

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 18 November 2025

GT-P(2025)4

**STEERING COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY  
(CDDEM)**

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**WORKING GROUP ON PARAMETERS FOR THE APPLICATION AND  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REYKJAVÍK PRINCIPLES FOR DEMOCRACY  
(GT-P)**

**REPORT OF THE 4th MEETING  
(Hybrid meeting, 13-14 October 2025)**

Secretariat Memorandum

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The CDDEM's Working Group on Parameters for the Application and Implementation of the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy (GT-P) held its 4th meeting in person and online (via Zoom) on 13-14 October 2025, chaired by Mr Edwin Lefebre (Belgium).

## 1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all participants, the list of which appears in Appendix I. Mr Lefebre briefly reminded of the work done so far by the GT-P in its three meetings held in Strasbourg on 23-24 September and 9-10 December 2024 and 6-7 March, as well as at the 3rd plenary meeting of the CDDEM held on 26-27 May 2025, where the draft Parameters were reviewed by the Committee.

The agenda was adopted as it appears in Appendix II.

## 2. Discussion of the Parameters to facilitate the application and implementation of the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy and other relevant Council of Europe standards

The GT-P discussed a revised version of the draft Parameters prepared by the Secretariat. The draft incorporates the feedback received from 22 organisations during the [public consultation](#) held during the summer period. The meeting also examined comments received by 11 member states ahead of the public consultation: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and Ukraine, and from the Bureau of the European Committee on Legal Cooperation (CDCJ) and the Gender Equality Commission (GEC), as well as the European Union and by other Council of Europe entities, among them the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI), the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) and the Youth and Culture Departments.

### 2.1 Discussion of the introductory elements

Regarding terminological changes, participants agreed to use "people at risk of discrimination" across the document instead of "vulnerable groups/people in situation of vulnerability". Other wording modifications were agreed which provide further clarity but do not impact the substance of the introduction. Additional references to the Reykjavik Declaration were included as well as to the parameters' objective to be used for increased awareness and shared learning between member states and informing their future actions.

The introduction now offers clear guidance as to the objectives of the parameters, define the standards in a clearer way- and thus give better guidance as to how to use them in national self-assessments, etc. The working group underlined that the interpretation and application of the parameters should be in line with Council of Europe standards, notably the European Convention on Human Rights and the applicable case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

### 2.2 Discussion of the draft Parameters

The participants next discussed the revised draft Parameters, reviewing each section in turn.

Under section 1 (**Free, fair and resilient elections**) several additions were agreed to ensure closer alignment to Council of Europe standards, such as ensuring that elections are free but also fair, the need to ensure freedom of movement within the country, and under what conditions, restrictions are possible. Other additions included clarifications on the distribution of seats among constituencies, on measures to promote broad and inclusive participation, on processing of voters' data and on the initiation of referendums. The participants also agreed to include new sub-parameters on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other new technologies' influence in electoral campaigning. In this section, however, agreement was not reached as to the sub-parameter on the changes of the fundamental elements of electoral law. Two alternative wordings will be examined at the CDDEM plenary meeting in November 2025.

Under section 2 (**Freedoms of assembly and association**), the GT-P agreed to include an explicit reference to online freedoms of assembly and association with new sub-parameters covering these aspects. Clarifications were also agreed on the scope of possible restrictions to peaceful assemblies.

In section 3 (**Civil participation in decision-making**), the participants agreed with comments received during the public consultation on the need to elaborate and clarify better the conditions for ensuring the participation of citizens and civil society. Several parameters on local and regional competences (Section 4 – **Democracy at all levels**) were redrafted to align more closely to the European Charter of Local Self-government.

Participants agreed to wording clarifications in Section 5 (**Separation of Powers**) and to include a sub-parameter on the democratic oversight of armed forces and police. However, the GT-P could not agree on the sub-parameter referring to the conditions for constitutional amendments and therefore, the CDEM plenary will examine it during its plenary meeting in November 2025.

Following, under Section 6 (**Independent and Effective Parliaments**), the GT-P discussed in detail the question of integrity frameworks for parliaments and other elected assemblies with one delegation opposing language on the regulation of contacts with third parties. Other aspects discussed were the inclusion of a sub-parameter on limits to the use of accelerated legislative procedure and other actions to curtail parliament deliberations. The inclusion of these elements will have to be decided at the CDDEM plenary meeting in November 2025 as no clear consensus emerged during the meeting.

Section 7 (**Independent, Impartial and Effective judiciaries**) benefited, in particular, from comments by the CDCJ Bureau. GT-P participants agreed to the Secretariat proposal to have two separate set of parameters for judges and for prosecutors. The new wordings were discussed at length during the meeting. As a result, in Section 7 new proposals were agreed on the sub-parameters on judicial self-governing bodies, funding of the judiciary and judges' guaranteed tenure. The CDCJ wording proposals on the role of the executive and legislative branches in judicial appointments and discipline could not be agreed upon during the meeting and will have to be decided during CDDEM plenary meeting. On the parameter related to prosecutors, the concrete wording on the exclusion of political influence on public prosecutors is to be decided at the plenary meeting of CDDEM as one delegation had a distinct proposal.

Section 8 (**Fight against Corruption**) benefited, in particular, from comments by GRECO Secretariat. One delegation expressed their opposition to the inclusion of asset declarations for high-ranking officials in the sub-parameter in integrity rules for public officials and to the social reuse of assets. The same delegation opposed the reference to the independence of anti-corruption and anti-money laundering authorities. These proposals will be examined and agreed upon at the CDDEM plenary meeting as they did not garner general agreement at the meeting.

In Section 9 (**Political Integrity: Party Funding and Lobbying Practices**) participants in the GT-P agreed to include a sub-parameter with criteria for the potential allocation of public funding.

Participants agreed some wording clarifications in Section 10 (**Good Democratic Governance**) to align closer to Council of Europe standards and agreed to re-draft the sub-parameter on standards of conduct for public officials promoting ethical practices. They also added a new sub-parameter related to measures to protect and support public officials and others with a public function from harassment and intimidation. Finally, and following suggestions in particular from GEC, a new sub-parameter was added on gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting and on considering gender parity in the filling of leadership positions in public administration.

The GT-P discussed several wording suggestions by the Secretariat on the definition of online risks, particularly to minors under Section 11 (**Freedom of Expression**). Other wordings discussed referred to the sub-parameters on disinformation, the transparency and accountability of algorithmic systems and online risks to electoral processes, public debate, health and safety, especially impacting women and girls and people at risk of discrimination. Participants also agreed to include a new sub-parameter on the functions of media regulatory activities and new sub-parameters on cultural policies, the promotion of cultural engagement and the access to cultural heritage.

Section 12 (**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**) benefited, in particular, from comments from the GEC Bureau. Participants agreed to refer to “access to and enjoyment of” rights for all individuals and added further requirements and clarifications to enhance the sub-parameters referring to the promotion of gender equality and combating gender-based discrimination, including the addition of an intersectional approach to gender equality policies and gender mainstreaming.

The group acknowledged and appreciated the useful feedback received from the public consultation especially in section 13 (**Protected Civil Society Space**) and agreed to further clarify the elements of an enabling environment for civil society. It also added a new sub-parameter on the possibility of civil society organisations (CSOs) to organise themselves in associations, federations, etc., and another one explicitly mentioning that CSOs are not stigmatised or subjected to other adverse consequences solely on the fact that they receive such funding.

Section 14 (**Empowerment of Young People and Children**) was redrafted following comments received by the Youth Department aiming at aligning with Council of Europe standards and latest work of the organisation in this area. A dedicated sub-parameter was included on the importance of youth work and youth-led and youth-oriented organisations

Several wording additions were agreed by the GT-P on Section 15 (**Education for Democracy**) and Section 16 (**Sustainable and Innovative Democratic Life**) to add further precision to the text, although participants agreed generally to the content of these sections.

### **3. Preliminary discussion on a new deliverable for the biennium 2026-2027: framework for supporting the use of the Reykjavik Principles for Democracy**

At the last GT-P meeting on 6-7 March 2025, the Secretariat, with the support of Ms Seema Shah from International IDEA, presented a number of possible models for building an assessment framework to operationalise the Parameters. Although the Parameters have an intrinsic value as a holistic framework and a list of core standards of and requirements for a political system to function as a democracy, their actual implementation is key to advance the goal of applying Reykjavík Principles for Democracy in practice. The objective of the assessment framework is to provide a shared framework which will allow member states to learn from each other, share good practices and experiences on the basis of assessments accomplished using a reasonably similar process. Such self-assessments should also illustrate that the parameters are adaptable to different political and cultural contexts. However, due to time constraints, there was no opportunity to discuss the assessment framework during the GT-P meeting.

With that objective in mind, the CDDEM had discussed the addition of a new deliverable for the upcoming biennium 2026-2027: a framework for supporting the use of the Reykjavik Parameters for the application and implementation of the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy. The Secretariat informed that the work on this deliverable is expected to begin in 2026 and that they will inform of the next steps in the development of this practical tool that will enable those that may wish to engage in self-assessment with assessment criteria to apply the parameters.

#### **4. Next steps**

Members were requested to send their comments and questions to the draft Parameters to the Secretariat by 20 October (lunchtime) on the basis of the working document used during the GT-P meeting. The revised version incorporating these comments will be circulated by the Secretariat on 24 October. Any final comments must reach the Secretariat before the 20 November in preparation for the CDDEM plenary session on 26-28 November where the Parameters are expected to be discussed and adopted.

#### **5. Any other business**

While this was the last meeting of the GT-P working group, new deliverables are planned to be developed by the CDDEM by the end of the next biennium – subject to the adoption of the proposed Terms of Reference 2026-2027 – most notably, the framework for supporting the use of the Parameters. Therefore, new GT-P2 working group members are to be elected at the CDDEM plenary meeting on 26-28 November.

**APPENDIX I**  
**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

**MEMBERS / MEMBRES**

**CHAIR / PRESIDENT**

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

**AUSTRIA / AUTRICHE**

Ms Doris WAGNER, Directrice générale de l'éducation et de l'enseignement professionnel au sein du Ministère fédéral de l'Éducation, des Sciences et de la Recherche

Mr Peter ANDRE, Ministry of Interior, Senior Expert for Legal Affairs

**BELGIUM / BELGIQUE**

Mr Thomas APOLITO, Attaché, Cellule Elections et Participation, Service public de Wallonie, SPW Intérieur et Action sociale, Direction de la Prospection et du Développement

**CROATIA / CROATIE**

Mr Dino ZORIĆ, Head of Service for political and election system at Department for political system and public administration, Directorate for political system and public administration of the Ministry of Justice, Public Administration and Digital Transformation of the Republic of Croatia

**CYPRUS / CHYPRE**

Ms Menelaos VASSILIOU, Officer A, Ministry of Interior

**GERMANY / ALLEMAGNE**

Ms Constanze LERNHART, Ministry of Regional Identity, Local Government, Building and Digitalization of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Head of Unit 302 "Local Government Tasks, Territorial Structure and Interests in Legislation and Administrative Implementation"

**GREECE / GRECE**

Mr Dimitrios PONTIKAKIS, expert within the Directorate of Organisation and Functioning of Local Government

Mr Georgios CHRYSAFIS, expert within the Department of Organisation and Functioning of Second Level of Local Government

Ms Argyro MERKOURI, expert within the Coordination Service

**LITHUANIA / LITUANIE**

Mr Paulius SKARDŽIUS, Senior Adviser, Public Administration and Local Government Policy Group, Ministry of the Interior

**REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA / REPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA**

Ms Ana IONAS, State Chancellery of the Republic of Moldova

**MONTENEGRO**

Ms Bosiljka VUKOVIC-SIMONOVIC, Head of Division for the Council of Europe,  
Department for the OSCE and CoE/DG for Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**NETHERLANDS / PAYS-BAS**

Ms Anna BUNDALO

**NORWAY / NORVEGE**

Ms Anne-Karin ØDEGAARD, Head of Analysis and Evaluation, Norwegian Ministry of Local  
Government and Regional Development, Department of Local Government

**PORTUGAL**

Ms Tânia MOURATO, Deputy Director, General Directorate of Local Authorities

**ROMANIA / ROUMANIE**

Mr Claudiu IVAN, adviser, General Secretariat of the Government, Service for Strategic Support and  
Cooperation with the Civil Society Organisations

Ms Ursula NICOLAE, adviser, General Secretariat of the Government, Service for Strategic Support  
and Cooperation with the Civil Society Organisations

**SLOVAK REPUBLIC / REPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUE**

Ms Zuzana VIZVÁRYOVÁ, General State Advisor, Self- government Unit, Department of  
Modernization and Coordination, Public Administration section, Ministry of Interior

**SPAIN / ESPAGNE**

Ms Sol Ángeles González Miranda, Senior Advisor, European and International Relations Unit,  
Ministry of Territorial Policy and Democratic Memory

**SWITZERLAND / SUISSE**

Ms Sarah VITTOZ, Collaboratrice scientifique, Département fédéral de justice et police DFJP, Office  
fédéral de la justice OFJ, Domaine de direction Droit public, Unité Projets législatifs II

**UNITED KINGDOM / ROYAUME-UNI**

Ms Coralie BLATCHFORD-NAEVE, English Devolution-Oversight and Governance, Ministry of  
Housing, Communities & Local Government

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

Ms Ivi-Triin ODRATS, Deputy Head of the Elections Division

Mr Cesare COLOMBO, Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

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

Mr Niall SHEERIN, Deputy Head of the Centre of Expertise for Multilevel Governance

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW (VENICE COMMISSION) /  
COMMISSION EUROPEENNE POUR LA DEMOCRATIE PAR LE DROIT (COMMISSION DE  
VENISE)**

Mr Adria RODRIGUEZ-PEREZ, Division II, Opinions and Reports

**ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH / CONSEIL CONSULTATIF SUR LA JEUNESSE (CCJ)**

Ms Anja JOKIC, member of the Advisory Council on Youth

**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON LEGAL CO-OPERATION / COMITÉ EUROPÉEN DE COOPERATION  
JURIDIQUE (CDCJ)**

Ms Julie DEVYS, European Committee on Legal Co-operation

**STEERING COMMITTEE ON ANTI-DISCRIMINATION, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION /  
COMITE DIRECTEUR SUR L'ANTI-DISCRIMINATION, LA DIVERSITE ET L'INCLUSION (CDADI)**

Ms Charlotte GILMARTIN, Co-Secretary of the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI)

**FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND CDMSI / LIBERTE D'EXPRESSION ET CDMSI**

Mr Cesare PITEA

**GROUP OF STATES AGAINST CORRUPTION / GROUPE D'ETATS CONTRE LA CORRUPTION  
(GRECO)**

Ms Anne WEBER, Senior Legal Adviser

**INTERCULTURAL INCLUSION UNIT / UNITE INCLUSION INTERCULTURELLE**

Ms Nichola HOWSON

**OTHER PARTICIPANTS / AUTRES PARTICIPANTS**

**EUROPEAN UNION / UNION EUROPEENNE**

Mr Daniel FLEISCHER-AMBRUS

Mr Janne DEWAELE

Mr Florian DITTRICH

**INDEPENDENT EXPERT / EXPERT INDEPENDENT**

Ms Seema SHAH, Head of Democracy Assessment (DA) at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), Stockholm, Sweden

**SECRETARIAT**

**SECRETARIAT DU CDDEM / SECRETARIAT DU CDDEM**

Ms Urška UMEK, Secretary of the CDDEM / Secrétaire du CDDEM

Ms Marta BECERRA, Co-Secretary of the CDDEM / Co-Secrétaire du CDDEM

Ms Isabelle ETTER, Assistant / Assistante

**INTERPRETERS / INTERPRETES**

Mr Didier JUNGLING  
Mr Nicolas GUITTONNEAU  
Ms Clarissa WORDSALE

## APPENDIX II

## AGENDA

1.	<b>Opening of the meeting by the Chair</b>	
2.	<b>Adoption of the agenda</b>	[GT-P(2025)OJ2]
3.	<p><b>Discussion and finalisation of the Parameters to facilitate the application and implementation of the Reykjavik Principles and other relevant Council of Europe standards to promote, protect and strengthen democracy throughout the member States</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussion of the feedback received during the public consultation</li> <li>- Examination and finalisation of the revised draft of the Parameters</li> <li>- Discussion on the assessment model of the Parameters</li> </ul>	[CDDEM(2025)1]
4.	<p><b>Preliminary discussion on a new deliverable for the biennium 2026-2027</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Framework for supporting the use of the Reykjavik Principles for Democracy</li> </ul>	
5.	<b>Any other business</b>	