is **priority driven** to ensure political relevance and is thus inextricably linked to the **Programme and Budget cycle** of the Organisation. The structure as well as the terms of reference of the committees are proposed by the Secretary General in line with the priorities for the Programme and approved by the Committee of Ministers together with the Programme and Budget 2024-2027.

The Committee of Ministers may also adopt ad hoc terms of reference at any time during the Programme and Budget cycle, providing a fair degree of flexibility to address specific and emerging challenges if the need arises. Terms of reference may be adjusted as necessary in the light of the mid-term review of the four-year programme.

The composition, terms of reference and working methods of the intergovernmental committees are regulated by **Resolution CM/Res(2021)3**.

Guiding principles and conditions for the intergovernmental structure

Steering and Ad hoc committees

- priority driven, aimed at building a common pan-European legal space, anticipating and addressing challenges in the field of human rights, democracy and the rule of law and at ensuring political relevance in terms of the key priorities for the Organisation and high-level attendance by member States and promoting intergovernmental dialogue at the pan-European level on topical issues. The involvement of specialised ministries is a key asset of the Organisation and the structure proposed for 2024-2027 aims at ensuring their continued participation in the intergovernmental work;
- clearly linked to the Programme and the priorities of the Council of Europe; and limited to the Programme cycle (no automatic renewal or prolongation).

Subordinate structures

- clear objective and mandate;
- linked to a specific priority activity (ceases to exist upon completion);
- limited to the Programme cycle (no automatic renewal or prolongation).

Adapting the intergovernmental structure to the Reykjavík Summit declaration

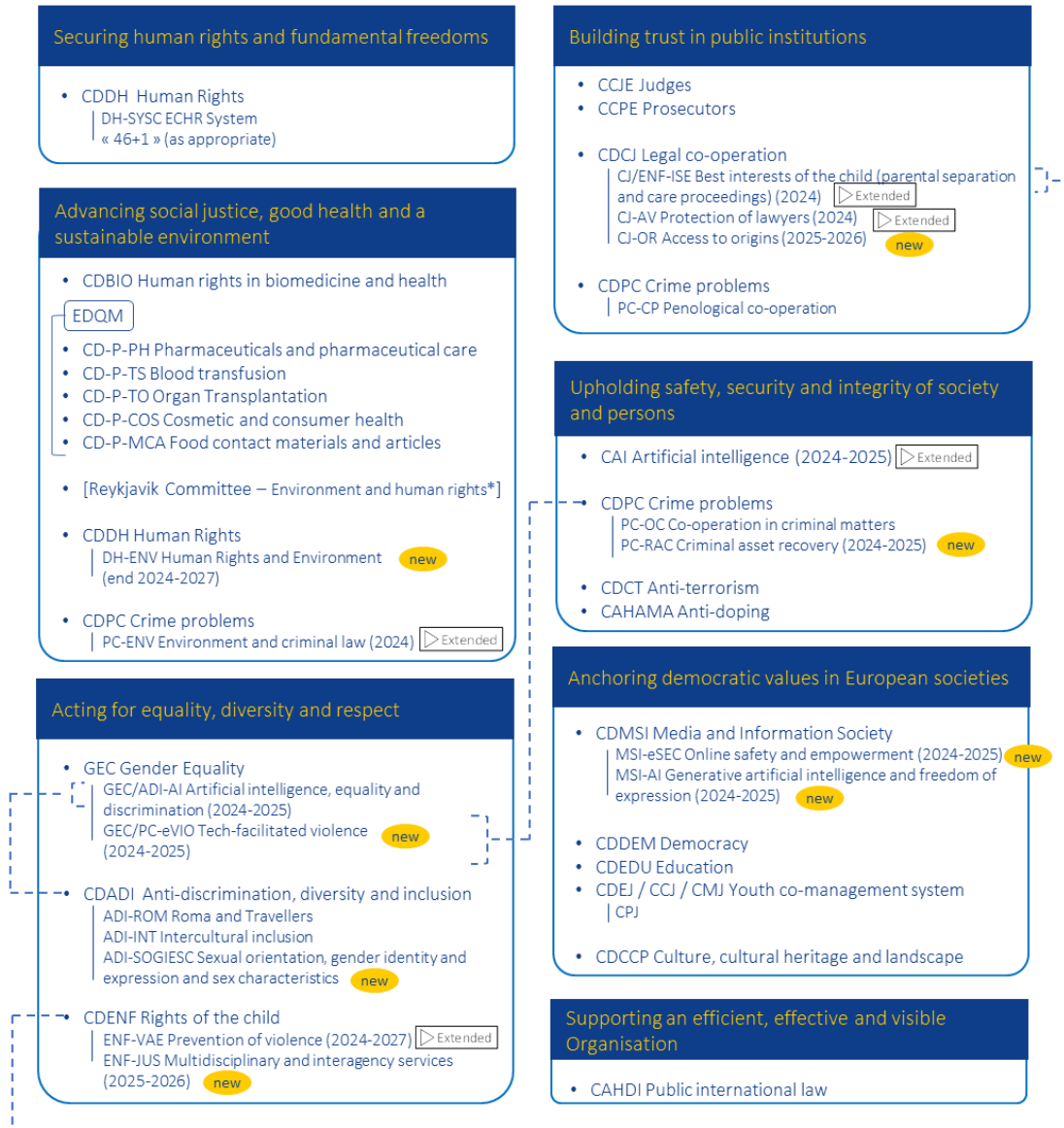
The Reykjavík Summit provides the fundamental guidance and direction for the Council of Europe's work. The structure is an integral part of the draft Programme and Budget and has been guided by those key decisions and documents. Relevant sectoral strategies have also been taken into account where they exist.³

Committees are responsible for the promotion of existing standards as well as the development of common policy instruments and legal standards to fill gaps and respond to emerging challenges in the field of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. They will also provide the opportunity for the sharing of good practice and knowledge, including on the implementation of standards, and remain sufficiently flexible to adapt to urgent and emerging needs. In this connection, committees will be asked to regularly evaluate their activities and advise the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General on future priorities in the sector concerned, including possible new activities and those that might be discontinued.

³ Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 ([CM\(2017\)148-final](#)) and draft Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029 under preparation, Strategic Action Plan on Human Rights and Technologies in Biomedicine (2020-2025) ([CM\(2019\)198](#)), Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025) ([CM\(2019\)161-final](#)), Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe (2021-2025) ([CM\(2021\)67-final](#)); Youth sector strategy 2030 ([CM/Res\(2020\)2](#)), Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2022-2027 ([CM\(2021\)168-final](#)), Council of Europe Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2023-2027 ([CM\(2023\)2-add-final](#)) and the draft Education Strategy 2024-2030 under preparation.

Changes in the previous structure of committees are shown in the following table :

Human rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law for all



* Subject to the outcome of the Reykjavik process.

Overview of the proposed main tasks of the committees by programme

Securing human rights and fundamental freedoms

CDDH Steering Committee for Human Rights (steering committee) with a focus on topical human rights issues (not covered by other steering committees), the effectiveness of the ECHR system and the preparation of standards on specific human rights challenges such as the eradication of impunity for serious human rights violations, the use of new technologies and the challenges posed to the protection of human rights by environmental degradation and climate change. It will continue to follow the accession of the European Union to the ECHR where relevant. The CDDH will be assisted by three subordinate bodies, including one presented under the programme *Advancing social justice, good health and a sustainable environment* (DH-ENV):

- DH-SYSC Committee of Experts on the System of the ECHR to perform specific tasks relating to ensuring the long-term effectiveness of the ECHR and evaluating the effectiveness of the system for the selection and election of the Court's judges;
- If necessary, the *Ad hoc* group 46+1 for the final agreement on the instruments setting out the modalities for the accession of the European Union to the ECHR (cf. CM/Del/Dec(2020)1364/4.3).

Advancing social justice, good health and a sustainable environment

CDBIO Steering Committee for Human Rights in Biomedicine and Health (steering committee) to assess ethical and legal challenges raised by scientific and technological developments, as well as by the evolution of practices, in the biomedical field and promote equitable access to innovative treatments and technologies in healthcare systems. This committee will also carry out the work assigned by the Convention on the protection of human rights and the dignity of human beings with regards to the applications of biology and medicine (Oviedo Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine).

In addition, in the framework of the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines & HealthCare EDQM, it is proposed to maintain the following steering committees aiming at delivering quality standards for safe medicines and health products and their safe use, thereby strengthening national competent authorities in their regulatory role of protecting public health:

CD-P-PH European Committee of Pharmaceuticals and Pharmaceutical Care (steering committee) to contribute to improving public health by developing harmonised standards for the appropriate use of medicines, promotion of pharmaceutical care and harmonisation of the classification of medicines for use with or without medical prescription, and by the minimisation of the falsification of medical products. The Committee will also fulfil the tasks of the Public Health Committee as set out in the Convention on the Elaboration of a European Pharmacopoeia (Phr. Eur. Convention), for the provision of common standards for the access to good quality medicines (innovative medicines, generics and biosimilars) in Europe and beyond.

CD-P-TO European Committee on Organ Transplantation (steering committee) to elaborate quality and safety standards and monitor practices and emerging challenges in the field of transplantation and application of organs, tissues and cells of human origin and support member States in the development of ethical, safe and efficient donation and transplantation services.

CD-P-TS European Committee on Blood Transfusion (steering committee) to address ethical, legal and organisational issues to ensure the safety and quality of human blood transfusion, optimal use of blood and due protection of donors and recipients and support member States in the implementation of harmonised quality management systems and technical standards.

CD-P-MCA European Committee for Food Contact Materials and Articles (steering committee) to contribute to consumer health protection by setting standards and developing policies for the safety and quality of food contact materials and articles, through harmonised measures that supplement EU and national legislation.

CD-P-COS European Committee for Cosmetics and Consumer Health (steering committee) to contribute to consumer health protection and respond to health risks posed by developing appropriate harmonised measures, setting standards and defining relevant policies, and in the field of market surveillance, promote technical collaboration in the field of market surveillance by the Network of Official Cosmetics Control Laboratories (OCCLs).

[**“Reykjavík Committee”** – Committee on environment and human rights⁴]: pending the outcome of the Reykjavík process and a decision by the Committee of Ministers and the possible establishment of such an intergovernmental committee to contribute to the development of common responses to the challenges raised by the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity for human rights, work in this area would be pursued by the GME, the CDDH and the CDPC and subordinated bodies.

GME Ad Hoc Multidisciplinary Committee on Environment

This Committee will prepare the Council of Europe Strategy on Environment and coordinate the Organisations’ work on environment as per its terms of reference.

CDDH Steering Committee for Human Rights (cf. above)

- **DH-ENV Drafting Committee on Human Rights and the Environment**
This subordinate body will develop instrument(s) in the field of human rights and the environment subject to the result of the on-going study on the need for and feasibility of such instrument(s).

CDPC European Committee on Crime Problems (cf. above)

- **PC-ENV Committee of Experts on the protection of the environment through criminal law (2024)**
This subordinate body will finalise the draft Convention superseding and replacing the European Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law (ETS No. 172) as well as a draft explanatory report thereto.

Acting for equality, diversity and respect

GEC Gender Equality Commission (steering committee) with a focus on the promotion of gender equality, as well as gender mainstreaming, combating all forms of violence against women and girls and domestic violence and, more generally, fighting discrimination. It will

⁴ Should a “Reykjavík Committee” be later created, its scope could also cover the work in the field of landscape covered by the CDCPP.

oversee and support the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy (2024-2029) (to be adopted). The GEC will be assisted by the following subordinate bodies composed of experts with the relevant expertise:

- GEC/ADI-AI Committee of Experts on Artificial Intelligence, Equality and Discrimination (2024-2025)
This subordinate body will develop, based on the results of the work of the CAI and subject to the results of the study carried out in 2023, a specific legal instrument on the impact of artificial intelligence systems, their potential for promoting equality – including gender equality – and the risks they may cause in relation to non-discrimination. The work will be overseen by the GEC and CDADI;
- GEC/PC-eVIO Committee of Experts on combatting Technology-facilitated Violence against Women and Girls (2024-2025)
This subordinate body will develop a specific legal instrument on combatting technology facilitated violence against women and girls as a concrete action to mitigate risks of negative consequences of the use of new and emerging technologies on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, in line with the Reykjavik Declaration and building on the 2021 GREVIO general recommendation on the digital dimension of violence against women. The work will be overseen by the GEC and CDPC.

CDADI Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (steering committee) to promote equality for all and build more inclusive societies, offering effective protection from discrimination and hate and where diversity is respected. This will include promoting and facilitating awareness raising of Council of Europe standards in relation to Roma and Traveller inclusion, national minorities, regional or minority languages, intercultural integration, combatting discrimination and intolerance on any ground covered by Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights, amongst others religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender identity, and combating all forms of hate speech and hate crime, offering common policy responses to the challenges faced by member States and strengthening the implementation and further development of standards. The CDADI will be assisted by the following subordinate bodies composed of experts with the relevant expertise:

- ADI-ROM Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues
This subordinate body will conduct thematic peer review visits and co-ordinate intergovernmental work in the field of Roma and Travellers, including supporting implementation of the on-going and preparation of a new Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion;
- ADI-INT Committee of Experts on Intercultural Inclusion
This subordinate body will conduct intergovernmental work in the field of intercultural inclusion and prepare a guidance document as well as a concept and methodology for peer learning and benchmarking; tools for capacity-building programmes for migrant integration will be developed, supporting the implementation of Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2022\)10](#);
- ADI-SOGIESC Committee of Experts on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression and Sex Characteristics
This new subordinate body, building on the current CDADI working group, will conduct intergovernmental work in the field of LGBTI equality and prepare a draft recommendation on the equality of rights of intersex persons, reviews of the implementation of Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2010\)5](#) and a draft Council of Europe strategy for the equality of rights of LGBTI persons.

CDENF Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (steering committee) will guide the intergovernmental work in the field of the rights of the child, with a special focus on strengthening children's access to justice, the protection of children from violence, impact of artificial intelligence on children's rights and strengthening of children's participation in decision-making. It will also oversee the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027) and contribute to the follow up to the Declaration on the situation of the children of Ukraine (Appendix II of the Reykjavík Declaration). The CDENF will be assisted by the following subordinate bodies composed of experts with the relevant expertise:

- ENF-VAE Committee of Experts on the prevention of violence
This subordinate body will review the implementation of the Council of Europe policy guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence, finalise a feasibility study on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education and prepare a non-binding instrument on the topic. It will also provide guidance on the prevention of sexual violence and harmful or risky behaviour by children, and review the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)10;
- ENF-JUS Committee of Experts on access to child-friendly justice through multidisciplinary and interagency services (2025-2026)
This subordinate body will prepare a draft recommendation on multidisciplinary and interagency services for child-friendly justice, including operational guidelines.

Building trust in public institutions

CCPE Consultative Council of European Prosecutors (*ad hoc* committee) to examine questions concerning the independence, impartiality and competence of prosecutors.

CCJE Consultative Council of European Judges (*ad hoc* committee) to examine questions concerning the independence, impartiality and competence of judges.

CDCJ European Committee on Legal Co-operation (steering committee) to steer legal co-operation in the field of public and private law among member States and to provide effective responses to new and emerging challenges in areas within its expertise, in close co-ordination and co-operation with relevant conventional and monitoring bodies and other Council of Europe bodies involved in areas of its competence and in synergy with other relevant stakeholders. The CDCJ will be assisted by the following subordinate bodies composed of experts with the relevant expertise:

- CJ/ENF-ISE Committee of Experts on the Rights and the Best Interests of the Child in Parental Separation and in Care proceedings (2024)
This subordinate body will finalise the preparation of a draft recommendation on the rights and the best interests of the child in care proceedings and tool(s) guiding the implementation of the relevant recommendations. The work will be overseen by the CDENF and CDCJ;
- CJ-AV Committee of Experts on the Protection of lawyers (2024)
This subordinate body will finalise the preparation of a draft legal instrument aiming at strengthening the protection of the profession of lawyer and the right to practice the profession without prejudice or restraint, which will set out a comprehensive set of minimum standards applicable to a lawyer's right to freely exercise their professional activities and ensure protection and independence of the profession.
- CJ-OR Committee of Experts on access to origins (duration 2025-2026)

This new subordinate body will draft a recommendation on rights of donor-conceived persons to know their origins subject to the conclusions of the on-going comparative study.

CDPC European Committee on Crime Problems (cf. below)

- PC-CP Council for Penological Co-operation
This subordinate body will conduct intergovernmental work in the field of prisons and probation, including with regard to radicalisation and violent extremism.

Upholding safety, security and integrity of society and persons

CDPC European Committee on Crime Problems (steering committee) to assist member States to develop modern criminal law and penal policies and to develop common standards in the fields of criminal law and preventing and combating all forms of criminal activities, covering both substantive and procedural aspects. A particular focus will be on the implementation of existing standards in the criminal law and penitentiary fields and on completing its work on criminal law and artificial intelligence, and on criminal law and the protection of the environment. It would review the implementation of the Action Plan on fighting smuggling of migrants. The CDPC will be assisted by five subordinate bodies composed of experts with the relevant expertise, including one presented under the programme above (PC-CP) and one presented under the programme *Advancing social justice, good health and a sustainable environment* (PC-ENV):

- PC-OC Committee of Experts on the Operation of European Conventions on Co-operation in Criminal Matters
This subordinate body will monitor and evaluate the operation of the conventions on international co-operation in criminal matters with a view to facilitating their practical implementation and improve the efficiency of international co-operation in criminal matters.
- PC-RAC Committee of Experts on Criminal Asset Recovery (2024-2025)
This subordinate body will draft an additional protocol supplementing the Council of Europe Convention on laundering, search, seizure and confiscation of the proceeds from crime and on the financing of terrorism (CETS no. 198).

CDCT Council of Europe Committee on Counter-Terrorism (steering committee) to oversee and co-ordinate intergovernmental work in the field of terrorism, including on radicalisation leading to terrorism, and to implement the Council of Europe Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2023-2027).

CAI Committee on Artificial Intelligence (*ad hoc* committee) (2024-2025) to finalise the Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and prepare a legally non-binding methodology for the Risk and Impact Assessment of AI Systems from the point of view of Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of Law (HUDERIA) to support its implementation. The CAI will continue to co-ordinate with other intergovernmental committees and Council of Europe entities addressing the implications of artificial intelligence in their respective fields of activity.

CAHAMA *Ad hoc* European Committee for the World Anti-doping Agency (*ad hoc* committee) as the pan-European forum to provide input in the World Anti-doping Agency.

Anchoring democratic values in European societies

CDMSI Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (steering committee) with a focus on ensuring freedom of expression, both online and offline, media freedom and the safety of journalists, with a special emphasis on challenges posed by generative artificial intelligence on freedom of expression. The CDMSI will be assisted by two subordinate bodies composed of experts with the relevant expertise:

- **MSI-eSEC Committee of Experts on online safety and empowerment of content creators and users (2024-2025)**
This subordinate body will prepare a draft recommendation on promoting online safety and empowerment of content creators and users.
- **MSI-AI Committee of Experts on the implications of generative artificial intelligence for freedom of expression (2024-2025)**
This subordinate body will prepare draft guidelines on the implications of generative artificial intelligence for freedom of expression.

CDDEM Steering Committee on Democracy (steering committee) to contribute to promoting democratic governance and countering democratic backsliding, with particular focus on enhancing citizens' participation in political decision-making. It will co-ordinate with other intergovernmental committees and Council of Europe entities in the follow up to the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy and contribute to enhancing the meaningful participation of civil society in the work of the Organisation.

CDEDU Steering Committee for Education (steering committee) to support member States in developing their policies, legislation and practice in view of promoting democratic, quality, inclusive and corruption-free education systems. It will ensure the follow-up of the 26th Session of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and oversee the implementation of the Education Strategy (2024-2030) (to be adopted).

Youth co-management structure

CDEJ European Steering Committee for Youth (steering committee) to develop and implement youth policies based on Council of Europe standards, thereby facilitating youth participation and young people's access to their rights in line with the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030;

CCJ Advisory Council on Youth (*ad hoc* committee) to act as the non-governmental partner in the co-management structures of the youth sector and advise the Committee of Ministers on all questions relating to youth and contribute to the integration of a youth perspective in the Organisation's work;

CMJ Joint Council on Youth (*ad hoc* committee) to bring together all the CDEJ and CCJ members, to prepare the policies, priorities and expected results of the youth sector and to apportion the budgetary means available in the political and budgetary framework established by the Committee of Ministers;

- **CPJ Programming Committee on Youth**
This subordinate body will establish the programme of youth activities of the European Youth Centres and the European Youth Foundation, in accordance with decisions of the Joint Council on priorities and expected results.

CDCPP Steering Committee for Culture, Cultural Heritage and Landscape (steering committee) to oversee the Council of Europe's intergovernmental work in the field of culture and cultural heritage and support member States in implementing sector-specific conventions and recommendations of the Committee of Ministers. It will devise policies and information tools for the sustainable management of culture and heritage resources and address the challenges of digitisation/artificial intelligence in its field. Landscape-related work at the intergovernmental level, including the follow up of the implementation of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention, will be continued by this committee. Should a "Reykjavík Committee" be later created, its scope could also cover the work in the field of landscape.

Supporting an efficient, effective and visible Organisation

CAHDI Committee of Legal Advisors on Public International Law (*ad hoc* committee) to provide legal advice to the Committee of Ministers in the field of public international law and constitute a forum for exchange and coordination among legal advisers of the Ministries for Foreign Affairs, strengthening the international rule of law and the coherence of the Council of Europe convention system through its monitoring of reservations and declarations.

Reporting lines for the intergovernmental structure 2024-2027

Human rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law for all

