The Chair, Mr Paul-Henri Philips (Belgium, Brussels-Capital Region), opened the meeting. He introduced Ms Sonia Sirtori, new Head of the Good Governance Division. He also welcomed Mr Yves-Marie Doublet, expert consultant, and Mr Gianluca Esposito, Executive Secretary of the Group of Experts against Corruption (GRECO). The agenda was adopted as set out in Appendix I. Appendix II contains the list of participants.

Mr Esposito thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the working group for the second time. The elaboration of Guidelines on public ethics were of paramount importance, especially if they could be used by GRECO in its monitoring work.

Mr Doublet supported Mr Esposito’s words. He recommended that the working group take into account the findings of GRECO monitoring, as instructed by the Committee of Ministers, and consolidate in one single, in-depth, accurate and comprehensive text the Council of Europe standards in the area of public ethics which were scattered in different documents.

The Chair thanked both speakers and recalled that Mr Doublet would be present for most of the meeting and would be able to take part in the discussions.

He invited members to proceed with the consideration of the draft Guidelines on public ethics. He recalled that, in his absence, the third meeting of the working group had been chaired by Mr Paul Rowsell (United Kingdom). On this occasion, the working group had modified the draft which had been previously submitted by Mr Doublet. Later, at its meeting of 23-24 May 2019, the Bureau of the CDDG had supported the approach of the new draft that the Guidelines should be a high-level statement of principles rather than a code. In addition, the Bureau had made a few drafting suggestions, which had been shared with all the members of the working group.

The Secretariat listed the documents which were included in the files recalling that, a few days prior to the meeting, Mr Rowsell had circulated a new version of the draft Guidelines taking onboard a number of comments, as a way to facilitate the discussion.

The working group decided to use, as a basis for its work, the document which had recently been circulated by Mr Rowsell.

After a general discussion, the working group carried out a detailed examination of the draft Guidelines on public ethics and gave concrete instructions for the finalisation of the text. It decided that the draft Guidelines would be submitted to the working group for approval by written procedure by early October 2019.
As regards the Guide on public ethics, the Chair recalled that, at its November meeting in 2018, the CDDG had provisionally approved its text. He opened the general discussion on the Guide. It was highlighted that some comments and proposals that had been made after the November 2018 meeting had not been included; that the language of the Guide needed editing; that examples were outdated and did not take into account the results of the GRECO monitoring; that definitions and notions should be reviewed to be aligned to those which were used in the draft Guidelines.

The working group then carried out a detailed examination of the draft Guide on public ethics and gave concrete instructions for the finalisation of the text. It also instructed the Secretariat to add example drawn from the document Greco(2019)5 – Codes of conduct for public officials. GRECO findings and recommendations. The working group instructed the Secretariat to revise the Guide in the light of the agreed changes and transmit it to the members of the working group by the beginning of October, for members to have time to add examples or propose amendments. The text would be subsequently submitted for final approval to the members of the working group by written procedure, ahead of the meeting of the Bureau of the CDDG, to be held on 24-25 October 2019.

The Secretariat pointed out that given the tight deadlines and the amount of work which was necessary it would not be possible to have the draft Guide translated into French in time for the Bureau meeting. The Secretariat also informed the working group that, should it be necessary to finalising work, the resources to hold an additional meeting of the working group or a more restricted group would be put made available.

The Chair took note and added that an additional meeting should be only a last resort.

The Chair opened the discussion on the feasibility study on the preparation of a Council of Europe indicator framework on public ethics. The Secretariat summarised the replies to the questionnaire. A discussion ensued during which the working group instructed the Secretariat to draft a feasibility study summarising the gist of the discussions that the working group had had, the replies to the questionnaire, and indicating how the public ethics benchmark of the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance could be used as a reference to set up indicators that the central authorities could use as a self-assessment tool.

The Chair thanked all participants as well as the interpreters. He closed the meeting.
APPENDIX I

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Report of the third meeting of the working group
4. Guidelines on Public Ethics and Revision of the 2004 Handbook of Good Practice on Public Ethics at Local Level
   a) Guidelines on Public Ethics
      • Presentation of the drafting proposals by the working group members
      • Observations by the expert, Mr Yves-Marie Doublet
      • Exchange of views and finalisation
   b) Draft ‘Practitioners’ Guide on Public Ethics
      • Presentation of the drafting proposals by the working group members
      • Observations by the expert, Mr Alan Doig
      • Exchange of views and finalisation
5. Replies to the questionnaire to member States on a possible Council of Europe indicator framework to identify trends and to allow member states to assess their performance in relation to public ethics
6. Conclusions
7. Other business
APPENDIX II

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