# Challenges and Opportunities for the Council of Europe Evaluation Function –Talking points of Margareta de Goys at High Level Event : Towards a new evaluation culture and policy, 9 November 2018

* Evaluation culture and professional and independent audit and evaluation functions are cornerstones of democratic societies, building on principles of good governance, including transparency, impartiality and accountability of institutions.
* This is particularly important for an institution such as the COE, building on principles of good governance, rule of law, democracy and human rights.
* Member of Oversight Advisory Committee; report to the Committee of Ministers and may advise the Secretary General, as appropriate on the scope, adequacy, effectiveness and efficiency of the Organisation’s governance system, including evaluation
* Annual report of Oversight Advisory Committee presented GRPBA meeting 4t October 2018 – Main messages;

The Organisation is at a juncture where important decisions need to be made for the future about strategic direction, policy and possibly significant budget cuts. It is important that decisions are informed and that evaluative evidence exists to provide information on programme performance a and which programmes/outputs achieve their objectives and on cost-effective approaches versus approaches which are costly and slow in achieving results. Evaluations should inform on whether the Organisation is delivering on its objectives and is attuned to deliver. However, in order for the evaluation function to increase its contribution, for improved effectiveness and efficiency of the Organisation, the coverage and scope of its work needs to increase and the independence of the function be improved.

* **Challenges** in relation to an evaluation culture needs to be seen in the perspective of challenges facing Europe and the Council of Europe in the promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.
* People suffering because their rights are violated have the right to demand efficiency and effectiveness, we have a responsibility, they have the right to evaluation.
* We need to know if we&COE are doing the right thing and are we doing it right?
* What works and what doesn’t in combating populism? In standard setting, monitoring and cooperation activities?
* Or, what are the reasons for success? Are there low-hanging fruits?
* Do we have evidence -based information to make bold decisions, about programmes, within the reform process?
* Today, insufficient attention to performance management.
* There are **opportunities**; today’s event, the reform process highlights efficiency and effectiveness issues, a new Evaluation Policy is under development, management showing commitment to evaluation, extra funding for evaluation, the evaluation work programme is becoming more strategic.
* Evaluation has the potential to play a more important role in guiding the reform process, allowing it to go beyond efficiency and cost-saving measures to a more holistic approach where assessments on goal achievement feed into policy and strategy formulation.
* Todays session is about evaluation culture and there is only one way to go – forward – an organization, such as the COE does not have a choice, it is a must, to walk the talk of good governance. The COE as a standard setting organization needs to adhere to best international practices.
* Europe believes in independent judiciary systems, and we are here today because we believe in principles of independent oversight. To meet its challenges, including the refugee crisis and threats of terrorism the Secretary General Mr. Jagland has emphasized that we need democratic societies where human rights and the rule of law are strongly anchored. Equally we need a COE evaluation function where the principles of transparency, impartiality, accountability and learning are firmly anchored. The AOC firmly believes that improvements are possible and an enhanced evaluation culture and a revised Evaluation Policy will contribute to increased efficiency in implementation and enhanced results in the promotion and protection of human rights, strengthening the rule of law, and strengthening democratic governance.
* The potential gains are many; evidence based planning and programming, cost-effectiveness, organizational architecture supporting the achievement of priority objectives, resources allocated to priority areas, where there are evidence of concrete result.
* It is important that the evaluation work plan represents a systematic coverage of COE interventions, reflecting key priorities. The opportunities for increased utility of the evaluation function are clearly there!
* The COE should not be in a second division when it comes to a professional and independents evaluation function.