Strasbourg, 11/02/2025 GME(2024)R2

AD HOC MULTIDISCIPLINARY GROUP ON THE ENVIRONMENT (GME)

2nd meeting
9–11 December 2024

MEETING REPORT

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING BY THE CHAIR OF THE GME

The Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME) held its 2nd meeting in Strasbourg on 9-11 DECEMBER 2024. The meeting was opened by the Chair, Ms Maria DIAMANTOPOULOU, she welcomed the participants.

2. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE 1ST GME MEETING, AND OF THE AGENDA OF THE 2nd MEETING

The GME adopted the report of the 1st meeting (GME(2024)R1) and the agenda of the 2nd meeting as it appears in Appendix I.

3. DEVELOPMENTS CONCERING THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The GME took note of the recent developments concerning the Council of Europe (CoE) activities on the environment presented by the Secretariat.

The GME was informed of the **internal strategy and Action Plan within the CoE regarding the organisation's carbon footprint** and leading to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The Committee of Ministers is currently working on the document.

Regarding the **Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)**, it adopted the following recommendations:

- PACE/Recommendation2273(2024) Towards Council of Europe strategies for healthy seas and oceans to counter the climate crisis
- PACE/Recommendation2286(2024) Guaranteeing the human right to food, referring its Resolution PACE/Resolution2577(2024).

Regarding the **Committee of Ministers**, it adopted a Recommendation on young people and climate action (CM/Rec(2024)6).

Regarding the **Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH)**, it completed its mandate on the need and feasibility of an instrument guaranteeing the right to a clean and healthy environment. The report and its conclusions were transmitted to the Committee of Ministers for consideration.

Dr Nicola WENZEL, representing the CDDH, reported that even though the report and its conclusions were discussed at lengths, Member-States were quite divided. Indeed, while some

supported an additional instrument, others contended that the ongoing development of the Court's case-law on this subject was sufficient.

Regarding the **European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC)**, it finalised the work on the draft Convention on the protection of the environment through criminal law. It has been submitted to the Committee of Ministers. The Convention is expected to be open to signature during the Council of Europe's Ministerial Conference in May 2025.

Regarding the **Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress)**, it adopted two recommendations of interest to the work of the GME:

- Recommendation 512(2024) Fostering a circular economy at local and regional levels
- Recommendation 510(2024) Local and regional responses to natural disasters and climate hazards: from risk preparedness to resilience

Regarding the **Bern Convention**, Ms Merike LINNAMÄGI, former Chair of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention, presented the latest updates concerning the Convention and notably the decision to modify the protection status of the wolf from "strictly protected" (Appendix II) to "protected" (Appendix III). She also mentioned the financing of the Bern Convention, which should be made sustainable despite a recent increase in the CoE ordinary budget but a noticeable reduction in the amount of voluntary contributions. The idea of a CoE Environmental Trust Fund was welcomed with interest by the members of the Bern Standing Committee.

Regarding the **Landscape Convention**, it held its 12th Conference in October 2024 which relaunched the activities and multilateral cooperation in the field. The Parties to the Convention approved a report and draft recommendation on Landscape and Health and submitted it to the Committee of Ministers for adoption.

Regarding the **European Committee on Social Rights (ECSR),** the GME was informed that the Committee was actively discussing social rights related to the environment.

It was also brought to the attention of the GME that the **Secretary General participated in the COP 29** in Baku, Azerbaijan, last November, and held several bilateral meetings with heads of States and the civil society.

The GME was also informed about the **financing** of environmental activities, and the fact that the Council of Europe relies on both its ordinary budget and extra-budgetary resources to fund its Strategy. While the core budget is limited, additional funds are essential to implement the Strategy's goals. Following the Reykjavik Summit, there has been an increase in environment related projects. The idea of a possible Trust Fund was raised. This Fund has 3 key parameters: Firstly, its supplementary aspect to the ordinary budget would ensure additional flexibility. Secondly, contributors would have the capacity to earmark their contributions while preserving the capacity for the non-earmarked contributions to serve the Strategy as a whole. Lastly, it would coordinate further synergies and cooperation projects.

4. COMPENDIUM OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE ACTIVTIES ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The Secretariat informed the GME that in the context of the Reykjavík process, the Secretary General decided to establish an Intersecretariat Task Force on the Environment. The Task Force was charged with a mapping exercise on current and future activities of the CoE on the environment. The compilation of the contributions constitutes the Compendium.

The GME considered an initial version of the Compendium at its first meeting and the updated version (GME(2024)2rev) during the current meeting.

The GME endorsed the revised version of the Compendium and requested the Secretariat to send it to the Committee of Ministers, as the first deliverable indicated in its terms of reference.

5. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH Ms MEROPI-SPYRIDOULA YDRAIOU, SPOKEPERSON ON ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE FOR THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Ms Meropi-Spyridoula YDRAIOU, presented the work of the Congress relevant for the GME work. She highlighted that local governments play a crucial role in addressing the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss, making decisions on a daily basis that impact the environment. The Congress contributes by producing reports on key environmental issues like natural disasters, circular economy, and water resources. It also published a Human Rights Handbook on sustainable development at the local level, sharing good practices from municipalities. She highlighted that the Reykjavik Declaration emphasised the need for cooperation between different government levels to tackle environmental crises.

The Congress proposed an Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government, aimed at increasing local authorities' awareness of environmental protection and integrating it into their daily actions. This protocol would clarify local and regional responsibilities, enhance governance, and promote resilience to climate risks. It would also offer training and support for local authorities and encourage the use of new technologies. The protocol would benefit member States by demonstrating commitment to multilevel governance, and its implementation could build on existing monitoring processes. The Congress believed the protocol, backed by member States, would be more effective than non-binding guidelines, ensuring that local authorities can leverage their strengths in environmental protection.

Ms Meropi-Spyridoula YDRAIOU concluded that local and regional authorities, as frontline actors, must work alongside national governments to achieve shared environmental goals.

6. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH Ms AOIFE NOLAN, CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

Ms Aoife NOLAN presented the role of the European Social Charter (ESC) in addressing environmental and human rights issues to the GME. While there is no equivalent to Article 46 of the European Convention on Human Rights, obliging member States to comply with the decisions of the ESC, the findings of the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) legal assessments of conformity or non-conformity remain significant. The ESC aimed to create a unified body of jurisprudence and standards.

Over the past year, the ESCR's work addressed issues like air pollution in mining companies, with the most important development being the recognition of the "right to protection of health" under Article 11 of the ESC. However, the right to a healthy environment was not fully developed in the complaint system, creating a gap. States were expected to apply the precautionary principle to environmental protection.

Ms NOLAN insisted that the Strategy needs to encompass the full scope of human rights and case law, especially as the ESC provides extensive protection of youth rights, which is unique in Europe. She noted that energy issues were not mentioned in the draft Strategy, despite their central role in climate change and the cost-of-living crisis. Reports highlighted the need to reduce financial burdens on vulnerable groups, emphasising intergenerational equity.

Two reasons were presented for including the ESC in the Strategy: it is the best instrument at the Council of Europe level for tackling environmental issues. Furthermore, its strong accountability system goes beyond climate litigation. The ESC has shown its ability to address contemporary social challenges and is crucial to ensure non-discrimination in areas such as socio-economic status, and geographical location. The Chair of the ECSR concluded by affirming the willingness of the Committee to continue conversing and collaborating on the draft Strategy.

Ms NOLAN's presentation was followed by discussions with the Member States from which it emerged that the integration of the ESC in the Strategy must be mindful of States that have not ratified it.

7. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH Mr TOMÁŠ BOČEK, VICE-GOVERNOR OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE DEVELOPMENT BANK

Mr Tomáš BOČEK informed the GME of the work of the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) and how the CEB has been addressing the social dimensions of the triple planetary crisis—climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. As a multilateral development bank with a social mandate, the CEB has evolved to focus on the intersection of environmental and social issues, aiming to protect human rights and promote social cohesion across Europe.

In 2023, the CEB integrated climate change into its strategic framework, financing social projects that promote climate resilience. The CEB focuses on sectors like gender equality, climate action, and digitalization. Around 60% of its 2024 projects include climate change mitigation or adaptation measures.

The Bank uses a "vulnerability lens" to prioritise support for the most affected populations, such as funding flood defence systems to protect communities in marginalised situations. The CEB also aligns its operations with the Paris Agreement, ensuring that its projects promote both environmental sustainability and social inclusion.

The CEB supports a just transition to a green economy, financing projects that reduce climate-related risks while fostering social equity. Indeed, there is a need for equitable and inclusive solutions, a sustainable economy must leave no one behind. The CEB expressed its readiness to support the work of the GME in tackling the triple planetary crisis through its technical expertise and financial means.

The intervention of Mr BOČEK was followed by a discussion with the participants during which multiple questions were raised, including how the Strategy could benefit from the CEB's experience.

8. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Ms Nela CERNOTA (Associate Human Rights Officer) made general comments on the draft Strategy, including the need for human rights to be central, the need for a greater focus on gender equality and intersectionality, businesses must be treated as duty-bearers in environmental and human rights protection and that she insisted on the need for the right to a healthy environment to be clearly integrated in the Strategy. Nature-based solutions must be carefully implemented to avoid exacerbating inequalities, and green financial tools should respect human rights, including gender equality.

Ms CERNOTA suggested that the draft Strategy should use the terms "individuals and communities in vulnerable situations" instead of "vulnerable and marginalised groups", have them participation in decision-making, and prioritise cooperation with other organisations to harmonise best practices.

Furthermore, transparency should include human rights impacts, and protections for Environmental Human Rights Defenders should cover broader threats such as arbitrary detention and violence.

Ms CERNOTA concluded by suggesting that, in the Action Plan, actions should be organised under each priority for better accountability and progress monitoring and that human rights should be integrated into all actions.

International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Ms Agnès MICHELOT (member of the WCEL Steering Committee) highlighted the crucial link between biodiversity protection and climate action, noting the European Court of Human Rights' role in expanding human rights protection. She advocated for the Council of Europe (CoE) to follow PACE's call (PACE/Recommendation 2211(2021) Anchoring the right to a healthy environment: need for an enhanced action by the CoE) for an additional protocol to clarify the right to a healthy environment. This right, she argued, was essential for environmental protection and should be based on four principles: duties towards future generations, the precautionary principle, non-regression, and collective rights.

She called for integrating the One Health approach into the strategy. One Health is an integrated, unifying approach that aimed to sustainable balance and optimise the health of people, animals and ecosystems, developed by the World Health Organisation. Strengthening legal indicators and promoting nature-based solutions aligned with EU initiatives were also key. Additionally, protecting scientific integrity, supporting participation, and defending whistleblowers were critical.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Ms Aiping CHEN (Special Assistant to the Senior Director) underscored the recent global discussions concerning the urgency of tackling the intertwined crisis of pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations and exacerbating inequality. She highlighted that the recognition of a healthy environment as a human right must be supported by stronger legal protections and that effective climate action also required inclusive governance, ensuring that all voices, especially marginalised groups, were heard.

Finally, she recalled that, robust accountability mechanisms were crucial to ensure countries uphold their environmental commitments. Ms CHEN concluded by highlighting that collective action rooted in human rights and the rule of law was essential for securing a sustainable future for all.

9. HEARING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

The GME held an exchange of views with representatives of civil society. The latter widely agreed on the importance of explicitly including the right to a clean and healthy and sustainable environment in the draft Strategy and to emphasise that people and nature were not separate. The critical role of civil society in combatting the triple planetary crisis was also highlighted and it was indicated that mechanisms for civil participation and transparency in dialogues with civil society should be further developed.

The presentations also focused on the need to adopt an integrated approach and to improve access to justice for vulnerable populations, as well as the need to train legal professionals on environmental challenges. International environmental crimes such as wildlife trafficking and corruption should also be considered in the draft Strategy.

The need for a binding human rights instrument was reiterated throughout the NGOs interventions and several of the organisations expressed their support for an additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights.

Overall, the civil society representatives welcomed the draft Strategy and emphasised that the Council of Europe must maintain its clear role in standards setting throughout this initiative.

The presentations were followed by discussions with the members of the GME on how to better integrate the recommendations and how to enhance support for the civil society.

10. HEARING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The European Youth Forum, the Young Nature Friends, Youth Environment Europe, the Young European Green and the Advisory Council of Youth intervened. Friend Justice, representing children, also made a presentation together with moving testimonies.

The Youth organisations all insisted on the central role they can play in promoting sustainability. Indeed, they put forward that they should not only be considered as future stakeholders but also be recognised as current citizens with a vital role in decision-making. They also stressed the need for accountability mechanisms notably regarding the activities of private actors.

Furthermore, the representatives of youth organisations shared concerns regarding legal abuses that environmental defenders face. To protect them, they proposed that access to justice and legal support must be reinforced. They also mentioned the vilification of environmental defenders and the preventive arrests some of them encounter.

Another crucial point in the hearing was that all children should have the same right to be informed and therefore climate education should be further developed and made accessible to all. Children representatives highlighted that the environmental crisis is a children's rights crisis as climate change threatens the most basic aspects of life and that no one should be left behind including young people who are mentally and physically impacted by climate change. They stressed that this was why a human rights-based approach was crucial. It was also emphasised that people with disabilities should be further integrated in the draft Strategy.

The Council of Europe Advisory Council of Youth explained that they were very active on environmental issues because it was a top priority for young people. Youth representatives said they felt generally positive on the draft Strategy as it builds on the Reykjavik Declaration. However, it was expressed that it was essential that the Strategy adopts a rights-based approach and while they called for strengthening youth-specific language this should not inadvertently exclude other groups.

The hearings were followed by discussions with the GME on how to concretely bring those concerns into actions. Environmental NGOs expressed support towards the propositions of the youth and children organisations.

The Chair of the GME thanked all the representatives of civil society, youth and international organisation as well as representatives of the Congress, ECSR and CEB that intervened, and highlighted the quality of those exchanges of views. She stated that the GME will consider these inputs in its subsequent work.

11. IDENTIFICATION OF THE CHALLENGES OF THE TRIPLE PLANETARY CRISIS: POLLUTION, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY LOSS, FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW IN MEMBER STATES: INITIAL EXAMINATION OF THE WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED

The Secretariat informed the GME of the results of the written contributions received. He announced that, considering the contributions received, it emerged that the triple planetary crisis is a systematic threat to human rights, the rule of law and democracy. The Council of Europe has therefore a clear role to play in addressing those interconnected challenges.

In total 21 contributions were received from members, participants and observers. It was recalled that it was very important for the CoE to capitalise on its historic strengths to have an overview of the challenges encountered. He also recalled that the CoE has a long-standing cooperation with other International Organisations and MEAs and that those synergies should be encouraged and deepened.

Member States stressed the importance of not duplicating what is already being undertaken in other instruments and other international fora, and that there should be a focus on the areas where the CoE has a comparative advantage.

The representative of the Conference of INGOs called again for the inclusion of the right to a healthy, clean and sustainable environment in the draft Strategy.

12. PREPARATION OF A COUNCIL OF EUROPE STRATEGY ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The participants to the GME discussed the text of the draft Strategy on the Environment. They made general comments regarding the draft but also commented specific points of the current draft (GME (2024)10).

Members of the GME agreed on the need to avoid overlaps with other international conventions or instruments. Indeed, it was reiterated that the Council of Europe has an expertise in human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and those areas as well as existing infrastructures must be focused on. It also emerged from the discussions that the text of the draft Strategy could benefit from being more specific, cohesive and shorter. Indeed, the members of the GME asked for more clarity notably regarding the recipients and timeline of the Strategy.

Furthermore, the members of the GME expressed the need for the Action Plan and the Strategy to match the text of the Reykjavík Declaration

Another key concern highlighted by the GME was the need to use the language that was internationally agreed on at Kunming-Montreal or used in the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).

The GME also considered that the notion of “stakeholder” in paragraph 6 of the draft Strategy should be clarified. While some advocated for a narrower approach, others favoured a broader approach to the term of “stakeholder”.

The reference to the Aarhus Convention was also largely discussed as many observers considered it should be included in the Strategy while some member States had reservations, considering not all of them were parties to the Convention.

Observers widely considered that there should be a better demonstration of the intersection of human rights and the environment through a right-based approach. They reiterated their call for the inclusion of the right to a healthy environment in the Strategy. The Youth organisations also reminded the GME of their key requests regarding the Environment notably the inclusion of Youth specific language and a wider role in decision-making processes.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), supported by several members of the GME, expressed that the Action Plan should be aligned with the Strategy instead of the Council of Europe Programme and Budget as some objectives, such as Business and Human Rights, were not reflected in the Action Plan. Furthermore, PACE added that the Action Plan should include concrete results, methods and expected outcomes to achieve the strategic objectives.

13. ELECTION OF A BUREAU MEMBER

The GME was informed of the departure of its Vice-Chair, Ms Nino LATSABIDZE (Georgia) from the Bureau of the GME due to her secondment to the Secretariat of the GME. The GME elected Ms Ruzanna GRIGORYAN (Armenia) as the new member of the Bureau in accordance with Resolution CM/Res(2021)3. Ms Charlotte BLONDEL (France) was elected Vice-Chair of the Bureau.

The new composition of the Bureau is as followed:

- Ms Maria DIAMANTOPOULOU, Chair
- Ms Charlotte BLONDEL, Vice-Chair

- Ms Michelle DUIN, Ms Ruzanna GRIGORYAN and Dr Ágnes Anna GÁBOR-HOSSZÚ, as members of the Bureau.

14. NOMINATION OF A GENDER EQUALITY RAPPORTEUR

The GME elected Ms Michelle DUIN as gender equality rapporteur.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no other business.

16. PRELIMINARY DRAFT AGENDA, DATE AND PLACE OF THE 3rd GME MEETING

The GME adopted the preliminary draft agenda for its 3rd meeting, which will be held in Strasbourg, on 11-13 February 2025 as set out in Appendix III.

17. ADOPTION OF THE ABRIDGED REPORT

The GME adopted the abridged report of this 2nd meeting as set out in Appendix IV.

APPENDIX I

AGENDA OF THE 2nd MEETING OF THE GME

9–11 December 2024
Council of Europe – Agora - Room G03
(opening at 9.30 on 9 December and closing at 17.30 on 11 December 2024)

1. Opening of the meeting by the Chair of the GME

2. Adoption of the report of the 1st GME meeting, and of the agenda of the 2nd meeting
[GME(2024)OJ2prov, GME(2024)OJan2prov, GME(2024)R1prov]

3. Developments concerning the Council of Europe
[PACE/Recommendation2273(2024), CM/AS(2024)Re2273-final, CM/Rec(2024)6, PACE/Recommendation2286(2024), PACE/Resolution2577(2024), GR-PBA(26/11/2024), GME(2024)13]

4. Compendium of the Council of Europe activities on the environment
[GME(2024)2rev]

5. Exchanges of views with Ms Meropi-Spyridoula YDRAIOU, spokesperson on Environment and climate change for the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

6. Exchange of views with Ms Aoife NOLAN, Chair of the Council of Europe's European Committee of Social Rights
[Vilnius Declaration]

7. Exchanges of views with Mr Tomáš BOČEK, Vice-Governor of the Council of Europe Development Bank

8. Exchange of views with representatives of international organisations

9. Hearing with civil society

10. Hearing with children and youth

11. Identification of the challenges of the triple planetary crisis: pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss, for human rights, democracy and the rule of law in member States: initial examination of the written contributions received
[GME(2024)11]

12. Preparation of a Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment
[GME(2024)10, GME(2024)1, GME(2024)3rev, GME(2024)4 (page 3-4)]

13. Election of a Bureau member
[CM/Res(2021)3]

14. Nomination of a gender equality Rapporteur
[GME(2024)12]

15. Any other business

16. Preliminary draft agenda, date and place of the 3rd GME meeting
[GME(2024)OJ3prov]

17. Adoption of the abridged report
[GME(2024)AR2prov]

APPENDIX II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / *LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS*

MEMBERS / *MEMBRES*

ALBANIA / *ALBANIE*	
ANDORRA / *ANDORRE*	
ARMENIA / *ARMENIE*	**Ms Ruzanna GRIGORYAN** Head of International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Armenia
AUSTRIA / *AUTRICHE*	**Mr Matthias KRESINGER** Department for International Climate, Energy and Environmental Affairs Ministry for Climate Action Austria
AZERBAIJAN / *AZERBAIDJAN*	**Ms Rugiyya MALIKOVA** Second Secretary, Department for Cooperation with International Human Rights Institutions, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan
BELGIUM / *BELGIQUE*	**Ms Sophie THYS** Legal policy advisor International and European policy for the Flemis Department of Environmental and Spatial Development
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA / *BOSNIE & HERZEGOVINE*	
BULGARIA / *BULGARIE*	
CROATIA / *CROATIE*	
CYPRUS / *CHYPRE*	
CZECH REPUBLIC / *RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE*	**Dr Pavel HLAVACEK** Officer Department of International Relations, Ministry of Environment
DENMARK / *DANEMARK*	

ESTONIA / *ESTONIE*	**Ms Merike LINNAMÄGI** Advisor Biodiversity Conservation Department Ministry of the Climate
FINLAND / *FINLANDE*	**Ms Charlotta VON TROIL** Senior Ministerial Adviser, Legislative Affairs Ministry of the Environment Unit for International and EU Affairs
FRANCE	**Ms Charlotte BLONDEL** Legal Adviser at the Human Rights Sub-Directorate, Directorate of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs
GEORGIA / *GÉORGIE*	**Ms Nino LATSABIDZE** Deputy Head of International Relations and European Integration Department Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia
GERMANY / *ALLEMAGNE*	**Mr Ralph WOLLMAN** Presidential offices International Academy Transformation for Environment and Sustainability at UBA (TES Academy) German Environment Agency
GREECE / *GRÈCE*	**Ms Maria DIAMANTOPOULOU** Ambassador, Head of Directorate for the Protection of Environment, Climate Change and World Politics, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, **Ms Aliki GKANA**, Rapporteur Legal Department Public International Law Section Ministry of Foreign Affairs
HUNGARY / *HONGRIE*	**Dr Ágnes Anna GÁBOR-HOSSZÚ** Head of Unit Department of Environmental Development and Strategy Ministry of Energy
ICELAND / *ISLANDE*	**Ms María Erla MARELSDÓTTIR** Ambassador Climate Change, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland
IRELAND / *IRLANDE*	**Mr Andrew MALONE** Department of Environment, Climate and Communications
ITALY / *ITALIE*	
LATVIA / *LETTONIE*	**Ms Anita TOCA** Climate Change Counsellor, Permanent Representation of Latvia to the European Union

LIECHTENSTEIN	**Ms Katherin WOLF** Trainee
LITHUANIA / *LITUANIE*	**Ms Inga AKSAMITAUSKAITĖ,** Advisor of the Group of the Environment protection policy coordination at the Ministry of Environment of Lithuania
LUXEMBOURG	**Mr Tom SCHRAM** Head of the Directorate for European and International Affairs Ministry of Environment, Climate and Biodiversity
MALTA / *MALTE*	
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA / *REPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA*	**Ms Mariana COVIC** Head of Financial and administrative Direction, Ministry of Environment
MONACO	**Ms Margaux GIRARDIN** Deputy to the Permanent Representative **Mr Gabriel CHABERT** First Secretary to the Permanent Representative
MONTENEGRO	**Mr Milos NIKOLIC** Director Directorate for the OSCE and the Council of Europe Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro
NETHERLANDS / *PAYS-BAS*	**Ms Michelle DUIN** Legal Officer at the International Law Division Legal Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NORTH MACEDONIA / *MACEDOINE DU NORD*	
NORWAY / *NORVÈGE*	**Mr Terje Birkrem HOVLAND** Research Coordinator Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment **Ms Anita GHOLAMI** Advisor at the Permanent Mission of Norway
POLAND / *POLOGNE*	
PORTUGAL / *PORTUGAL*	**Ms Ana Castela RODRIGUES** Senior Officer, International Relations Department of the Ministry of Environment and Energy
ROMANIA / *ROUMANIE*	
SAN MARINO / *Saint-Marin*	
SERBIA / *SERBIE*	

SLOVAK REPUBLIC / *RÉPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUE*	**Ms Andrea POLÁŠEKOVÁ** The Director of Legislative Affairs of the Ministry of Environment
SLOVENIA / *SLOVÉNIE*	**Mr Matija VIDMAR** Legal Counsellor
SPAIN / *ESPAGNE*	**Ms Sofía SANZ ESTEBANEZ** Senior Advisor for International Affairs
SWEDEN / *SUÈDE*	**Ms Gabriella MODIN** Legal advisor, Ministry of Climate and Enterprise
SWITZERLAND / *SUISSE*	**Mr Norbert BÄRLOCHER** Head of the Rio Conventions Section, Federal Office for the Environment (OFEV) **Dr. iur. Maya BEELER-SIGRON, LL.M.** Jurist, International Human Rights Protection Unit (IMRS), Federal Office of Justice (OFJ)
TÜRKIYE	**Ms İrde ÇETİNTÜRK GÜRTEPE** Head of Department Mınıstry of Envıronment, Urbanızatıon and Clımate Change **Ms Şeyma UÇAR SEÇGEL** Expert **Mr Sarp Ege ÖZPİRİNÇCİ** Deputy to the Permanent Representative
UKRAINE / *UKRAINE*	
UNITED KINGDOM / *ROYAUME-UNI*	**Ms Isobel COOK** Human Rights and Environment Policy Lead, Human Rights Department FCDO, United Kingdom

PARTICIPANTS / *PARTICIPANTS*

COUNCIL OF EUROPE ENTITIES / *ENTITES DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE*

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe	**Ms Aurora FLORIDIA** Italy Member of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development **Ms Claire DUBOIS-HAMDI** **Ms Aiste RAMANAUSKAITE** Committee of Social Affairs, Public Health and Sustainable Development

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe	**Ms Meropi-Spyridoula YDRAIOU** Greece Thematic spokesperson on Environment and climate change **Ms Stéphanie POIREL** Head of the Department Protecting Local democracy **Mr Guillaume LOISEAU** Co-Secretary of the Committee on the Monitoring of the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and on the respect of Human Rights and the Rule of Law
European Court of Human Rights	**Ms Zoë BRYANSTON-CROSS** Deputy Head, Office of the President of the Court
Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe	**Mr Andrzej MANCEWICZ** Adviser to the Commissioner
Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe	**Ms Amy JACOBSEN** Greenpeace International, on behalf of the INGO Conference **Mr Dirk GOTZMANN** Civilscape, on behalf of the INGO Conference
Council of Europe Development Bank	**Mr Tomáš BOČEK** Vice-Governor **Ms Tanja FALLER** Director of the Technical Assessment and Monitoring Directorate **Ms Christiane SCHIMECK** Executive Secretary of the Partial Agreement on the Council of Europe Development Bank

COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE ENTITIES / *COMITES DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE*

Bern Convention	**Ms Merike LINNAMÄGI (also representative of Estonia)** Advisor Biodiversity Conservation Department Ministry of the Climate Former Chair of the Bern Convention Standing Committee **Mr Jose AMENGUAL** Policy Advisor
CDADI	**Ms Cristina MILAGRE** Policy Adviser to the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) and Administrator of the CDADI Secretariat
CDPC	**Ms Eva PASTRANA** Head of Division of the European Committee on Crime Problems **Mr Radu PANTIRU,** Member of the European Committee on Crime Problems

	Ms Maeve BUCHIGNANI Trainee, European Committee on Crime Problems
CDDH	**Dr Nicola WENZEL, LL.M.** Chairperson CDDH-ENV Head of Human Rights Division Agent before the European Court of Human Rights Federal Ministry of Justice, Germany **Mr David MILNER** Head of the Human Rights Intergovernmental Co-operation Division
CDEDU	**Ms Helena KRUDER** Trainee, Higher and Further Education, Education Department
GEC	**Ms Roza Bella CSÉBY** Project Assistant, Gender Equality Division
ECSR	**Ms Aoife NOLAN** Chair of the ECSR **Ms Diana BALANESCU** Lawyer, Department of the European Social Charter
EUR-OPA	**Mr Krzysztof ZYMAN** Executive Secretary
Landscape Convention	**Mr Norbert BÄRLOCHER (also representative for Switzerland)** Head of the Rio Conventions Section, Federal Office for the Environment (OFEV)
Advisory Council on Youth	**Ms Agni GKOUTZIAMANI** Youth and Environment Europe – YEE on the CCJ **Mr Jannis GUSTKE** International Young Nature Friends – IYNF on the CCJ **Mr Sean CURRIE** Federation of Young European Greens – FYEG on CCJ **Ms Clementina BARBARO** Head of the Youth Policy Division **Ms Krystina JELINKOVA** Policy Officer, Youth Policy Division **Ms Anna-Sophie DIEDRICH** Trainee, Youth Policy Division

OBSERVER STATES TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE / *OBSERVATEURS PERMANENTS DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE*

CANADA	
HOLY SEE / SAİNT-SİÈGE	**Mr Nicolas BAUER** Représentant

JAPAN / JAPON	
MEXİCO / MEXİQUE	**Ms Eva PIZANO CEJKA** Deputy to the Permanent Observer
UNİTED STATES OF AMERİCA / ETATS-UNİS D'AMÉRİQUE	

NON-MEMBER STATES PARTIES TO THE BERN CONVENTION /
ETATS NON-MEMBRES MAIS PARTIES A LA CONVENTION DE BERNE

BURKİNA FASO	
MOROCCO / MAROC	
SENEGAL / SÉNÉGAL	
TUNİSİA / TUNİSİE	**Mr Hedi CHEBILI** Directeur général de l'environnement et de la qualité de vie, ministère de l'Environnement

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS /
ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES

The United Nations and its agencies	OHCHR	**Ms Nela CERNOTA** Associate Human Rights Officer
	UNFCCC	**Ms Aiping CHEN (online)** Special Assistant to the Senior Director Programmes Coordination division
IUCN		**Ms Agnes MICHELOT** Professeure des universités, membre du Steering Committee WCEL IUCN

OBSERVERS /
OBSERVATEURS

Organisation	**Nominated representative**
World Wide Fund for Nature	
Youth and Environment Europe	**Ms Emma PAGLIARUSCO** Advocacy Coordinator at Youth and Environment Europe.
International Young Nature Friends	
ClientEarth	**Ms Malgorzata KWIEDACZ-PALOSZ** Senior Fundamental Rights Lawyer, Just Societies
Greenpeace	**Mr Rodrigo ESTRADA PATIÑO** Acting Program Director / Directeur intérimaire des programmes Greenpeace Canada

Wild Legal	**Mr Vincent DELBOS** Membre Wild Legal, expert et magistrat honoraire
Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime	
Wildlife Justice Commission	**Ms Joanna CHOBLET (online)** External Relations Officer
European network of national human rights institutions	
Amnesty International	**Ms Ann HARRISON** Climate Justice Researcher and Policy Advisor
International Commission of Jurists	
International Federation of Human Rights	**Ms Maddalena NEGLIA (online)** Director of the Business Human Rights and environment office
Center for International Environmental Law	**Mr Sebastien DUYCK** Senior Attorney
Global Network for Human Rights and the Environment	**Ms Corina HERI** Deputy Director for Europe
Green Rights Coalition	**Ms Juliette DESSAGNE** **Ms Ambre ZWETYENGA** Advocacy assistants

SPEAKERS /
INTERVENANTS

Name	**Organisation**
Mr Callum HEDDERMAN (online)	European youth forum
Ms Mariama DIALLO	Child Friendly Justice – European Network
Mr Benjamin VAN BUNDEREN ROBBERECHTS	Child Friendly Justice – European Network
Ms Ioana MIHAILESCU (online)	Child Friendly Justice – European Network

SECRETARIAT /
SECRÉTARIAT

Name	**Position**
Mr Rafael BENITEZ	Director of Social Rights, Health and Environment
Mr Gianluca SILVESTRINI	Secretary of the Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment
Mr Mikaël POUTIERS	Co-Secretary of the Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment
Mr Michaël NGUYEN	Administrative and Project Officer, Department on the Reykjavík process and the Environment

Ms Jenny MITCALF	Administrative Support Assistant, Department on the Reykjavík process and the Environment
Ms Irina SPOIALA	Administrative Assistant, Department on the Reykjavík process and the Environment
Ms Ines CARTER	Trainee, Department on the Reykjavík process and the Environment

APPENDIX III

DRAFT AGENDA OF THE 3RD MEETING OF THE GME

11–13 February 2025
Council of Europe – Agora - Room G03
(opening at 9.30 on 11 February and closing at 12.30 on 13 February 2025)

1. Opening of the meeting by the Chair of the GME

2. Adoption of the report of the 2nd GME meeting, and of the agenda of the 3rd meeting [GME(2025)OJ3prov, GME(2025)OJan3prov, GME(2024)R2prov]

3. Developments concerning the Council of Europe

4. Preparation of a Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and its Action Plan [GME(2024)10]

5. Any other business

6. Preliminary draft agenda, date and place of the 4th GME meeting [GME(2025)OJ4prov]

7. Adoption of the abridged report [GME(2025)AR3prov]

APPENDIX IV

ABRIDGED REPORT OF THE 2nd MEETING OF THE GME

9–11 December 2024
Council of Europe – Agora - Room G03
(opening at 9.30 on 9 December and closing at 17.30 on 11 December 2024)

1. The Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME) held its 2nd meeting in Strasbourg on 9-11 December 2024. The meeting was chaired by Ms Maria DIAMANTOPOULOU.

2. The GME adopted the report of the 1st GME meeting and the agenda as it appears in Appendix I. The list of participants appears in Appendix II.

3. The GME took note of the Council of Europe developments concerning the environment, namely Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2273 "Towards Council of Europe strategies for healthy seas and oceans to counter the climate crisis", Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2286 "Guaranteeing the human right to food" and Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)6 to member States on young people and climate action. The GME was also informed of the outcomes of the 44th Standing Committee of the Bern Convention, Strasbourg, 2-6 December 2024 – the 12th Conference on the implementation of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention, Strasbourg, 29-30 October 2024 – the 101st meeting of the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH), Strasbourg, 26-29 November 2024, regarding the need for and feasibility of a further instrument or instruments on human rights and the environment – the 86th Plenary meeting of the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC), Strasbourg, 20-22 November 2024, regarding the approval of the draft Convention for the protection of the environment through criminal law which has been submitted to the Committee of Ministers for adoption. The GME was also informed of the Council of Europe's strategy "Carbon footprint, carbon trajectory, and action plan".

4. The GME took note of the Compendium of the Council of Europe activities on the environment (GME(2024)2rev) and agreed to transmit it to the Committee of Minister in pursuance of its terms of reference.

5. The GME considered the replies to a questionnaire regarding the challenges of the triple planetary crisis - pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss - and the analysis carried thereon and agreed to take it into account in the preparation of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment.

6. In light of the preparation of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment, the GME held an exchange of views with Ms Meropi-Spyridoula YDRAIOU (Greece, L, EPP/CCE), spokesperson on Environment and climate change for the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, with Ms Aoife NOLAN, Chair of the Council of Europe's European Committee of Social Rights, and with Mr. Tomáš BOČEK, Vice-Governor of the Council of Europe Development Bank and Tanja Faller, Director of the Technical Assessment and Monitoring Directorate. The GME also held an exchange of views with representatives of various international organisations, Ms Agnes MICHELOT (IUCN), Ms Nela CERNOTA (OHCHR) and Ms Aiping CHEN (UNFCCC).

7. In the same vein, the GME held an exchange of views with representatives of civil society and, observer NGOs, namely: Ms Emma PAGLIARUSCO (Youth and Environment Europe), Ms Małgorzata KWIĘDACZ-PALOSZ (ClientEarth), Mr Rodrigo ESTRADA PATIÑO (Greenpeace), Mr Vincent DELBOS (Wild Legal), Ms Joanna CHOBELT (Wild Life Justice Commission), Ms Ann HARRISON (Amnesty International), Mr Sébastien DUYCK (Center for International Environmental Law), Ms Corina HERI (Global Network for Human Rights and The Environment),

Ms Juliette DESSAGNE (Green Rights Coalition); and the Council of Europe Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations representative Ms Amy JACOBSEN (Greenpeace), as well as with representative of children and youth organisations, namely: Ms Mariama DIALLO, Mr Benjamin VAN BUNDERN ROBBERECHTS, Ms Ioana MIHAILESCU (Child Friendly Justice European Network), Mr Caillum HEDDERMAN (European Youth Forum), Ms Agni GOUTZMANI (Youth and Environment Europe), Mr Jannis GUTSKE (International Young Nature Friends), and Mr Sean CURRIE (Federation of Young European Greens).

8. The GME examined the preliminary draft Strategy on the Environment (document GME(2024)10). The GME welcomed the preliminary draft, took note of the various comments made by delegations which were invited to submit any comment of general nature, and specific amendments in writing (track changes to the Word version of the draft Strategy) to the Secretariat (GME@coe.int) by 31 December 2024.

9. The GME was informed about Ms Nino LATSABIDZE's departure from the Bureau and was invited to elect a new member in pursuance of Resolution CM/Res(2021)3. Ms Ruzanna GRIGORYAN (Armenia) was elected as member of the GME Bureau. Ms Charlotte BLONDEL (France) was elected as Vice-Chair of the GME.

10. The GME appointed Ms Michelle DUIN (the Netherlands) as Gender Equality Rapporteur of the Committee.

11. The GME decided to hold its 3rd meeting in Strasbourg, on 11-13 February 2025, and adopted the preliminary draft agenda as set out in Appendix III.

12. The GME adopted the present abridged report.