

CDDH(2026)R104
Strasbourg, 21 July 2026

STEERING COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (CDDH)

MEETING REPORT

104th meeting

Strasbourg, 30 June – 3 July 2026

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Information on the meeting

The Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) held its 104th meeting in Strasbourg, from 30 June to 3 July 2026, with Tonje MEINICH (Norway), in the Chair.

The agenda of the meeting appears in appendix.

Items for decision by the Committee of Ministers

The CDDH adopted the following texts and decided to transmit them to the Committee of Ministers for information:

- Study on the need for and feasibility of updating Recommendation No. R(97)22 of the Committee of Ministers to member State containing guidelines on the application of the safe third country concept;
- Report on the examination of implementation of Committee of Ministers Recommendations to member States CM/Rec(2019)6 on the development of the Ombudsperson institution and CM/Rec(2021)1 on the development and strengthening of effective, pluralist and independent national human rights institutions.

The CDDH adopted the following text and decided to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers for its consideration:

- CDDH Comments on PACE Recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly 2306 (2026) "Procedure for the election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights" and 2307 (2026) "European guidelines to counter social dumping and labour exploitation", as well as on Recommendations of the Congress of local and regional authorities 543 (2026) "Free elections at the local and regional level: A fundamental right to strengthen grassroots democracy" and 548 (2026) "Implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights by local and regional authorities: lessons from the case law of the European Court of Human Rights".

The CDDH decided to transmit the following text to the Committee of Ministers for information:

Presentations by invited speakers at the discussion on the possible implications of the conclusions of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 23 July 2025 on the obligations of States with respect to climate change and those of the advisory opinion A0-32/35 of 29 May 2025 of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on the climate emergency and human rights.

Items for information of the Committee of Ministers

The CDDH,

As regards the system of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR):

- Exchanged views on the results of the first meeting of its Drafting Group on the use of new technologies by the European Court of Human Rights and new tendencies in litigation before the European Court of Human Rights (CDDH-TE) and on preparations for its second meeting;
- Received information from the Secretariat on the adoption of the Chişinău Declaration; took note that the Committee of Ministers had not taken decisions on possible follow-up to the Declaration and that so far, the CDDH had no mandate in this respect; recalled that paragraph 58 of the Declaration was of general application and not intended to be specific to the context of migration;

As regards the other items on its agenda:

- Held a discussion on the possible implications of the conclusions of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 23 July 2025 on the obligations of States with respect to climate change and those of the advisory opinion A0-32/35 of 28 May 2025 of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on the climate emergency and human rights, with the participation of Rodrigo MUDROVITSCH, President of the Inter-American Court of Human

Rights, Bogdan-Lucian AURESCU, judge of the International Court of Justice, and Professor Jannika JAHN, University of Trier;

- Held a thematic debate on the right of access to official documents, with the participation of Helena JÄDERBLOM, Chairperson of the Council of Europe Access Info Group, Mateja PREŠERN, Vice-chairperson of the Consultation of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on access to official documents, Professor Paivi KORPISAARI, member of the Council of Europe Access Info Group, and Boglarka BENKO, Registry of the European Court of Human Rights;
- Exchanged views with Eerik-Niiles KROSS, Chairperson of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly;
- Exchanged views with Maria-Adriani KOSTOPOULOU, Chairperson of the Group of experts on action against violence against women and domestic violence (GREVIO), in the context of its examination of conventions for which it has been given responsibility;
- Held a preliminary exchange of views on a draft Report on possible amendment of Appendices 1 and 3 to Committee of Ministers' Recommendation CM/Rec(2021)2 on measures against the trade in goods used for the death penalty, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and on the possibility of introducing a simplified amendment procedure for Appendix 2, with the participation of Dr Alice Jill EDWARDS, United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and Dr Michael CROWLEY, Omega Research Foundation;
- Exchanged views on the results of the fourth meeting of its Drafting Group on the safe third country concept (CDDH-PTS); decided that following the adoption of the Study on the need for and feasibility of updating Recommendation No. R(97)22 of the Committee of Ministers to member States containing guidelines on the application of the safe third country concept, the CDDH-PTS had fulfilled its mandate;
- Exchanged views on the results of the third meeting of its Drafting Committee on human rights and drug policies (DH-PDA) and on preparations for its fourth meeting; noted the difficulties posed by resource constraints to the preparation of an explanatory memorandum to the draft recommendation being prepared by the DH-PDA;
- Took note of the decisions taken by the Ministers Deputies in March 2026 on follow-up to the CDDH study on the need for and feasibility of (an) additional non-binding instrument(s) to complement the 2011 Committee of Ministers' Guidelines on eradicating impunity for serious human rights violations; exchanged views on preparations for the seventh meeting of its Drafting Group on eradication of impunity for serious human rights violations (CDDH-ELI), taking note that this meeting had been postponed due to the need to hold three extraordinary CDDH plenary meetings between January and March 2026;
- Exchanged views on working methods for its examination of the implementation of Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)5 to member States on the system of the European Convention on Human Rights in university education and professional training; in this context, received information from members of the Council of Europe Secretariat on other standards and activities relating to human rights education;
- Held a preliminary exchange of views on working methods for its examination of the implementation of Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2021)4 to member States on the publication and dissemination of the European Convention on Human Rights, the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and other relevant texts, noting the connection between this recommendation and Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)5;
- Expressed its interest in working on the system of the European Social Charter, in particular on ensuring effective follow-up to decisions of the European Committee on Social Rights concerning collective complaints; decided to include this issue in its future proposals for deliverables under its terms of reference for 2028-2031;
- Exchanged views on enhancing integration of the youth perspective into its future work; appointed Elīna Luīze VÍTOLA (Latvia) as its youth rapporteur;
- Adopted criteria to be applied by CDDH subordinate bodies in relation to public consultations on texts under preparation;
- Adopted criteria to be applied when examining requests for observer status with the CDDH; examined requests for observer status with the CDDH submitted by the European Law Institute (ELI) and the Association européenne pour la Défense des Droits et des Libertés (ASSEDEL); decided to accept the request by ELI and to reject the request by ASSEDEL;

- Exchanged views on the integration of the gender equality dimension into its work; took note of the thematic form submitted by the Chairperson of the CDDH-PTS following completion of this group's work;
- Took note of the information provided by its thematic rapporteurs and its representatives to other committees; took note in particular of the conclusions of the Workshop on neurotechnologies and human rights organised by the Steering Committee on human rights in biomedicine and health (CDBIO), including those concerning Article 9 (freedom of thought) of the European Convention on Human Rights;
- Took note of the state of signatures and ratifications of the Council of Europe treaties for which it has been given responsibility, and of recent developments concerning derogations and reservations to the European Convention on Human Rights; recalled its existing and envisaged activities in relation to the European Convention on Human Rights and related treaties, the European Social Charter and related treaties, and the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine and related treaties; agreed to keep the other treaties under active review;
- Took note of recent publications of the work of the CDDH;
- Took note of the proposed revised CDDH website;
- Took note of the new online platform for the CDDH Handbook on human rights and artificial intelligence;
- Adopted a revised calendar of meetings during the second semester of 2026 and took note of a provisional calendar of meetings during the first semester of 2027.
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Resource implications

The CDDH noted that all of the above activities were conducted within the foreseen budgetary envelopes and that the CDDH-PTS had completed its deliverable within the expected deadlines.

MEETING REPORT

1. The Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) held its 104th meeting in Strasbourg, from 30 June to 3 July 2026, with Tonje MEINICH (Norway) in the Chair (see list of participants in [Appendix II](#)).

ITEM 1: OPENING OF THE MEETING, ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORDER OF BUSINESS

2. The CDDH adopted its agenda as it appears in [Appendix I](#) and agreed to the order of business proposed in the draft annotated agenda (CDDH(2026)OJ1 REV Annot.).

ITEM 2: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY AND OF THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

3. The CDDH examined draft comments on Recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly 2306 (2026) – “Procedure for the election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights” and 2307 (2026) – “European guidelines to counter social dumping and labour exploitation”, as well as, on Recommendations of the Congress of local and regional authorities 543 (2026) – “Free elections at the local and regional level: A fundamental right to strengthen grassroots democracy” and 548 (2026) – “Implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights by local and regional authorities: lessons from the case law of the European Court of Human Rights”.

4. With respect to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2306 (2026), the CDDH exchanged views with Despina CHATZIVASSILIOU, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly. Ms Chatzivassiliou described the motivation behind the Assembly’s proposal that the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) should be amended in order to prevent a judge from sitting for more than one year beyond the expiration of the nine-year mandate foreseen under Article 23 of the ECHR. She also explained the Assembly’s suggestion that should this limit on the term of office result in there being no judge elected with respect to a State Party, a sitting judge could be appointed instead of an ad hoc judge. On this basis and in response to proposals by delegations, the CDDH agreed to make certain amendments to the draft comments on this recommendation.

5. The CDDH adopted the comments on all of the recommendations, thus amended, as they appear in [Addendum 1](#), and decided to transmit them to the Committee of Ministers.

ITEM 3: WORK ON THE SYSTEM OF THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The use of new technologies by the European Court of Human Rights and the new tendencies in litigation before the European Court of Human Rights

6. The Chairperson of the Drafting Group on the use of new technologies by the European Court of Human Rights / new tendencies in litigation before the European Court of Human Rights (CDDH-TE), Milène BLANCHARD (France), informed the CDDH of the results of its first meeting (11 –13 May 2026).

7. During the meeting, the Group had held exchanges of views with members of the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights (Klaudiusz RYNGIELEWICZ, Francis DOHERTY, John DARCY, Hasan BAKIRCI and Ugur ERDAL); Veronika FIKFAK (Professor of Human Rights and International Law, Director UCL Institute for Human Rights, Vice President

of the European Society of International Law); Laurent PETTITI (Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE)); Jan SPOENLE (Member of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) working group on Cyberjustice and AI); and Teresa RODRÍGUEZ DE LAS HERAS BALLELL (President of the European Law Institute, Full Professor (Catedrática) of Commercial Law, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid).

8. The Group had also exchanged views on its terms of reference. It had held preliminary discussions on whether there should be one report, with two chapters, or two reports, and on whether “new tendencies in litigation” was an appropriate title for the second chapter or report. It had decided to return to both of these questions at a later stage in its work.

9. A draft text on the use of new technologies will be considered at the second meeting (see the calendar of meetings in Appendix VIII).

10. The CDDH took note of this information and welcomed the progress being made by the CDDH-TE.

ITEM 4: MINISTERIAL SESSION – CHIȘINĂU

11. The CDDH received information from the Secretariat on the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the Chișinău Declaration, based very closely on the outcome document adopted by the CDDH at its third extraordinary meeting of 2026 (10 – 12 March 2026). The Secretariat noted that the Ministers’ Deputies were currently discussing possible follow-up to the Declaration and had not yet given a mandate to any committee to conduct further work.

12. Several delegations welcomed the consensual adoption of the Declaration as a reflection of the high quality of the CDDH’s own work. A number of delegations considered that several elements of the Declaration would benefit from follow-up work, that most of these (including those relating to third party interventions before the European Court of Human Rights) were of general nature and not specifically related to migration, and that the CDDH would be the best forum for conducting this work. It was, however, acknowledged that any substantial follow-up would necessitate a mandate from the Committee of Ministers.

ITEM 5: SAFE THIRD COUNTRY CONCEPT

13. The Chairperson of the Drafting Group on the safe third country concept (CDDH-PTS), Elīna Luīze VĪTOLA (Latvia), informed the CDDH of the results of its 4th and last meeting (17 – 19 mars 2026), notably the finalisation of the study on the need for and the feasibility of updating Recommendation No. R(97)22 of the Committee of Ministers to member States containing guidelines on the application of the safe third country concept (CDDH-PTS(2026)R4 Addendum). She noted the main conclusion of the drafting group that no further work should be taken to update Recommendation No. R(97)22 or its explanatory memorandum.

14. The CDDH then examined the study as well as comments and proposals submitted by the member States before the present meeting (CDDH(2026)18). The CDDH made certain amendments to and adopted the study, as it appears in Addendum 2, and decided to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers for information.

15. On this basis, the CDDH decided that the CDDH-PTS had fulfilled its mandate, and thanked the CDDH-PTS and its Chairperson for the work carried out.

ITEM 6: HUMAN RIGHTS AND DRUG POLICIES

16. The Chairperson of the Drafting Committee on human rights and drug policies (DH-PDA), Tonje MEINICH (Norway), informed the CDDH of the results of its 3rd meeting (19 – 20 May 2026). She recalled that the DH-PDA had provisionally agreed on the text of the draft recommendation, whose structure and general contents she described. She noted that resource constraints were complicating the preparation of an explanatory memorandum, which the DH-PDA intended to examine at its fourth and final meeting scheduled for 20-22 October 2026, and that possible solutions to these issues were under consideration. One delegation recalled the need for the draft recommendation to be attentive to particular risks of discrimination against the LGBTI community in relation to drug policy.

17. The CDDH took note of this information and welcomed the progress being made by the DH-PDA.

ITEM 7: ERADICATION OF IMPUNITY FOR SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

18. The Secretariat informed the CDDH of the adoption by the Ministers' Deputies of decisions on follow-up to the feasibility study adopted by the CDDH in November 2025 (see CDDH(2025)R103 Addendum 2), noting that the envisaged resumption of meetings of the Drafting Group on eradication of impunity for serious human rights violations (CDDH-ELI) had been postponed until the autumn due to the three CDDH extraordinary plenary meetings held in early 2026. The Chairperson of the CDDH-ELI, Hans-Jörg BEHRENS (Germany), recalled the deadline of 30 June 2027 for completion of follow-up work, noting that if necessary the CDDH could ask the Committee of Ministers to extend the deadline.

ITEM 8: PROHIBITION OF THE TRADE IN GOODS USED FOR TORTURE AND THE DEATH PENALTY

19. The CDDH held an exchange of views with Dr Alice Jill EDWARDS, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and Dr Michael Crowley, Omega Research Foundation.

20. Both speakers discussed the proposed Report on possible amendment of Appendices 1 and 3 to Committee of Ministers' Recommendation CM/Rec(2021)2 on measures against the trade in goods used for the death penalty, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and on the possibility of introducing a simplified amendment procedure for Appendix 2. Dr Crowley highlighted the importance of revising the CM/Rec(2021)2 in light of the changing nature of law enforcement tools and the introduction of new technologies to the market which could be used for torture and the death penalty, such as chemical irritants and experimental auditive weapons. The European Union (EU) Anti-torture Regulation (EU) 2019/125 is of importance but revision of CM/Rec(2021)2 could take an aspirational approach and go beyond those equipment types listed in Regulation (EU) 2019/125. Dr Edwards underlined the need to ensure that regulation keeps pace with technology. She encouraged the CDDH to be ambitious and forward-looking when proposing amendment of the appendices to CM/Rec(2021)2, and to consider also the UN Guidance on the prevention of torture, emphasising that items should be regulated well in advance of their entry into common usage.

21. The CDDH then exchanged views on the draft report (CDDH(2026)12). Some Members stated that there had not been sufficient time to consult colleagues in their capitals with direct responsibility for regulation in this area. Some members considered that the proposals in the report should align with Regulation (EU) 2019/125, which had been carefully examined and agreed by EU member States. Some members noted that the information in the tables describing the scope of production and/ or marketing of certain goods had not been verified by

national authorities and suggested that the names of specific States be removed, whilst leaving the information on the number of States and companies.

22. In light of the foregoing, the CDDH decided to postpone further examination and possible adoption of the report to its next plenary meeting. It asked the Secretariat to prepare a revised version of the draft report, with the tables amended as indicated above, for distribution at the earliest opportunity in order to allow national authorities time to consult and take position.

ITEM 9: NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS AND OMBUDSPERSON INSTITUTIONS

23. The CDDH made certain amendments to and adopted the report on examination of implementation of Committee of Ministers Recommendations to member States CM/Rec(2019)6 on the development of the Ombudsperson institution and CM/Rec(2021)1 on the development and strengthening of effective, pluralist and independent national human rights institutions, as it appears in Addendum 3, and decided to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers for information.

ITEM 10: ECHR IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

ITEM 11: PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF THE ECHR, THE CASELAW OF THE COURT AND RELATED TEXTS

ITEM 12: HELP PROGRAMME

24. Taking agenda items 10, 11 and 12 together, the CDDH held an exchange of views with Ana-Maria TELBIS, Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) Programme, Giulia LO-PRESTI, North-South Centre, Sarah KEATING, Secretary of the Steering Committee for education (CDEDU), and Dylan VERDIN POL (DGII – Education, training and co-operation). The CDDH took note of the wide range of Council of Europe instruments and activities concerning human rights education, including the HELP programme, the Human Rights Education for Youth (HEY) programme administered by the North-South Centre, the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education that had been drafted by the CDEDU, and the Compass Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People, intended to support the implementation of the aforementioned Charter. It noted the particular relevance of the HELP programme in the context of judicial training and its growing recognition for the purposes of continuing professional development of lawyers. It explored the distinct features of the HEY programme, including its intercultural and interregional exchange dimension that reflected its engagement with participants in non-European countries. It noted the intergovernmental nature of the Charter, which had been adopted in the framework of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States, with the Compass Manual intended as a reference for many people involved in value-based youth work and non-formal education.

25. The CDDH returned to the issue of possible working methods for its examination of implementation of Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)5 on the system of the European Convention on Human Rights in university education and professional training. It considered that a questionnaire, which had been decided at its previous meeting, would be difficult to administer and likely to produce only limited results. Reflecting on the information just received, it considered that a more comprehensive overview of human rights education, taking into account also the context of other Council of Europe instruments and activities, would be more useful. In this context, it noted the connection between CM/Rec(2019)5 and Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2021)4 on the publication and dissemination of the European Convention on Human Rights, the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and other relevant texts, the implementation of which it was also required to examine.

26. On this basis, the CDDH asked the Secretariat to consult further with Council of Europe colleagues and to prepare a concrete proposal on its future work on Recommendations CM/Rec(2019)5 and CM/Rec(2021)4, for examination at the next plenary meeting.

ITEM 13: EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

27. The Chairperson reported to the CDDH on her participation in the recent meeting of the Governmental Committee of the European Social Charter, which the CDDH had wished to consult before taking decisions on possible future work on the system of the Charter. She confirmed that the Governmental Committee had responded positively to the proposal of the CDDH Bureau (CDDH(2025)20REV) that the CDDH should examine effective follow-up to decisions of the European Committee on Social Rights concerning collective complaints, and looked forward to future collaboration. Several delegations welcomed this development and expressed their support for the Bureau's proposal.

28. On this basis, the CDDH decided to include this issue in its future proposals for deliverables under its terms of reference for 2028-2031.

ITEM 14: HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

29. In accordance with deliverable 18 of its revised terms of reference for 2026 – 2027, the CDDH discussed the possible implications of the conclusions of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 23 July 2025 on the obligations of States with respect to climate change and those of the advisory opinion AO-32/35 of 29 May 2025 of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on the climate emergency and human rights, with presentations by Rodrigo MUDROVITSCH, President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Bogdan-Lucian AURESCU, judge of the International Court of Justice, and Professor Jannika JAHN, University of Trier.

30. Discussions then focused on issues including the domestic and European law implications of the possible customary law status of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; the human rights implications of rising sea levels; environmental refugees and the principle of non-refoulement; the role of regional human rights courts in the progressive development of positive human rights obligations under international law in relation to environmental and climate-change matters; domestic implementation of heightened due diligence standards in climate policies; States' obligations to regulate the activities of private actors in response to climate change, including for the protection of particularly vulnerable groups; whether insufficient State action on climate adaptation may violate human rights; whether there is a common understanding of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment under international law; the extent to which the opinion of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights may be grounded in the specific legal cultures of that court and of American States; and whether standing for associations, as recognised by the European Court of Human Rights in the *Verein Klimaseniorinnen Schweiz v. Switzerland* judgment, would be preferable to a general actio popularis procedure for examining environmental cases under the ECHR. Natalia CASTRO, lawyer at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, participated in these discussions.

31. The CDDH thanked the invited speakers warmly for their fascinating insights into these important issues. The three invited speakers' presentations can be found in Addendum 4, which the CDDH decided to transmit to the Committee of Ministers for information.

ITEM 15: ACCESS TO OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

32. The CDDH held a thematic debate on “Standards on the right of access to official documents – meeting points and distinct features of the Tromsø Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights” (see [Appendix III](#)). The presentations of the invited speakers, Helena JÄDERBLOM, President of the Council of Europe Access Info Group (AIG), Boglarka BENKO, Senior Lawyer at the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights, Päivi KORPISAARI, AIG member and professor of Communication Law in Helsinki University, and Mateja PREŠERN, Vice-Chair of the Consultation of the Parties, and General Director at the Ministry of Public Administration in Slovenia, along with a summary of the ensuing discussions, can be found in document CDDH(2026)20.

33. The CDDH Chair concluded the debate by thanking the speakers and the CDDH members for their lively discussion. She invited delegations of member States which have not yet ratified the Tromsø Convention to consider doing so and invited them to contact the convention’s secretariat should they have any further questions.

ITEM 16: INTEGRATION OF THE YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

34. The CDDH held an exchange of views with Andrei-Dragos TARTA, member of the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ), who explained the importance and value of the youth perspective to the Council of Europe’s work and identified some possible issues of relevance within the mandate of the CDDH; Nina GRMUSA, Youth Participation Advisor, DGII, who explained the collaborative approach that was being developed further to decisions taken at the Fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in May 2023, the 2025 ministerial conference on youth, and subsequent decisions of the Committee of Ministers; and Laurence LWOFF, Secretary of the Steering Committee for human rights in biomedicine and health (CDBIO), who described the pilot project on youth engagement organised by the CDBIO. In the ensuing discussion, it was noted that “youth” was generally defined from 16/18 to 30 years of age, although this age group could not be considered as homogenous; and that the appointment of a youth rapporteur, whose precise role and responsibilities would be flexible but could include collaboration with the representative of the CCJ, could be a useful way of structurally enhancing integration of the youth perspective into a committee’s work.

ITEM 17: PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

35. The CDDH made certain amendments to and adopted the criteria to be applied by CDDH subordinate bodies in relation to public consultations on texts under preparation (CDDH(2025)17_FINAL).

ITEM 18: INVITED PERSONALITIES

36. The CDDH exchanged views with Eerik-Niiles KROSS, Chairperson of the Committee on legal affairs and human rights of the Parliamentary Assembly. Mr Kross’ presentation appears in [Appendix IV](#).

37. The ensuing discussion addressed issues including the work of the Committee on legal affairs and human rights concerning Ukraine, which was highly appreciated; the Committee’s new Parliamentary Network to Promote the Implementation of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights; international humanitarian law and targeted attacks on places of worship; freedom of religion; politicization of human rights; and artificial intelligence, including in relation to migration management and warfare, with one delegation recalling the CDDH Handbook on human rights and artificial intelligence, which examined the application of AI systems in specific sectors of public administration.

ITEM 19: THEMATIC RAPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER COMMITTEES

38. The CDDH received information from Elias KASTANAS (Greece), its representative to the CDBIO, on that committee's recent activities, taking note in particular of the conclusions of the Workshop on neurotechnologies and human rights organised by CDBIO, including those concerning Article 9 (freedom of thought) of the European Convention on Human Rights; Krista OINONEN (Finland), its representative to the Steering Committee for democracy (CDDEM), on that committee's recent activities; and the Secretariat, on the results of the work of the Committee of Experts on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (PC-FIMI), on which the CDDH had been represented by Dalibor JURASEK (Slovak Republic), including the fact that the Ministers' Deputies were considering possible follow-up to the feasibility study prepared by the PC-FIMI and subsequently adopted by the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC). The CDDH recalled the significant human rights dimension to this latter issue, considering it important that the CDDH be involved in any future work.

39. The CDDH recalled its earlier discussion on how to integrate further the youth perspective into its work (see item 16). It appointed Elīna-Luīze VĪTOLA (Latvia) as its youth rapporteur.

ITEM 20: OBSERVERS

40. The CDDH adopted criteria to be applied when examining requests for observer status with the CDDH, namely sharing and promoting Council of Europe values and principles; having legal personality; having large, preferably Europe-wide membership or representation; having broad experience in relevant areas; and bringing demonstrable added value and having the potential to make high-quality contributions to the CDDH's work.

41. On this basis, the CDDH examined requests for observer status submitted by the European Law Institute (ELI) and the Association européenne pour la Défense des Droits et des Libertés (ASSEDEL). It decided to accept the request by ELI and to reject the request by ASSEDEL, and declined to refer the latter request to the Committee of Ministers.

ITEM 21: GENDER EQUALITY

42. The CDDH received information from Phillipe WERY (Belgium), its gender equality rapporteur, including on integration of the gender equality dimension into the work of the CDDH-PTS drafting group.

ITEM 22: CONVENTIONS

43. The CDDH exchanged views with Maria-Andriani KOSTOPOULOU, Chairperson of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) established under the Istanbul Convention, one of the conventions for which the CDDH has been given responsibility by the Committee of Ministers. Ms Kostopoulou's presentation appears in [Appendix V](#).

44. The ensuing discussion addressed issues including disinformation about the Istanbul Convention; how to ensure that appointments of new members strengthened GREVIO; how GREVIO selected new themes for evaluation and general recommendations; how to maintain coherence between standards under the Istanbul Convention and those under the ECHR; provision of services for victims of violence against women and domestic violence; digital violence against women and the role of technology companies; collaboration between GREVIO and the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

(CEDAW); how GREVIO co-operated with other Council of Europe bodies; and how the CDDH could support the work of GREVIO.

45. The CDDH examined a document prepared by the Secretariat that grouped the conventions for which it was responsible by topic, indicating which ones had a treaty body and which were also under the responsibility of another intergovernmental committee. It recalled its existing and envisaged activities in relation to the ECHR and related treaties, the European Social Charter and related treaties, and the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine and related treaties. It agreed to keep the other treaties for which it was responsible under active review, noting the possibility of future exchanges of views with the chairpersons of secretaries of the relevant monitoring bodies.

46. The CDDH took note of information provided by the Secretariat on recent signatures and ratifications of certain treaties under the responsibility of the CDDH, along with information on recent derogations to the ECHR.

ITEM 23: CDDH WEBSITES

47. The Secretariat presented the new CDDH website, which will adopt a comprehensive thematic approach to presenting information on the committee's work. It will be brought online after the summer break, replacing the current website.

48. The Secretariat presented the new online Platform for the CDDH Handbook on human rights and artificial intelligence

ITEM 24: PUBLICATIONS

49. The CDDH noted the publication of the Proceedings of the Workshop on "Ombudsperson Institutions and National Human Rights Institutions: Implementation of Committee of Ministers Recommendations and other international standards" and the CDDH Manual on Human Rights and Artificial Intelligence.

50. It encouraged its members to inform the Secretariat of publication in languages other than English or French of texts that had been prepared by the CDDH, notably non-binding instruments of the Committee of Ministers that called for translation into national official languages.

ITEM 25: CALENDAR

51. The CDDH adopted its calendar of meetings for the second semester of 2026 and took note of a proposed calendar of meetings for the first semester of 2027, as they appear in Appendix VIII.

ITEM 26: OTHER BUSINESS

52. The CDDH expressed its warm appreciation for the contributions of two departing members: Brigitte OHMS (Austria), a very long-standing member, former member of the Bureau and former chairperson of Drafting Group 'A' on the Reform of the Court (GT-GDR-A), following her retirement; and Carlos PUENTE GALINDO (Andorra), following his appointment to other functions. It wished them both well in their future endeavours.

53. The CDDH welcomed Pamela McCORMICK following her recent recruitment to the secretariat of committee.

ITEM 27: ADOPTION OF THE ABRIDGED REPORT

54. The CDDH adopted the abridged report of the present meeting.

* * *

Appendix I

Agenda

1: OPENING OF THE MEETING, ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORDER OF BUSINESS	1 : OUVERTURE DE LA RÉUNION, ADOPTION DE L'ORDRE DU JOUR ET DE L'ORDRE DES TRAVAUX
CDDH(2025)R103 – Report of the 103rd meeting CDDH(2026)R EXTRA – Report of the first extraordinary meeting CDDH(2026)R2 EXTRA – Report of the second extraordinary meeting CDDH(2026)R3 EXTRA – Report of the third extraordinary meeting CDDH-BU(2026)R115 – Report of the 115th meeting of the Bureau	CDDH(2025)R103 – Rapport de la 103^e réunion CDDH(2026)R EXTRA – Rapport de la première réunion extraordinaire CDDH(2026)R2 EXTRA – Rapport de la deuxième réunion extraordinaire CDDH(2026)R3 EXTRA – Rapport de la troisième réunion extraordinaire CDDH-BU(2026)R115 – Rapport de la 115^e réunion du Bureau
2: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY & THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES	2 : RECOMMANDATIONS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE & DU CONGRÈS DES POUVOIRS LOCAUX ET RÉGIONAUX
CDDH(2026)10 – Draft CDDH comments on: - PACE Recommendation 2306 (2026) – “Procedure for the election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights” - PACE Recommendation 2307 (2026) – “European guidelines to counter social dumping and labour exploitation” - Congress Recommendation 543 (2026) – “Free elections at the local and regional level: A fundamental right to strengthen grassroots democracy” - Congress Recommendation 548 (2026) – “Implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights by local and regional authorities: lessons from the case law of the European Court of Human Rights”	CDDH(2026)10 – Projet de commentaires du CDDH sur : - Recommandation APCE 2306 (2026) – « Procédure d'élection des juges à la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme » - Recommandation APCE 2307 (2026) – « Lignes directrices européennes pour combattre le dumping social et l'exploitation par le travail » - Recommandation du Congrès 543 (2026) – « Élections libres aux niveaux local et régional : un droit fondamental pour renforcer la démocratie de proximité » - Recommandation du Congrès 548 (2026) – « La mise en œuvre de la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme par les collectivités locales et régionales : enseignements tirés de la jurisprudence de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme »
3: SYSTEM OF THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS	3 : SYSTÈME DE LA CONVENTION EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
The use of new technologies by the European Court of Human Rights and new tendencies in litigation before the European Court of Human Rights	L'utilisation de nouvelles technologies par la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme et nouvelles tendances en matière de litiges devant la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme
CDDH-TE(2026)R1 – Report of the first meeting CDDH-TE(2026)02 – Compilation of presentations of speakers in the exchange of views of the 1st meeting	CDDH-TE(2026)R1 – Rapport de la première réunion CDDH-TE(2026)02 – Compilation des présentations des intervenants lors de l'échange de vues de la 1^e réunion
4: MINISTERIAL SESSION – CHISINAU	4 : SESSION MINISTÉRIELLE – CHISINAU
CDDH(2026)R3 EXTRA Addendum: CDDH outcome document containing elements for a political declaration Chişinău Declaration	CDDH(2026)R3 EXTRA Addendum : Document du CDDH contenant des éléments en vue d'une déclaration politique Déclaration de Chişinău
5. SAFE THIRD COUNTRY CONCEPT	5. NOTION DE PAYS TIERS SÛR
CDDH-PTS(2026)R4 – Report of the 4th meeting CDDH-PTS(2026)R4 Addendum – Draft study on the need for and the feasibility of updating Recommendation No. R(97)22 of the Committee of	CDDH-PTS(2026)R4 – Rapport de la 4^e réunion CDDH-PTS(2026)R4 Addendum – Projet d'étude sur la nécessité et la faisabilité d'une mise à jour de la Recommandation n° R(97)22 du Comité des Ministres

Ministers to member States containing guidelines on the application of the safe third country concept CDDH(2026)18 – Compilation of the comments received on the draft study	aux États membres énonçant des lignes directrices sur l'application de la notion de pays tiers sûr CDDH(2026)18 – Compilation des commentaires reçus sur le projet d'étude
6: HUMAN RIGHTS AND DRUG POLICIES	6 : DROITS HUMAINS DANS LES POLITIQUES EN MATIÈRE DE DROGUES
DH-PDA(2026)R3 – Report of the 3rd meeting	DH-PDA(2026)R3 – Rapport de la 3 ^e réunion
7: ERADICATION OF IMPUNITY FOR SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS	7 : ÉLIMINATION DE L'IMPUNITÉ POUR LES VIOLATIONS GRAVES DES DROITS HUMAINS
Décisions taken by the Committee of Ministers at their 1552nd meeting, 4 March 2026 CM/Del/Dec(2026)1552/4.1	Décisions prises par le Comité des Ministres lors de leur 1552 ^e réunion, 4 mars 2026 CM/Del/Dec(2026)1552/4.1
8. PROHIBITION OF THE TRADE IN GOODS USED FOR TORTURE AND THE DEATH PENALTY	8. INTERDICTION DU COMMERCE DE BIENS UTILISÉS POUR LA TORTURE ET LA PEINE DE MORT
CDDH(2026)12 – Draft Report on possible amendment of Appendices 1 and 3 to Committee of Ministers' Recommendation CM/Rec(2021)2 on measures against the trade in goods used for the death penalty, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and on the possibility of introducing a simplified amendment procedure for Appendix 2	CDDH(2026)12 - Projet de rapport sur l'éventuel amendement des annexes 1 et 3 de la Recommandation du Comité des Ministres CM/Rec(2021)2 sur des mesures contre le commerce de biens utilisés pour la peine de mort, la torture et autres peines ou traitement cruels, inhumains ou dégradants et sur la possibilité d'introduire une procédure d'amendement simplifiée pour l'annexe 2
9: NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS & OMBUDSPERSON INSTITUTIONS	9: INSTITUTIONS NATIONALES DES DROITS HUMAINS & INSTITUTIONS DE L'OMBUDSMAN
CDDH(2026)13 – Draft report on examination of implementation of Committee of Ministers Recommendations to member States CM/Rec(2019)6 on the development of the Ombudsperson institution and CM/Rec(2021)1 on the development and strengthening of effective, pluralist and independent national human rights institutions CDDH(2026)11 – Compilation of comments received on the draft report	CDDH(2026)13 - Projet de rapport sur l'examen de la mise en œuvre des Recommandations du Comité des Ministres aux États membres CM/Rec(2019)6 sur le développement des institutions de l'Ombudsman et CM/Rec(2021)1 sur le développement et le renforcement d'institutions nationales des droits de l'homme efficaces, pluralistes et indépendantes CDDH(2026)11 – Compilation des commentaires reçus sur le projet de rapport
10: ECHR IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL TRAINING	10: LA CEDH DANS L'ENSEIGNEMENT UNIVERSITAIRE ET LA FORMATION PROFESSIONNELLE
CM/Rec(2019)5 on the system of the European Convention on Human Rights in university education and professional training	CM/Rec(2019)5 sur le système de la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme dans l'enseignement universitaire et la formation professionnelle
11: PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF THE ECHR, THE CASELAW OF THE COURT AND RELATED TEXTS	11 : PUBLICATION ET DIFFUSION DE LA CEDH, DE LA JURISPRUDENCE DE LA COUR ET D'AUTRES TEXTES PERTINENTS
CM/Rec(2021)4 on the publication and dissemination of the European Convention on Human Rights, the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and other relevant texts	CM/Rec(2021)4 sur la publication et la diffusion de la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme, de la jurisprudence de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme et d'autres textes pertinents
12: HELP PROGRAMME	12: PROGRAMME HELP
13: EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER	13 : CHARTE SOCIALE EUROPÉENNE
CDDH(2025)20REV – (Revised) Bureau proposals on possible future CDDH activities related to the system of the European Social Charter	CDDH(2025)20REV – Propositions (révisées) du Bureau sur d'éventuelles activités futures du CDDH liées au système de la Charte sociale européenne

14: HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONEMENT	14 : DROITS HUMAINS ET L'ENVIRONNEMENT
Advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 23 July 2025 on the obligations of States in respect of climate change Advisory opinion A0-32/25 of 29 May 2025 of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on the climate emergency and human rights	Avis consultatif de la Cour de justice internationale du 23 juillet 2025 sur les obligations des États en matière de changement climatique Avis consultatif A0-32/25 du 29 mai 2025 de la Cour interaméricaine des droits de l'homme sur l'urgence climatique et les droits humains (<i>disponible uniquement en anglais</i>)
15: ACCESS TO OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS	15 : ACCÈS AUX DOCUMENTS PUBLICS
AIG(2026)R11 – Report of the 11th meeting of the Access Info Group AIG(2026)LD12 – List of decisions taken at the 12th meeting of the Access Info Group AIG(2026)R12 – Report of the 12th meeting of the Access Info Group CDDH(2026)15 – Draft programme of the thematic debate	AIG(2026)R11 – Rapport de la 11 ^e réunion du Groupe AIG AIG(2026)LD12 – Liste des décisions prises lors de la 12 ^e réunion du Groupe AIG AIG(2026)R12 – Rapport de la 12 ^e réunion du Groupe AIG CDDH(2026)15 – Projet de programme du débat thématique
16: INTEGRATION OF THE YOUTH PERSPECTIVE	16 : INTEGRATION DE LA PERSPECTIVE JEUNESSE
17: PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS	17 : CONSULTATIONS PUBLIQUES
CDDH(2025)17REV - [Revised draft] Criteria to be applied by CDDH subordinate bodies in relation to public consultations on texts under preparation Amnesty International contribution to the CDDH on public consultations on texts under preparation	CDDH(2025)17REV – [Projet révisé de] Critères à appliquer par les instances subordonnées au CDDH concernant les consultations publiques sur des textes en cours de préparation Contribution d'Amnesty International au CDDH concernant les consultations publiques sur des textes en cours de préparation (<i>en anglais uniquement</i>)
18: INVITED PERSONALITIES	18 : PERSONNALITÉS INVITÉES
19: THEMATIC RAPORTEURS & REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER COMMITTEES	19 : RAPORTEURS THÉMATIQUES ET REPRÉSENTANTS DANS D'AUTRES COMITÉS
CDDH(2026)07 - Comments of the Bureau of the CDDH on the draft feasibility study on the possible elaboration of a legal instrument on foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), including disinformation	CDDH(2026)07 - Commentaires du Bureau du CDDH sur le projet d'étude de faisabilité sur l'élaboration éventuelle d'un instrument juridique traitant de la manipulation de l'information et de l'ingérence menées depuis l'étranger (FIMI), y compris la désinformation
20: OBSERVERS	20 : OBSERVATEURS
CDDH(2026)14 – Requests for observer status with the CDDH CDDH(2026)17 - Observer status with intergovernmental committees of the Council of Europe – rules, criteria and procedure for examining requests	CDDH(2026)14 – Demandes de statut d'observateur auprès du CDDH CDDH(2026)17 - Statut d'observateur auprès de comités intergouvernementaux du Conseil de l'Europe – règles, critères et procédures pour l'examen des demandes
21: GENDER EQUALITY	21: ÉGALITÉ DE GENRE
CDDH(2026)09 – The gender equality dimension in the work of the CDDH and its subordinate bodies CDDH(2020)13 – Thematic Form on Gender Equality	CDDH(2026)09 – La dimension d'égalité de genre dans les travaux du CDDH et de ses instances subordonnées CDDH(2020)13 – Fiche thématique sur l'égalité de genre
22: CONVENTIONS	22 : CONVENTIONS

CDDH(2026)16 – State of signatures and ratifications of certain treaties under the responsibility of the CDDH CDDH(2026)19 - Treaties under the responsibility of the CDDH – monitoring bodies, other responsible committees, current relevance	CDDH(2026)16 – État des signatures et ratifications de certains traités sous la responsabilité du CDDH CDDH(2026)19 (<i>disponible uniquement en anglais</i>)
23: CDDH WEBSITES	23 : SITES INTERNET DU CDDH
24: PUBLICATIONS	24 : PUBLICATIONS
Proceedings of the Workshop : “Ombudsperson Institutions and National Human Rights Institutions: Implementation of Committee of Ministers Recommendations and Other International Standards” Manual on Human Rights and Artificial Intelligence CDDH Publications' website	Actes de l'Atelier : « Les Institutions de l'Ombudsman et les Institutions nationales des droits humains : Mise en œuvre des Recommandations du Comité des Ministres et autres normes internationales Manuel sur les droits humains et l'intelligence artificielle Site internet des publications du CDDH
25: CALENDAR	25 : CALENDRIER
26: OTHER BUSINESS	26 : QUESTIONS DIVERSES
27: ADOPTION OF THE ABRIDGED REPORT	27 : ADOPTION DU RAPPORT ABRÉGÉ

Appendix II**List of participants****MEMBERS / MEMBRES**

ALBANIA / ALBANIE	Brunilda KOÇO Deputy Permanent Representative of Albania to the Council of Europe Arlinda GJATA (ONLINE) State Advocate, Office for Legal Representation in Foreign Courts and International Arbitration Tribunals, State Advocates Office
ANDORRA / ANDORRE	APOLOGISED
ARMENIA / ARMÉNIE	Roza ARAKELYAN Attaché of the Department of International Treaties and Law of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Nelly SAROYAN Head of Department International Treaties and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
AUSTRIA / AUTRICHE	Valerie TROFAIER-LESKOVAR Legal expert, Department for European and International Law, Protection of Human Rights, Constitutional Service, Federal Chancellery
AZERBAIJAN / AZERBAIDJAN	Elmin HASANOV Chief of the Main Department for Work with Municipalities Habib ABDULLAYEV (ONLINE) Head of the Human Rights Division, Department for Work with Law Enforcement Bodies, Administration of President of the Republic
BELGIUM / BELGIQUE	Philippe WERY Chef du Service des droits de l'homme, SPF Justice, Service des Droits de l'Homme Isabelle NIEDLISPACHER Agent to the European Court of Human Rights for the Government
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE-HERZEGOVINE	Monika MIJIC (ONLINE) Agent of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina before European Court of Human Rights
BULGARIA / BULGARIE	Atanas MLADENOV Ambassador, Deputy to the Permanent Representative Permanent Representation of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Council of Europe
CROATIA / CROATIE	Štefica STAŽNIK (ONLINE) Representative of the Republic of Croatia before the ECHR Andrea KONJEVIĆ (ONLINE) Adviser to the Representative
CYPRUS / CHYPRE	Theodora CHRISTODOULIDOU Senior Counsel of the Republic of Cyprus, Law Office of the Republic of Cyprus

CZECHIA / TCHÉQUIE	Petr KONŮPKA Deputy Agent of the Government for the representation before the European Court of Human Rights, Ministry of Justice
DENMARK / DANEMARK	Clara KRUSE SCHLEEF Ministry of Justice Thomas V. LYTKEN LARSEN Head of Secretariat
ESTONIA / ESTONIE	Tim KOLK Agent du gouvernement estonien auprès de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme, ministère des Affaires étrangères
FINLAND / FINLANDE	Krista OINONEN Government Agent before the ECtHR, Director, Unit for Human Rights Courts and Conventions, Ministry for Foreign Affairs
FRANCE	Milène BLANCHARD Sous-directrice des droits de l'Homme, Direction des affaires juridiques, ministère de l'Europe et des affaires étrangères
GEORGIA / GÉORGIE	Suliko ZHENTI Senior Legal Adviser of the Litigation Division of the Department of State Representation to International Courts, Ministry of Justice
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GREECE / GRÈCE	Elias KASTANAS Senior Legal Counselor, Legal Department, Public International Law Section, Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ourania PATSOPOULOU Legal Counsel, Legal Council of the State, Agent of the Government before ECtHR
HUNGARY / HONGRIE	Zoltan TALLODI Government Agent before the ECtHR, Ministry of Justice
ICELAND / ISLANDE	Ingunn Elísabet MARKÚSDÓTTIR Ministry of Justice
IRELAND / IRLANDE	Darina FLYNN Government Agent before the European Court of Human Rights, Legal Counsellor, Legal Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
ITALY / ITALIE	Francesco FORTE Représentant permanent adjoint auprès du conseil de l'Europe
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LIECHTENSTEIN	Helen LOREZ-SCHWEIG Counsellor Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the Council of Europe
LITHUANIA / LITUANIE	Ričard DZIKOVIČ Government agent before ECtHR, Head of Legal Representation, Ministry of Justice
LUXEMBOURG	Cindy COUTINHO Attachée, Déléguée du Gouvernement, ministère de la Justice
MALTA / MALTE	Christopher SOLER (ONLINE) State Advocate and Government Agent
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA / RÉPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA	Doina MAIMESCU Head of the Government Agent Department, Ministry of Justice
MONACO	Laura MICHAEL Chef de Division au sein du Service du Droit International, des Droits de l'Homme et des Libertés Fondamentales relevant de la Direction des Affaires Juridiques
MONTENEGRO / MONTÉNÉGRO	Mirko ĐUKOVIĆ Representative of Montenegro before the European Court of Human Rights
NETHERLANDS / PAYS-BAS	Babette KOOPMAN Government Agent before the ECtHR, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NORTH MACEDONIA / MACÉDOINE DU NORD	Elena BODEVA Head of Unit - Directorate for Multilateral Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NORWAY / NORVÈGE	Tonje MEINICH Deputy Director General, Legislation Department, Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Chair of the CDDH Tonje RØNNEBERG RUUD Legal adviser, Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Legislation department
POLAND / POLOGNE	Paweł WIERDAK Agent of the Government of Poland before the ECtHR, Director, Legal and Treaty Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Katarzyna GAŁKA Specialist, Legal and Treaty Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Maria WEJS DOMŻALSKA (ONLINE) Co-Agent of the Government of Poland before the ECtHR, Deputy Director, Legal and Treaty Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Eliza SUCHOŻEBRSKA (ONLINE) Co-Agent of the Government of Poland before the ECtHR, Legal and Treaty Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Barbara HAŁADYJ (ONLINE) Counsellor, Legal and Treaty Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

PORTUGAL	Helena LEITÃO (ONLINE) Agente du Gouvernement du Portugal auprès de la Cour
ROMANIA / ROUMANIE	Adriana-Mihaela BĂRBIERU Co-agent before the European Court of Human Rights, Deputy to the Permanent Representative
SAN MARINO / SAINT MARIN	APOLOGISED
SERBIA / SERBIE	Zorana JADRIJEVIĆ MLADAR State Attorney Deputy Government Agent of the Republic of Serbia before the ECHR
SLOVAK REPUBLIC / RÉPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUE	Miroslava BÁLINTOVÁ (ONLINE) Government Agent before the ECHR, Ministry of Justice,
SLOVENIA / SLOVÉNIE	Matija VIDMAR Secretary, Department for International Cooperation and EU law, Ministry of Justice
SPAIN / ESPAGNE	Francisco SANZ Agent du Gouvernement auprès de la CEDH, Service juridique des Droits de l'Homme, ministère de la Présidence, Justice et relations avec le Parlement
SWEDEN / SUÈDE	Fredrik BERGIUS Deputy Director, Department for International Law, Human Rights and Treaty Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
SWITZERLAND / SUISSE	Xavier-Baptiste RUEDIN Agent du Gouvernement auprès de la CEDH, Département fédéral de justice et police DFJP, Office fédéral de la justice OFJ Représentation de la Suisse devant la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme, le CAT, le CEDR, le CEDEF et le CDE
TÜRKIYE	Ayşen EMÜLER Experte Juridique, ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Représentation Permanente de Türkiye auprès du Conseil de l'Europe, Strasbourg Volkan MÜFTÜOĞLU Président du Département, Ministère de la Justice
UKRAINE	Oleksii YAKUBENKO Head of the Unit of Legal Protection from the Aggressor State, Department for Representation of the Government in Inter-State Cases, Office of the Agent of Ukraine before the European Court of Human Rights, Ministry of Justice
UNITED KINGDOM / ROYAUME-UNI	Ahila SORNARAJAH Agent for the United Kingdom / Deputy Director, Legal, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

INVITEES

Dr Alice Jill EDWARDS (ONLINE)

UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment /
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Mateja PREŠERN

Vice-Chair of the Consultation of the Parties to the Tromsø Convention, General Director at the Ministry of the Interior and Public Administration of Slovenia / *Vice-présidente de la Consultation des Parties à la Convention de Tromsø, Directrice Générale au ministère de l'Administration publique de Slovénie*

Boglarka BENKO

Senior Lawyer, Registry of the European Court of Human Rights / *Juriste principale au Greffe de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme*

President Rodrigo MUDROVITSCH (ONLINE)

Inter-American Court of Human Rights / *Cour Interaméricaine des droits de l'homme*

Natalia CASTRO (ONLINE)

Lawyer, Inter-American Court of Human Rights / *Juriste, Cour Interaméricaine des droits de l'homme*

Judge Bogdan-Lucian AURESCU (ONLINE)

International Court of Justice / *Cour internationale de justice*

Professor Jannika JAHN (ONLINE)

University of Trier / *Université de Trèves*

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PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
l'ASSEMBLÉE
PARLEMENTAIRE

Despina CHATZIVASSILIOU

Secretary General / *Secrétaire Générale*

Eerik-Niiles KROSS (ONLINE)

Chairperson of the Committee on legal affairs and human rights / *Président de la Commission des questions juridiques et des droits de l'homme*

Guillem CANO-PALOMARES (ONLINE)

Head of Secretariat of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights - Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights Secretariat / *Chef du Secrétariat de la Commission des questions juridiques et des droits de l'homme - Commission sur l'élection des juges à la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme*

	Rafal SOKOL Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights / <i>Commission des questions juridiques et des droits de l'homme</i> Marc MONTANY DAUFI Committee on Migration, International Protection & Economic Co-operation / <i>Commission des migrations, de la protection internationale & de la coopération économique</i>
CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES / CONGRÈS DES POUVOIRS LOCAUX ET RÉGIONAUX	Inge HANNON Statutory Affairs, Department Protecting Local Democracy / <i>Division des activités statutaires</i>
CONFERENCE OF INGOs OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE / CONFÉRENCE DES ONG DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE	Simon MATTHIJSEN Standing Committee conference of INGOs at the Council of Europe, Secretary
DIRECTORATE OF LEGAL ADVICE AND PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW / DIRECTION DU CONSEIL JURIDIQUE ET DU DROIT INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC (DLAPIL)	Sofia THEOCHARI (ONLINE) Public International Law Division and Treaty Office / <i>Division du Droit international public et Bureau des Traités</i>
STEERING COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE FIELDS OF BIOMEDICINE AND HEALTH / COMITÉ DIRECTEUR POUR LES DROITS HUMAINS DANS LES DOMAINES DE LA BIOMÉDECINE ET DE LA SANTÉ (CDBIO)	Laurence LWOFF Secretary of the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health / <i>Secrétaire du Comité directeur pour les droits humains dans les domaines de la biomédecine et de la santé</i>
GROUP OF EXPERTS ON ACTION AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE / GROUPE D'EXPERT SUR LA LUTTE CONTRE LA VIOLENCE A L'EGARD DES FEMMES ET LA VIOLENCE DOMESTIQUE (GREVIO)	Maria-Andriani KOSTOPOULOU Chairperson of the GREVIO / <i>Présidente du GREVIO</i> Johanna NELLES Head of Division and Executive Secretary of the Istanbul Convention / <i>Cheffe de Division et Secrétaire exécutive de la Convention d'Istanbul</i>
EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON LEGAL CO-OPERATION / COMITÉ EUROPÉEN DE COOPÉRATION JURIDIQUE (CDCJ)	Sopho GELASHVILI (ONLINE) Head of Unit / <i>Cheffe d'Unité</i>
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DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN DIGNITY (DGII), EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE DE LA DÉMOCRATIE ET DE LA DIGNITÉ HUMAINE (DGII), SERVICE DE L'ÉDUCATION	Sarah KEATING Head of Division, Formal and non-formal education / <i>Cheffe de Division, Education formelle et non formelle</i> Catherine GUERRERO Education Department / <i>Service de l'Éducation</i>
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UNHCR	Jutta SEIDEL Senior Legal Associate, UNHCR Representation to the European Institutions in Strasbourg / <i>Associée juridique principale, Représentation du HCR auprès des Institutions Européennes à Strasbourg</i>

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	Céline DEWAELE <i>Assistant / Assistante</i>
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INTERPRETERS / INTERPRÈTES

CHENETIER Chloe
DEVICTOR Gregoire
TANNER Julia

Appendix III

Programme of the Thematic debate

Standards on the right of access to official documents –

Meeting points and distinct features of the Tromsø Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights

Background

One of the CDDH's main tasks under its terms of reference starting on 1 January 2024 until 31 December 2027 is to "organise thematic debates on the right of access to official documents taking into account the entry into force of the [Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents (CETS No. 205) also known as the] Tromsø Convention".

At its 103rd meeting (24–27 November 2025), the CDDH received, further to its decision at its 102nd meeting, a presentation by the Secretariat of a proposal for a thematic debate on the right of access to official documents ([CDDH\(2025\)23](#)). The CDDH agreed to hold the debate as proposed at its next meeting.

The Tromsø Convention entered into force on 1 December 2020 following its ratification by its 10th Party. Today, it has 17 Parties. The Council of Europe Access Info Group (AIG), which monitors its implementation by its Parties, has completed the baseline evaluation of 15 Parties so far. The Consultation of the Parties has adopted recommendations to Parties based on the findings of the AIG's baseline evaluation reports.

The session will provide an overview of the Tromsø Convention's standards guaranteeing a general stand-alone right to access official documents and the standards developed by the Court regarding access to State-held information under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. It will highlight the meeting points of the two treaties, their distinct features and possible ways in which they influence on each other. Overall, it will aim at promoting a deeper understanding of the Tromsø Convention and its added value with respect to the limited right of access to information under the European Convention on Human Rights, and a favourable environment for its ratification by Council of Europe member States. The results of the AIG's monitoring work will also be presented.

Programme

Interventions by invited speakers

- Helena JÄDERBLOM – presentation of the AIG's monitoring work (15 min)
- Boglarka BENKO – Senior Lawyer, Registry of the European Court of Human Rights, presentation of the evolution of the Court's jurisprudence on access to information under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (15 min)
- Päivi KORPISAARI – AIG member, professor of Communication Law, Helsinki University, presentation of the standards of the Tromsø Convention (15 min)
- Mateja PREŠERN – Vice-Chair of the Consultation of the Parties, Director at the Ministry of Public Administration, Directorate for Local Self-Government, Non-Governmental Organizations and the Political System – Sector for Transparency and the Political System, Ministry of Public Administration, Slovenia (15 min)

Discussion – 30 minutes

Appendix IV

Presentation by Eerik-Niiles KROSS, Chair of the Committee on legal affairs and human rights of the Parliamentary Assembly

Thank you for your invitation. It is a privilege, in my capacity as Chair of the Parliamentary Assembly's Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights since January 2026, to present our most recent work and priorities.

I particularly welcome the continued cooperation between your Steering Committee and our own. Our regular exchanges are essential to ensuring coherence between the intergovernmental and parliamentary dimensions of the Council of Europe, especially on matters at the core of our mandate.

Unsurprisingly, a central focus of our Committee in recent years has been the **Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine and its far-reaching legal and human rights consequences**.

Since the full-scale invasion in February 2022, the Parliamentary Assembly has taken a leading role in condemning this act of aggression and in advancing a comprehensive accountability agenda. Following Russia's expulsion from the Council of Europe, our Committee was the first to propose, as early as April 2022, the establishment of a special tribunal for the crime of aggression. Since then, we have adopted several substantive reports on the legal and human rights implications of the war, consistently calling for a coherent system of accountability for all violations of international law.

In this context, we have actively promoted and supported **key institutional developments**: the bilateral agreement between the Council of Europe and Ukraine of June 2025, the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Special Tribunal adopted in May 2026, and the Convention establishing a Claims Commission in December 2025. Our current priority is to secure their **rapid entry into force and effective operationalisation**. This requires the completion of national ratification processes—often within parliaments—as well as clarity regarding sustainable financing. In my role as Chair, I have engaged directly with national delegations to monitor progress. Yet progress is not as swift as we would like, and the situation demands. We are particularly concerned that the process of joining the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Special Tribunal is too slow, and that there are still uncertainties about the budgetary estimates. I therefore encourage all of you and your governments to use all the means at your disposal to accelerate these processes and to make the Special Tribunal a reality, without further delay.

Let me recall several fundamental legal principles that the Assembly has affirmed must not be set aside in any peace process concerning Ukraine, as reflected in our latest resolution based on my report of June 2025. (list not exhaustive)

First, the attempted annexation of Crimea and other temporarily occupied territories constitutes a violation of *jus cogens* norms and cannot be recognised under any circumstances. Second, individual criminal responsibility must be upheld; international crimes cannot be subject to amnesty. Third, the Russian Federation remains under a clear obligation to implement the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights concerning Crimea, eastern Ukraine, and the aggression. Fourth, Russia must provide full reparation for the damage caused by its internationally wrongful acts, owed to Ukraine as a State and to individual victims.

At the same time, there are areas where we would have wished States to go further. On the personal immunities of the "Troika" before the Special Tribunal, we consider that the compromise reached in the Statute falls short of our expectations and of established precedents in international criminal justice. We also take the view that the crime of aggression began in

2014, and that the compensation mechanism should therefore cover damage caused since 20 February 2014. It is indeed possible to amend the Convention establishing the Claims Commission to extend its temporal scope beyond February 2022, and we invite future States Parties to do so.

Equally important is the establishment of the third pillar of the compensation mechanism: a dedicated compensation fund. The Assembly has repeatedly called for this fund to be financed through Russian state assets frozen in Europe and elsewhere. We consider such measures to constitute lawful countermeasures in response to serious breaches of *erga omnes* obligations arising under *jus cogens* norms. It would be both logical and institutionally coherent for this fund to be established or administered within the Council of Europe framework, as a continuation of the Register of Damage and the Claims Commission.

Our resolutions have also paid particular attention to the situation of **Ukrainian prisoners of war, civilian captives and deported or transferred Ukrainian children**. We have characterised some of the violations committed by Russia as **crimes against humanity**, and as an **element of genocide**. We have therefore called on the International Criminal Court to reflect these qualifications in its ongoing investigations into the situation in Ukraine. Ensuring full complementarity between the ICC and the future Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression is essential, as the crimes investigated by the ICC stem from the “supreme international crime” of aggression.

In sum, the Parliamentary Assembly—and in particular our Committee—has played an important role in shaping the Council of Europe’s legal response to this war. Without this parliamentary impetus, I doubt that States would have moved forward with the same ambition and pace. Yet our work is far from complete. Sustaining momentum on accountability is critical, especially in a context of evolving geopolitical uncertainties. The credibility of the Council of Europe as a rule-of-law-based organisation is at stake. We must deliver on our commitments—not only for Ukraine and its people, but also to uphold the integrity of the international legal order established after the Second World War.

Another key priority of our Committee concerns the **European Convention on Human Rights system**.

As you know, under Article 22 of the Convention, the Parliamentary Assembly elects the judges of the Court. This matter has been discussed with our Secretary General earlier this week, and I will not address it further, as it falls within the remit of our Committee on the Election of Judges. Our focus, within the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, is on the substantive functioning and future of the Convention system.

We have consistently contributed to reflections on strengthening this system, including in the context of reforms, successive protocols and high-level conferences. We have recently intensified our work on the implementation of the Court’s judgments, which remains a central challenge for the effectiveness and credibility of the Convention.

Looking ahead, we are preparing a report entitled “**ECHR: 75 years and beyond**”, under the rapporteurship of Mr Titus Corlăţean, aimed at taking stock of the Convention’s achievements and identifying the key challenges that lie ahead. In this context, our rapporteur has been closely following your work on the elements for the **Chişinău Declaration on migration and the Convention**, and we are grateful for the opportunity to contribute. Ahead of the Declaration, our Committee adopted a statement in April calling on member States to preserve the overall integrity of the Convention system, including the independence, impartiality, and authority of the Court.

In that statement, we acknowledged the complexity of migration-related challenges and recalled that the Convention is a living instrument, interpreted in the light of present-day conditions. At the same time, we warned that this reflection must be handled with caution and must not

jeopardise the universality of human rights. We urged States to preserve core principles, including non-discrimination, the absolute prohibition of torture and the principle of non-refoulement. We note with satisfaction that most of these principles are somehow reflected in the final Chişinău Declaration.

We stand ready to continue contributing to this process, should the CDDH be entrusted with a follow-up mandate by the Committee of Ministers. In doing so, we will pay particular attention to any implications for the interpretation of Articles 3 and 8 of the Convention. While we understand the concerns expressed by certain States regarding the application of the Convention in the migration context, we must remain clear on one point: the authority and independence of the Court must not be compromised. It is for the Court to provide authoritative guidance on the interpretation and application of the Convention, including through its case-law and communication tools. Member States, including national parliaments, should not seek to substitute themselves for the Court in this role, but rather to support it. —

I would also like to highlight our strengthened work on the **implementation of the Court's judgments**. In addition to our regular reports—both general and specific, including one concerning the Russian Federation—we have recently established a Network of parliamentarians to promote the implementation of ECHR judgments. This Network, launched in April and chaired by Mr Adam Bodnar, former Minister of Justice and former Ombudsperson of Poland, is a direct follow-up to the Reykjavík Declaration of 2023, in which Heads of State and Government called for stronger parliamentary involvement in the execution of judgments.

One particularly complex issue we are addressing concerns the **execution of judgments against the Russian Federation**, in a context of complete non-cooperation and limited effectiveness of existing mechanisms. Our rapporteur on this matter, Mr Tony Vaughan, is currently examining possible avenues, with a view to formulating recommendations to the Committee of Ministers. You will therefore likely be invited to provide your views on these proposals. Among the options under consideration are the establishment of a compensation fund to ensure the payment of just satisfaction in cases related to the war in Ukraine, potentially financed through Russian state assets, as well as measures to facilitate the recognition and enforcement of Court judgments before national jurisdictions. These proposals inevitably raise complex legal questions, including with respect to State immunity.

Let me finally highlight **three thematic areas** of our work with relevance from the point of view of **normative development**. Not only for member States but beyond Europe, as the problems we are addressing are global and require global responses.

First, on **strengthening the international legal order**, we have two reports under preparation: one on the modernisation of international humanitarian law in light of contemporary armed conflicts, and another on threats to the International Criminal Court, including sanctions imposed by third states on ICC judges and prosecutors. We consider it essential that such measures do not affect the Court's functioning or the status of its officials in member States, and that Europe actively supports the Court's independence and effectiveness. In January 2025, the Assembly also adopted a report on private military and security companies, and we welcome the Committee of Ministers' openness to consider a Council of Europe instrument addressing the risks these actors pose to human rights and the rule of law, complementing UN initiatives.

Second, our recent work on **transnational repression** has led to the adoption, in June, of a new resolution and recommendation based on the report by Mr Efstathiou (as a follow-up to our 2023 report that you are already aware of). In this recommendation, we invite the Committee of Ministers, as a matter of priority, to consider an international legal instrument—potentially a convention—on the prevention and punishment of transnational repression, including a clear definition and minimum standards to prevent such practices and protect victims. The Assembly sees a momentum being developed to combat this dangerous phenomenon, with dedicated reports or policies being implemented in several member and observer States of the Council of Europe. We hope this proposal will receive your careful consideration.

Third, **artificial intelligence**. Two reports are under preparation: one on the use of AI by parliaments, and another on its use in public administration, with a particular focus on safeguarding human rights. Our Committee has a dedicated Sub-Committee on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights and has contributed, through its statutory opinion, to the adoption and promotion of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on AI.

I shall stop here to allow sufficient time for our discussion. I am ready to answer your questions and to elaborate further on any points that interest you most.

Thank you.

Appendix V

**Presentation by Maria-Andriani KOSTOPOULOU,
Chairperson of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women
and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)**

Dear Chair, of the CDDH, dear members of the Committee, colleagues,

It is a great honour to address your Committee today and provide you with an overview of the state-of-play regarding the implementation of the Istanbul Convention – as identified by GREVIO in the course of a full decade of intense country-by-country monitoring work. It is also an important responsibility, because I am bringing to you a fundamental human rights issue - violence against women – that is still so very much in need of our attention.

15 years ago, the Committee of Ministers adopted legally binding standards to address violence against women in all its forms. This includes domestic violence – a form of violence that affects many families in many different ways. Women are predominantly exposed to intimate-partner violence at the hands of their male partners, whether this is physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence. Which is why the Istanbul Convention recognizes

Recognizing this strong gender dimension in the daily forms of violence that women and girls are subjected to in our societies, placed the Council of Europe at the forefront of standard-setting in the area of women's rights. The Istanbul Convention filled a gap in the prevention and protection of violence against women in Europe, and GREVIO's monitoring shows a high level of engagement with the convention's principles and premises among its 39 parties.

Before going into a more detailed description of GREVIO's findings, please allow me to also state that there is persistent and at times very vocal opposition to the convention's standards, as you may be aware. Since issuing the first report on its general activities, and through its monitoring work over the past decade, GREVIO has been offering facts and results regarding the impact of the convention. This is contributing to important messages about the aims and purposes of the Istanbul Convention.

But how do we know that the Istanbul Convention is producing results? Since 2016, exactly ten years ago, GREVIO has been monitoring its implementation at national level, starting with what we call the baseline evaluation procedure. This is a comprehensive stocktaking exercise of nearly all of the 60 operational provisions of the Istanbul Convention across its four pillars: prevention, protection, prosecution and comprehensive policies. This week, with the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation reports on Latvia and Ukraine, we have completed this initial baseline evaluation procedure in respect of all state parties. This means, that all 38 member states of the Council of Europe that are party to the convention have undergone this stocktaking exercise. As many of you know, the European Union acceded to the Istanbul Convention in 2023, making it the first non-state to become a party. Last year, the EU submitted its baseline report to GREVIO, and on this basis, GREVIO recently conducted its evaluation visit to EU institutions, bodies and agencies. It held in-depth discussions on the measures taken by the respective EU entities for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. We will now be working on our draft report to be adopted by the GREVIO plenary next year.

GREVIO's baseline evaluation procedures are followed by thematic evaluation rounds. We are currently conducting our first such thematic procedure, focussing on the theme of "Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice." By the end of this year, we will have published 24 country reports under this theme.

The progress identified across GREVIO's 16 first thematic evaluation reports published to date testifies to the impact of the convention and the advances made in the protection of women and girls from gender-based violence through the convention's thorough implementation.

Prime among the positive steps taken at national level is the alignment of legislation with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention. This is particularly the case for offences such as stalking, forced marriage and female genital mutilation, which have been introduced as specific offences in many criminal codes. This is linked with a trend visible in a few countries of growing access to justice for women, notably for victims of sexual violence. While there was some hesitation around defining rape as a non-consensual sexual act in the early days of the convention, we are now seeing many countries moving towards such a consent-based definition of rape, which truly is a game changer. Most women and girls are raped by someone they know, and many do not fight back or experience coercion and violence. They simply say no or otherwise show that they are not consenting. Consent-based definitions of rape in the criminal code ensures that their experiences are not dismissed by law enforcement agencies. While this is no guarantee for conviction, the stark increase in reporting rates in countries where this change was made shows how important it is to align criminal law with women's lived reality. And in this context it is important to remember that a rise in reported cases is not to be mistaken with inefficiency or that something is not working. The opposite is true: women are coming forward because they feel they can turn to the authorities.

There are three more important areas of progress I would like to share with you:

- The adoption of new national policies, including National Action Plans, that address violence against women more comprehensively, based on the approach, definitions and obligations contained in the Istanbul Convention.
- The allocation of more funding and resources to measures and policies addressing violence against women.
- The significant increase in specialist support services: gaps in quantity and quality are being closed, and that is making me hopeful.

But these improvements don't mean we are at the end of the road. In fact, implementation of the Istanbul Convention is a journey. Its many detailed provisions provide us with the GPS for how to get move forward. This is something we need to bear in mind when we consider that since the introduction of the Istanbul Convention, not a single national or international prevalence survey has shown violence against women to be on the decline. Instead, the pandemic and other factors have and are contributing to persistent or even growing levels of violence against women and girls.

The factors I have in mind are diverse but interlocking and must be addressed with urgency. Many are linked to the systemic lack of primary prevention, which means ensuring that violence is not committed. We are seeing far too few examples of comprehensive and long-term preventive efforts that tackle the root causes of violence against women in all its forms and that target those who perpetrate: primarily men and boys. Instead, we are seeing a seemingly unstoppable rise in digital manifestations of violence – by former partners, husbands, boyfriends but also by complete strangers, with online hate against women turning into real-life threats of violence. Technology-facilitated violence against women and girls has become pervasive, yet prevention strategies continue to lag behind the scale and speed of the phenomenon.

GREVIO refers to this as “the digital dimension of violence against women”, which is a term we chose to highlight the continuum of violence across the different spheres of life. There is no difference between the violence women and girls experience offline, and the violence they experience online. In fact, there is great fluidity and it is only the tools that vary, not the reasons why. Or the aims. GREVIO's findings indicate that women and girls are increasingly exposed to digital manifestations of violence, and that it is growing in scale and complexity. An example are deepfakes, which are, in 95% of the cases, directed against women and girls. Holding perpetrators to account requires skilled investigators, highly trained, and the joining of forces. An interesting practice, such as the introduction of “cyber competence centers” in prosecution services following the introduction of new criminal offences such as image-based abuse. Addressing the digital dimension of violence against women requires a multi-layered response,

as reflected in GREVIO's General Recommendation No. 1, published in 2022. This document is GREVIO's first authoritative interpretation of the provisions of the Istanbul convention viewed through a particular theme, in this case digital forms of violence against women. It underscores that digital manifestations of violence against women must be addressed across the full range of obligations under the convention.

Another and somewhat related concern is the growing levels of exposure or active consumption of violent pornography and the impact this has on sexual violence perpetration, including by ever younger perpetrators. It is prompting the normalisation of risky sexual practices such as non-fatal strangulation. According to some national studies, around 70% of young women (18-34 or even younger) have engaged in such practices, with varying degrees of consent. It is widespread in intimate-partner violence as a form of violence, with the potential for serious and lifelong harm. Also, it is violence that is predominantly perpetrated on women by male partners – indicating a strong gender dimension. As is so often the case with the type of behaviour GREVIO is concerned by.

For this reason, it is with concern that GREVIO is noting a shift in how violence against women is viewed at policy level in some countries: as a gender-neutral phenomenon. This denies the link between violence against women and their inequality with men. In line with the spirit of the Istanbul Convention, violence against women must be recognised as a cause and a consequence of women's inequality with men in order to address it effectively. This, distinguished members of the CDDH, requires a strong commitment to achieving women's equality with men, which many worry is dwindling at international level.

Another recent pre-occupation of GREVIO that I would like to share with you is the limited efforts to ensure systematic prevention measures. I touched upon this briefly but would like to develop it a little further because this is the topic addressed in GREVIO's forthcoming activity report, to be published in September. Preventing violence against women before it occurs, especially by addressing the underlying attitudes, stereotypes, behaviours and structural inequalities that sustain violence against women, remains both the most ambitious and the most essential objective of the Istanbul Convention. Yet, GREVIO's monitoring work has consistently shown that primary prevention remains one of the weakest aspects of national responses.

Across the parties we have evaluated, prevention policies too often fail to distinguish clearly between primary, secondary and tertiary prevention measures. Awareness-raising campaigns, school-based programmes, perpetrator work and victim support measures are frequently grouped together as though they pursue the same objectives. GREVIO has repeatedly underlined the need for greater conceptual clarity: primary prevention requires a distinct approach focused on intervening before violence occurs.

One consequence of this confusion is the persistent underfunding of genuine primary prevention. Well-funded awareness campaigns are important and welcome, but they do not by themselves transform the social norms, behaviours and power dynamics that sustain violence. Effective prevention requires comprehensive, evidence-based and multi-level programmes capable of addressing attitudes, relationship dynamics, community norms and structural inequalities simultaneously. Where such approaches exist (including school-based interventions challenging gender stereotypes or initiatives engaging men and boys) GREVIO has observed more meaningful progress. Some countries provide encouraging examples, although such practices remain too limited.

Women's rights organisations remain indispensable actors in this field. Their expertise, community roots and longstanding experience place them at the centre of effective prevention efforts. Yet GREVIO's findings continue to reveal insecure and short-term funding towards these organisations, often accompanied by increasing competition from non-specialist providers. As a result, important prevention work may rely heavily on under-resourced NGOs, including in areas concerning women exposed to intersecting forms of discrimination.

Another issue relates to the evaluation. Do prevention measures actually reduce violence? Do they change behaviour? Do they alter social norms over time? Across many parties, prevention measures are implemented without a sufficiently rigorous assessment of their long-term impact. Campaigns are launched, programmes are funded and action plans are adopted, yet there is often limited evidence as to whether these measures effectively reduce violence, change behaviours or transform social norms over time. If we do not know what works in prevention, it is difficult for policy makers to take action.

Yet, the prevention of violence against women is vital, in the literal sense of the word, because it still leads to women killed at the hands of their partners or ex-partners. Frequently, this is linked to insufficient risk assessment or enforcement of protection orders, or signs overlooked because of low levels of multi-agency co-operation at local level. Such killings are a reminder of what is at stake when authorities fail to prevent, protect and respond adequately.

This is why, in parallel to its country evaluation work, GREVIO initiated work on its second General Recommendation, dedicated to gender-related killings of women and girls. This recommendation will identify the key obligations and measures required under the convention to promote a comprehensive response to gender-related killings on the basis of the Istanbul Convention, while providing practical guidance for the prevention of and protection from femicides. A dedicated working group composed of five GREVIO members is mandated to complete this work by the end of 2026, and GREVIO is aiming to launch this recommendation in May 2027.

There are many other topics of relevance to the wide field of violence against women which GREVIO has looked at in more detail, and in different ways. Our activity reports each offer a digest of GREVIO's findings on a specific theme. This allows us to showcase progress in a certain area but also shared shortcomings. In this manner we have covered issues such as sexual violence and rape, the linkages between domestic violence and child custody decisions, risk assessment for victims and the shrinking space for women's human rights defenders.

Women's rights defenders often work on the frontlines, challenging patriarchal norms, traditional gender roles and discriminatory laws. Advocacy around violence against women and the provision of support and protection for victims of gender-based violence form an important aspect of their work. Their contribution to the implementation of international legal standards on women's rights, such as Istanbul Convention is vital. For this reason, formal recognition of this essential role, notably in the context of preventing and combating violence against women, is expressed in Article 9 of the Istanbul Convention. Over the years, GREVIO's monitoring work has revealed a growing number of examples in which women's rights organisations active in this way have seen their scope of action reduced. This ranges from reduced funding opportunities to challenges where co-operation between state actors and specialist support services was lacking, leading to increasing isolation of women's NGOs in their daily work. A decline in co-operation and dialogue with specialist organisations as well as in their involvement in political processes is also visible, as are examples of the silencing and intimidation of NGOs and individual women activists, including journalists.

Copies of our respective focus sections reproduced in a compilation of the first five are available to you. They may for interesting reading!

Because of the many specific areas GREVIO covers in its monitoring work under the convention, GREVIO has built up significant expertise which it regularly shares with other Council of Europe committees and bodies. One example is the Drafting Committee on Human Rights and Drug Policies (DH-PDA), a joint sub-committee to yours, which GREVIO was pleased to nominate a full member to. GREVIO has also significantly contributed to the drafting work on the recently adopted CM Recommendation on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against

women and girls, as well as to the recommendation on age-appropriate sexuality education for children.

Another area of increasing synergies is the caselaw of the European Court of Human Rights. The past decade has seen a strong increase in jurisprudence which references not only the provisions of the Istanbul Convention, but also the findings from GREVIO's evaluation reports. Several high-profile judgments on domestic violence, custody rights in such contexts and sexual violence demonstrate the importance of GREVIO's work for the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights. Conversely, GREVIO's evaluation reports contain numerous references to the Court's jurisprudence and regularly draw on its interpretative guidance. In view of this growing cross-fertilisation between the two conventions, GREVIO also took the initiative to organise a high-level scientific dialogue with the European Court of Human Rights last September.

Legal and judicial responses to cases of violence against women are of great interest to GREVIO. This year, I have the honour of presiding, in my capacity as GREVIO President, over the Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women. This Platform brings together seven independent women's rights mechanisms from around the world (CEDAW Committee, UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women, for example). I have launched work to prepare a position paper on legal retaliation against women, because this is a phenomenon that all seven regional and global women's rights bodies are confronted with. For many women seeking justice, including for experiences of gender-based violence, turning to the legal system may result in retaliatory action taken by the perpetrator. Courts inadvertently turn into institutions that further such retaliation, because in many countries, there are no mechanisms to stop lawsuits intended to silence and intimidate. The experience of women the world over shows that such retaliatory action is pursued by many perpetrators and can take many forms. Together, we as the EDVAW Platform, are advancing discussions on this theme and will be launching a joint paper on 25 November.

Appendix VI**CDDH rapporteurs and representatives**

- Rapporteur on gender equality: Philippe WERY (Belgium)
- Youth rapporteur: Elīna-Luīze VĪTOLA (Latvia)
- Thematic rapporteur on human rights and artificial intelligence: Tim KOLK (Estonia)
- Thematic rapporteur on human rights and the environment: Nicola WENZEL (Germany)
- Thematic rapporteur on impunity for serious violations of human rights: Hans-Jörg BEHRENS (Germany)
- Thematic rapporteur on human rights and business: Nicola WENZEL (Germany)
- Representative to the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO): Elias KASTANAS (Greece)
- Representative to the International Cooperation Group on Drugs and Addictions (Pompidou Group): Milène BLANCHARD (France)
- Representative to the Steering Committee on Democracy (CDDEM): Krista OINONEN (Finland)
- Representative to the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ): Elīna-Luīze VĪTOLA (Latvia)

Appendix VII**Composition of the Bureau of the CDDH and Chairpersons of subordinate bodies**

BUREAU	END OF THE MANDATE	REFERENCES
Tonje MEINICH (Norway) Chairperson	31 December 2026 (elected for 1 year, renewable)	103rd CDDH meeting (November 2025)
Nicola WENZEL (Germany) Vice-chairperson	31 December 2026 (elected for 1 year, renewable)	103rd CDDH meeting (November 2025)
Tim KOLK (Estonia) Member	31 December 2027 (elected for 2 years, renewable once)	103rd CDDH meeting (November 2025)
Elias KASTANAS (Greece) Member	31 December 2027 (elected for 2 years, renewable once)	103rd CDDH meeting (November 2025)
Milène BLANCHARD (France) Member	31 December 2026 (elected for 2 years, renewable once)	101st CDDH meeting (November 2024)
Elīna Luīze VĪTOLA (Latvia) Member	31 December 2026 (elected for 2 years, renewable once)	101st CDDH meeting (November 2024)
Babette KOOPMAN (Netherlands) Member	31 December 2027 (elected for 2 years, renewable once)	103rd CDDH meeting (November 2025)
Paweł WIERDAK (Poland) Member	31 December 2027 (elected for 2 years, renewable once)	103rd CDDH meeting (November 2025)
CHAIRPERSONS		
"46 + 1" Tonje MEINICH (Norway)		92nd CDDH meeting (November 2019)
CDDH-ELI Hans-Jörg BEHRENS (Germany)		99th CDDH meeting (November 2023)
CDDH-PTS Elīna Luīze VĪTOLA (Latvia)		1st CDDH-PTS meeting (March 2025)
CDDH-VOTE Krista OINONEN (Finland)		103rd CDDH meeting (November 2025)
CDDH-TE Milène BLANCHARD (France)		103rd CDDH meeting (November 2025)
DH-PDA Tonje MEINICH (Norway)		102nd CDDH meeting (June 2025)

Appendix VIII**Calendar**

*As adopted (for the second semester 2026) and approved (for the first semester 2027)
by the CDDH at its 104th meeting (30 June – 3 July 2026)*

21 – 23/09/2026	1st meeting of the Drafting Group on the protection of the right of vote / <i>1^e réunion du Groupe de rédaction sur la protection du droit de vote</i> (CDDH-VOTE)
13 – 15/10/2026	<u>2nd meeting of the Drafting Group on the use of new technologies by the Court and new tendencies in litigation before the Court / 2^e réunion du Groupe de rédaction sur le système de la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme</u> (CDDH-TE)
20 – 22/10/2026	<u>4th meeting of the Drafting Committee on human rights and drug policies / 4^e réunion du Comité de rédaction sur les droits humains et les politiques en matière de drogues</u> (DH-PDA)
04 – 06/11/2026	<u>7th meeting of the Drafting Group on the eradication of impunity for serious human rights violations / 7^e réunion du Groupe de rédaction sur l'élimination de l'impunité pour les violences graves des droits humains</u> (CDDH-ELI)
12 – 13/11/2026	<u>116th meeting of the Bureau of the Steering Committee for Human Rights / 116^e réunion du Bureau du Comité directeur pour les droits humains</u> (CDDH-BU)
01 – 04/12/2026	<u>105th meeting of the Steering Committee for Human Rights / 105^e réunion du Comité directeur pour les droits humains</u> (CDDH)
03 – 05/02/2027	<u>3rd meeting of the Drafting Group on the use of new technologies by the Court and new tendencies in litigation before the Court / 3^e réunion du Groupe de rédaction sur le système de la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme</u> (CDDH-TE)
10 – 12/03/2027	<u>8th meeting of the Drafting Group on the eradication of impunity for serious human rights violations / 8^e réunion du Groupe de rédaction sur l'élimination de l'impunité pour les violences graves des droits humains</u> (CDDH-ELI)
31/03 – 02/04/2027	2nd meeting of the Drafting Group on the protection of the right of vote / <i>2^e réunion du Groupe de rédaction sur la protection du droit de vote</i> (CDDH-VOTE)
19 – 21/05/2027	<u>9th meeting of the Drafting Group on the eradication of impunity for serious human rights violations / 9^e réunion du Groupe de rédaction sur l'élimination de l'impunité pour les violences graves des droits humains</u> (CDDH-ELI)
10 – 11/06/2027	<u>117th meeting of the Bureau of the Steering Committee for Human Rights / 117^e réunion du Bureau du Comité directeur pour les droits humains</u> (CDDH-BU)
16 – 18/06/2027	3rd meeting of the Drafting Group on the protection of the right of vote / <i>3^e réunion du Groupe de rédaction sur la protection du droit de vote</i> (CDDH-VOTE)
29/06 – 02/07/2027	<u>106th meeting of the Steering Committee for Human Rights / 106^e réunion du Comité directeur pour les droits humains</u> (CDDH)

