

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 29 March 2023

GT-A(2023)4

**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE  
(CDDG)**

**WORKING GROUP ON GREEN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
(GT-A)**

**REPORT OF THE 1st MEETING**

**Strasbourg, 2-3 March 2023**

Secretariat Memorandum  
prepared by the  
Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity  
Democratic Governance Division

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## **1. Opening of the meeting**

The Secretariat opened the meeting and welcomed the members of this new Working Group. The list of participants is set out in Appendix I. The Secretariat presented the terms of reference (GT-A(2023)1).

## **2. Elections**

The working group elected by acclamation Mr. Markku MÖLLÄRI (Finland) as its chairperson, and elected Mr Christos PETSIMERIS (Greece) as its vice-chair.

## **3. Agenda**

The agenda was adopted as it appears in Appendix II.

## **4. Conference**

The Secretariat presented an updated draft agenda of the conference (GT-A(2023)2). Overall, the working group welcomed the draft concept. There was consensus to change the focus of the first session towards priority areas for governments in light of global challenges. The working group discussed the audience for the conference and agreed that invitations should be sent to CDDG members and permanent representations. CDDG members were invited to disseminate the invitation to relevant colleagues. Furthermore, members of the working group were invited to propose speakers by the 17 March.

## **5. Tour de table**

The working group held a tour de table, which gave an opportunity to all participants to share information on activities in their countries and express preliminary views on the scope of work to be carried out. The following was highlighted:

- the delegation from Belgium presented the [Flemish Local Energy and Climate Pact](#) that envisaged amongst others co-design; a local climate portal was available to track progress and enable exchange of experience.
- the Czech delegation pointed out that the local level was active in the field of environmental protection, e.g. waste management, while at the national level no overarching approach existed and defining strategic investments was challenging; climate change was discussed in the context of inter-generational justice, yet there was no consensus in the society; mentioned that the Czech presidency of the EU had put light pollution on the agenda.

- the Finish delegation highlighted that the green agenda had the potential to divide public opinion; shared the sustainability strategy of the Finish Finance Ministry which included reference to biodiversity; mentioned that in the context of the Russian war on Ukraine, Finland intended to reduce its dependency on Russian energy and invested in finding technical solutions for environmental and climate change issues; highlighted good cooperation at the local and regional level on environmental and climate change policies.
- the Greek delegation underlined that due to its many coastal areas, Greece was vulnerable to the impact of climate change, and also had to invest in disaster response and preparedness (e.g. earthquakes, floods and forest fires); mentioned that the protection of the environment was under the Prime Minister's office and that the Interior Ministry had a department for green public procurement; referred to strong cooperation between the national and local level to deliver on SDGs, (e.g. SDG 12 – sustainable cities); referred to funding for transition of mobility sector to electricity.
- the Maltese delegation mentioned activities related to green public procurement and green infrastructure and related challenges, such as creating a market, in particular in the context of a small island; pointed out that awareness for environmental issues was relatively low, however, that Covid had provided an opportunity to increased environmental awareness amongst the population.
- the United Kingdom delegation mentioned the recent creation of a new department Energy Security and Net Zero and referred to its [responsibilities and priorities](#) on the national level and stressed that the local level was very active, too.

With regards to the scope of the draft report on Green Public Administration (GPA), the members of the working group suggested among others that the following issues might be considered: role of leadership; how to involve citizens, given that climate policies were often controversial / divisive; multi-level governance; balancing environmental and social concerns as well as the needs of existing and future generations; developing markets and investment opportunities.

## **6. Contributions by the Parliamentary Assembly and Congress of Local and Regional Authorities**

Mr. Armen GEVORGYAN (Armenia), General Rapporteur on Local and Regional Authorities, Member of PACE's Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development Committee stressed the importance and relevance of the work of the GT-A in the context of the work on environment at the Council of Europe. Mr. Gevorgyan also referred to the Network of Contact Parliamentarians for a Healthy Environment that had started its work, among others, with the aim to strengthen links between environment and human rights. Furthermore, he drew the attention of the working group to nine resolutions adopted by PACE with regards to climate and the environment, addressing different aspects. He also mentioned the PACE resolution from January 2023 on the [environmental impact of armed conflict](#). Mr. Gevorgyan suggested to conceptualise Green Public Administration (GPA) in the context of good democratic governance inspired by a 3-R approach: GPA should be responsive, responsible and relevant. He further proposed that GPA as a process aimed at finding a balance between technological progress and threats this progress poses to future generations.

Ms Inge HANNON, Current Affairs Committee, Congress, pointed out that environment was one of the priority areas for the Congress under its current strategic plan. She also emphasised the importance of the local level in delivering green public administration. She mentioned the resolution calling for an additional Protocol giving local authorities the right to be consulted. Furthermore, Ms Hannon draw the attention of the working group to the 3<sup>rd</sup> volume of Human rights and environment; to a booklet addressing children entitled "How to make your town a better place" and the [report on smart cities and regions](#) adopted in October 2022. She also mentioned that Congress intended to include issues related to the environment in its monitoring activities.

Ms Stefania PETROSILLO, Policy Officer in Brussels, Transboundary Parks Programme, EUROPARC Federation, representing the Conference of INGOs, briefly presented its work. Ms Petrosillo mentioned that EUROPARC could provide case studies, highlighting in particular cross-border cooperation and experiences from central Europe.

The following issues were discussed: cross-border cooperation; multi-level governance; need for internal dialogue within public administration and promoting cooperation among different authorities; and the key role of local level.

## **7. Draft report**

The Secretariat presented a background paper (GT-A(2023)3) compiling information on work done in the field of environment and climate change at the international and supranational level, as well as at the Council of Europe.

The working group heard an intervention by Mr Daniel J. FIORINO, Director, Centre for Environmental Policy, School of Public Affairs, American University, United States. Mr Fiorino argued that while all governments fell short of appropriate implementation of Paris Agreements, the best performing ones were democracies; among the reasons for this, he identified free flow of information and transparency, an active civil society, capacity to innovate and lower levels of corruption as well as strong institutions.

The ensuing discussion addressed whether the link between democracy and climate change was causal and correlational; what role media played regarding shifting public opinions, in particular in light of current fragmentation of media; the advantages and disadvantages of federal structures and of multiparty v. two party systems; how to involve the citizens, given that climate change was a divisive issue; the role of leadership in dealing with collective action problems, in particular "wicked problems" such as climate change; and the key role of the local level.

Regarding a possible definition of green public administration, Mr Fiorino suggested that green public administration meant integrating environmental and sustainability issues into decision making, e.g., in the fields of infrastructure, investment, budget planning etc. He pointed out that city administrations were at the forefront.

The working group heard a presentation by Mr Rafael JIMENEZ AYBAR, Senior Policy Advisor Environmental Democracy, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, United Kingdom. Mr Aybar presented the concept of [environmental democracy](#) and highlighted the importance of transparency, participation, and access to justice when taking decisions on environmental and climate change policies and moving from policy making to implementation. He commended the PACE report [More participatory democracy to tackle climate change](#) for its insistence on participation. He also referred to work carried out under the [Action for Climate Empowerment](#) (ACE), a voluntary work stream under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The over-arching goal of ACE was to empower all members of society to engage in climate action, through the elements: climate change education and public awareness, training, public participation, public access to information, and international cooperation on these issues.

The discussion centred around development and opportunities for developing countries to leapfrog to green solutions; climate finance; level of ambitions for national governments and people's expectation; need for democratic innovation to deliver on climate change for the benefit of all; role of local government; how equity and proportionality mattered for the acceptance of measures; impact of current energy crisis, among others.

Ms Eileen TORRES, Research Associate, Stockholm Environment Institute, Sweden, presented key findings of a recent study on [Green Public Procurement: a key to decarbonizing construction and road transport in the EU](#). The study showed that the inclusion of environmental considerations into procurement varied greatly between the eight countries studied (between 1% to 67% of procurements, 2020); there was a gap between ambitious targets and their implementation; in some countries, regions and municipalities showed examples of ambitious and innovative procurement practices. Ms Torres underlined that the environmental footprint of the public sector could be reduced and decarbonization of key industries supported by taking into account environmental considerations in public procurement. However, barriers to implementing green public procurement remained, including capacity building, monitoring implementation and impact, arduous processes and lack of coordination between ministries to name a few. She also mentioned that the [EU website on green public administration](#) provided guidelines, case studies and information materials.

The discussion centred around, among others, the need to change the frame of mind of procurers to integrate a life cycle approach and to understand best value for money not only in economic terms; role of post procurement auditing; challenges posed by lack of market availability for green products; role of leadership; lack of harmonisation of efforts between different levels of government; at local level, fear of litigation as green public procurement was a new field and expertise might be lacking.

The working group examined a **possible working description** to support and facilitate forthcoming work. The various suggestions were summarised in the following tentative draft:

*"Green public administration" (GPA) refers to decision-making processes at all levels of government (international, supranational, national, and subnational), that integrate environmental and climate change considerations, such as those stemming from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement, among others, in order to ensure a healthy living space."*

The following characteristics for a report emerged from the discussions:

- it should not be excessively long
- it should be practical with a focus on guidance
- the guidance is addressed to member States (*not to local level*)
- it should seek to answer the question, "how are environmental and climate change concerns integrated into decision making processes?"
- it should have an added value and not repeat work done in this field by other organisations.

The structure of the report could be as follows: a Chapter defining the concept and setting the scene; a Chapter providing examples from all levels of government; a final Chapter identifying possible guidance to member States when advancing green public administration. The principle of sustainability and long-term orientation could be a starting point.

## **8. Next steps**

**Regarding the work on the report on green public administration**, members entrusted the Secretariat to send out a questionnaire to CDDG delegations (countries, mainly) by means of the Rapid Response Service to collect further case studies. Respondents would be invited to submit short contributions highlighting practice rather than listing legislation. The deadline for responses should be 21 April.

The members also entrusted the Secretariat to prepare a draft structure of the report, to be discussed at the Bureau on 23-24 March and presented at the April CDDG plenary. The first draft of the report should be available by June for the informal meeting. The members agreed to finalise the draft report at its second meeting in October for adoption at the CDDG plenary 30 November and 1 December.

**Regarding the conference on green public administration**, members entrusted the Secretariat to update the draft agenda, contact potential speakers and prepare the invitations. Invitation should be sent to CDDG members and through permanent representatives in cooperation with the Icelandic representation. Members were invited to send proposals for speakers to the Secretariat by 17 March.

**9. Other business**

None

**10. Date of the next meeting**

The Group agreed that an informal meeting would be held on 21 June 2023.

## APPENDIX I

### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

#### **CHAIR / PRESIDENT**

Mr Markku MÖLLÄRI, Ministerial adviser, Department for Local Affairs and Regional Administration, Ministry of Finance, HELSINKI

#### **BELGIUM / BELGIQUE**

Mr Edwin LEFEBRE, Deputy Director, Ministry of the Flemish Community, Agency for Home Affairs, Brussels

#### **CZECH REPUBLIC / REPUBLIQUE TCHEQUE**

Ms Tereza ŠTALCEROVÁ, Senior administrative advisor, Department for Strategic Development and Coordination of Public Administration

#### **GREECE / GRECE**

Mr Christos PETSIMERIS, Head of the Department of International Relations (sector of Administrative Reconstruction)

#### **ITALY / ITALIE**

Mr Francesco GIUSTINO, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Ufficio Attività Internazionali, ROMA

#### **MALTA / MALTE**

Mr Kristian SULTANA, Senior Manager, Implementation and Green Public Procurement

#### **UNITED KINGDOM / ROYAUME-UNI**

Mr Paul ROWSELL, Head of Governance Reform and Democracy Unit, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Local Government & Communities Directorate, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, LONDON

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

#### **PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE / ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE**

Mr Armen GEVORGYAN, General Rapporteur on Local and Regional Authorities, Member of the Social, Health and Sustainable Development Committee

#### **CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE / CONGRES DES POUVOIRS LOCAUX ET REGIONAUX DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE**

Ms Inge HANNON, Current Affairs Committee



**CONFERENCE OF INGOS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE / CONFERENCE DES OING  
DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE**

Ms Stefania PETROSILLO, Policy Officer in Brussels, Transboundary Parks Programme,  
EUROPARC Federation, Brussels Office

**VENICE COMMISSION / COMMISSION DE VENISE**

Apologised for absence / Excusé

**GUEST SPEAKERS / INTERVENANTS**

Mr Daniel J. FIORINO, Director, Centre for Environmental Policy, School of Public Affairs,  
American University, Washington DC, USA

Mr Rafael JIMENEZ AYBAR, Senior Policy Advisor Environmental Democracy, Westminster  
Foundation for Democracy, UK

Ms Eileen TORRES, Research Associate, Stockholm Environment Institute, Sweden

**SECRETARIAT**

Mr Daniel POPESCU, Head of Democracy and Governance Department / Directorate of  
Human Dignity, Equality and Governance / Directorate General of Democracy and Human  
Dignity

Ms Alina TATARENKO – Head of the Democratic Governance Division / Secretary of the  
CDDG / Directorate of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance / Directorate General of  
Democracy and Human Dignity

Ms Judith ORLAND, Democratic Governance Division – Directorate of Human Dignity,  
Equality and Governance - Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity

Ms Isabelle ETTER, Assistant

## APPENDIX II

## AGENDA WITH ORDER OF BUSINESS

Meeting day 1	Thursday 2 March 2023	
1.	<b>9.30 Opening of the meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information by the Secretariat about the terms of reference and other matters</li> <li><i>Tour de table</i> for the participants to introduce themselves</li> </ul>	<a href="#">[GT-A(2023)1]</a>
2.	<b>Election of Chair and Vice-Chair</b>	
3.	<b>Adoption of the agenda</b>	[GT-A(2023)OJ1]
5.	<b>Roundtable discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributions by member States on current activities and work in their countries</li> <li>Identification of main issues</li> </ul>	
<b>Coffee break</b>	<b>11.00-11.15</b>	
5.	<b>Continue Roundtable discussion</b>	
6.	<b>Contributions by Parliamentary Assembly, Congress, others</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation of current activities on the topic</li> </ul>	
<b>Lunch break</b>	<b>13.00-14.30</b>	
7.	<b>Draft report on Green Public Administration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Background paper on green public administration</li> <li>Discussion</li> </ul>	[GT-A(2023)3]
<b>Coffee break</b>	<b>15.45-16.00</b>	
7.	<b>16.00</b> Can democracy handle climate change? Mr Daniel J. Fiorino, Director, Center for Environmental Policy, School of Public Affairs, American University, USA  Discussion	

	<p><b>17.00</b></p> <p>Environmental Democracy: participation, transparency and justice. Mr Rafael Jimenez Aybar, Environmental Democracy, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, United Kingdom</p> <p>Discussion</p>	
<b>End day 1</b>	<b>18.00</b>	
<b>Meeting day 2</b>	<b>Friday 3 March 2023</b>	
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>9.30 Resuming of work</b></p> <p>Continue discussion on Draft Report (scope and outline)</p> <p><b>10.00</b></p> <p>Key findings from recent study on "Green Public Procurement: a key to decarbonizing construction and road transport in the EU" Ms Eileen Torres, Research Associate, Global Agendas, Climate and Systems Division, Stockholm Environment Institute, Sweden</p> <p>Discussion</p>	
<b>Coffee break</b>	<b>11.15-11.30</b>	
<b>7.</b>	Continue discussion on scope and outline	
<b>Lunch break</b>	<b>13.00-14.30</b>	
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Conference on Green Public Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated draft programme</li> <li>• Next steps</li> </ul>	[GT-A(2023)2]
<b>Coffee break</b>	<b>16.00-16.15</b>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Continue</b>	

<b>8.</b>	<b>Next steps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working methods (use of informal on-line meetings, consultations by e-mail, hiring of scientific expertise...)</li> <li>• Possible timetable</li> </ul>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Other business</b>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Next date:</b> 2-3 October 2023 in Strasbourg	
	<b>18.00 Close of the meeting</b>	