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| **MINISTERS’ DEPUTIES** | CM Documents | **CM(2021)2** | 17 December 2020[[1]](#footnote-1) |

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| **1394th meeting, 3 February 2021**2 Current political questions**2.4 European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG)**a. Abridged report of the 12th meeting (Strasbourg, 25-27 November 2020)**Item to be considered by the GR-DEM at its meeting on 19 January 2021** |

**Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**

The European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG) held its 12th plenary meeting by videoconference on 25-27 November 2020 with Mr Markku Mölläri (Vice-Chair and Chair *ad interim*, Finland) in the chair.

The agenda of the meeting is set out in the appendix. The full report of the meeting including the list of participants, and documents considered by the CDDG are available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/good-governance/cddg>.

**List of items for decision by the Committee of Ministers**

None.

**List of items for information of the Committee of Ministers**

The CDDG held exchanges of views on a number of Council of Europe and national developments in areas relating to its terms of reference with

* Mr Ján Lazar, State Secretary, Ministry of the Interior, Slovak Republic;
* Mr Jari Partanen, State Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Finland;
* Mr Markus Richter, State Secretary and Federal Commissioner for Information Technology, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, Germany;
* Mr SeanDougherty, Coordinator of the OECD Network on Fiscal Relations, on the impact of COVID-19 on public authorities of all levels and on inter-governmental fiscal relations;
* Ms Claudia Luciani, Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance, DGII.

As regards the state of implementation of CDDG activities according to its terms of reference 2020-2021, the CDDG:

* heard a presentation by Mr Almir Sahović, Chair of the working group on democracy and technology (GT-DT), and by Mr Paul-Henri Philips, Chair of the working group on accountability (GT-RE), on the progress of work of the working groups;
* heard presentations by Professor Ines Mergel (University of Konstanz), expert consultant of GT-DT, on digital transformation in public administrations and by Professor Arnaud Duranthon (University of Strasbourg), expert consultant of GT-RE, providing an analysis of the replies to the questionnaire on the accountability of local and regional elected officials and bodies;
* examined a draft study on the impact of digital transformation on democracy and good governance;
* heard an update from Mr Peter Andre (Austria), CDDG Rapporteur on democracy and technology and CDDG representative to the Ad hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI), on the recent activities of CAHAI and its working groups;
* shared the view of the GT-DT that it should draft Committee of Ministers’ guidelines on new technologies and the different stages of the electoral process, rather than a recommendation; it also modified and approved the text of a questionnaire on new technologies and the different stages of the electoral process, and decided that it should be sent to its members, with the request that they consult competent bodies within their countries, including Election Management Bodies
* invited members to submit replies to the questionnaires circulated in relation to the working groups activities, as well as any relevant information, examples of legislation and case studies by 31 December 2020.

As regards the subject of democratic governance and Covid-19, the CDDG modified and approved for publication a report on “Democratic Governance and Covid-19” and decided to provide an update by the end of 2021, with a view to reflecting the evolution of the response to the pandemic by Council of Europe member States.

As regards the Rapid Response Service (RRS), the CDDG took note of a Secretariat memorandum and agreed on a set of measures aimed at increasing the visibility and accessibility of the information collected through the RRS.

As regards gender mainstreaming in its work, the CDDG took note of a memorandum by Mr Edwin Lefebre (Belgium, Flanders) and Ms Siobhan Smyth (United Kingdom), Gender Equality Rapporteurs, and agreed to consider, at one of its next meetings, internal guidelines on how to ensure gender mainstreaming in its work.

As regards the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, the CDDG took note of the achievements of the Greek Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers in the period May - November 2020, as well as of the priorities of the German Presidency for the period November 2020 – May 2021.

With regard to activities of other Council of Europe bodies and structures, the CDDG:

* took note of a Secretariat memorandum on activities of particular interest to the CDDG carried out by other Council of Europe bodies;
* held an exchange of views with Ambassador Rasmus Lumi, Permanent Representative of Estonia to the Council of Europe, Thematic Coordinator on Information Policy (TC-INF) of the Ministers' Deputies,
* held an exchange of views with Mr Andreas Kiefer, Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, and underlined the importance of close cooperation and coordination between the CDDG and the Congress, and expressed the wish for a close involvement of the Congress in the work of the working group on accountability (GT-RE);
* heard presentations by Ms Sibel Arslan (Switzerland, SOC), Parliamentary Assembly General Rapporteur on local and regional authorities and member of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, and by Mr Gerhard Ermischer of the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations (CINGO), on recent activities by their respective bodies;
* was briefed about the 2020 edition of the World Forum for Democracy, in particular the change of format and its implications.

The CDDG also took note of the information provided by the Secretariat of the Elections and Civil Society Division and the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance on their work in 2020 and heard presentations by experts on two specific projects implemented by the Centre (draft toolkit for teleworking in public administrations, draft toolkit on Emergency resilience and preparedness for local authorities). The CDDG also approved the annual report of the Elections and Civil Society Division and welcomed the opportunity to have an oversight of the activities of the Division and it **approved the annual report of the Centre, expressing great appreciation for its work.**

**Resource implications**

The financing of the activities described in this report is assured.

**Evaluation of completed activities**

The CDDG held an exchange of views on the state of implementation of its terms of reference for 2020-2021. It expressed appreciation for the progress made despite the change of working methods and additional workload due the COVID-19 pandemic. It expressed appreciation for the work and dedication of the CDDG Secretariat in the current context and asked that this be reflected in the meeting report.

The CDDG also held an exchange of views on possible future priorities and it modified and approved the work plan for 2021, taking note of a provisional calendar of meetings.

**Any changes to the composition of the Committee Bureau**

The CDDG elected by acclamation to vacant posts in its Bureau for 2021:

* Mr Markku Mölläri (Finland) as Chair;
* Mr Peter Andre (Austria) as Vice-Chair;
* Ms Albana Koçiu (Albania) as Bureau member;
* Mr Francesco Giustino (Italy) as Bureau member;
* Mr Edwin Lefebre (Belgium, Flanders);
* and Ms Stefania Traustadóttir (Iceland).

**Other observations**

The 13th plenary meeting of the CDDG will be held on 15-16 April 2021.

**APPENDIX**

**AGENDA**

1. **Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**
2. **Information on recent activities and developments**
* Statement by the Chair *ad interim*
* Reports of Bureau meetings
* Exchange of views with Ms Claudia Luciani, Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance
* Information by the Secretariat
1. **Test of the voting system**
2. **State of implementation of the CDDG activities according to its terms of reference 2020-2021**
* Democracy and technology
* Reports of the 2nd and 3rd meeting of the Working Group on democracy and technology
* Progress of work
* Approval of the study on digital transformation
* Questionnaire on elections
* Democratic accountability
* Report of the 2nd meeting of the Working Group on accountability
* Progress of work
* Consideration of the analysis of the replies to the questionnaire

- Covid-19 and democratic governance

* Approval of a report
* Follow up
* Stocktaking and exchange of views on priorities
* Workplan for 2021
1. **Promoting democratic governance through shared experience**

- Presentation of ongoing reforms by members of the CDDG

- Exchange of views with high-level representative(s) of member States

1. **Activities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities**
* Exchange of views with Mr Andreas Kiefer, Secretary General of the Congress

**7. Activities of the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance**

* Approval of the annual report
* Emergency resilience and preparedness (presentation of the toolkit addressed to local authorities)
* Toolkit on Teleworking
1. **Activities of the election and civil society division**
* Approval of an annual report
1. **Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers**

- Stocktaking of the Greek Chairmanship (May-November 2020)

- Priorities of the German Chairmanship (November 2020-May 2021)

1. **Activities of the Committee of Ministers**
2. **Activities of other Council of Europe bodies**
3. **Elections of the Bureau**
4. **The Rapid Response Service**
* Consideration of a memorandum by the Secretariat
1. **Other business**
2. **Adoption of the abridged meeting report**
1. This document has been classified restricted until examination by the Committee of Ministers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)