

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 25 November 2025

CDBIO/INF (2023) 13 REV

**STEERING COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE FIELDS OF
BIOMEDICINE AND HEALTH (CDBIO)**

Terms of reference of the CDBIO for 2024-2027

Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO)

Set up by the Committee of Ministers under Article 17 of the Statute of the Council of Europe and in accordance with Resolution CM/Res(2021)3 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

Category: Steering committee

Duration: 1 January 2024 - 31 December 2027¹

Programme: Advancing social justice, good health and a sustainable environment

Sub-programme: Health and human rights

Main tasks

Under the authority of the Committee of Ministers, and bearing in mind the Council of Europe legal standards, as well as the relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights, the CDBIO carries out the work assigned to the Steering Committee in Bioethics by the Convention on the protection of human rights and the dignity of human beings with regards to the applications of biology and medicine (Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine); conducts the intergovernmental work on human rights protection in the fields of biomedicine, as well as health; in particular with regard to issues raised by the Covid-19 pandemic and taking into account the lessons to be learnt from the health crisis and advises the Committee of Ministers on all questions within its fields of competence. In particular, the CDBIO is instructed to:

- i. take due account of the Reykjavik Declaration²[8] in conducting its activities and submit proposals for its implementation as appropriate;
- ii. take account of the relevant key findings and challenges set out in the Secretary General's 2023 Report on the state of democracy, human rights and rule of law "An Invitation to Recommit to the Values and Standards of the Council of Europe";
- iii. promote equitable access to health care, patient rights, protection of persons in vulnerable situations and citizen participation in the healthcare and biomedical research policies and, where appropriate, prepare relevant guidelines and other tools (reference tools, implementation guides), in accordance with the principles laid down in the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine;
- iv. assess ethical and legal challenges raised by scientific and technological developments, as well as by the evolution of practices, in the fields of biomedicine and health;
- v. contribute to raising awareness and facilitating the implementation of the principles laid down in the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine and its additional protocols, taking also into account the outcome of co-operation activities in the relevant fields;
- vi. carry out the regular re-examination foreseen in the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine and its additional protocols;
- vii. develop further the principles laid down in the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, as appropriate, also in the light of the relevant case law of the European Convention on Human Rights;
- viii. co-operate with the relevant intergovernmental bodies and organisations in particular with a view to promoting consistency between normative texts;

¹These terms of reference are approved for the first biennial period 2024-2025. For the second biennial period 2026-2027, they are approved on a provisional basis, subject to confirmation upon the adoption of the budget for 2026-2027.

² [Reykjavik Declaration - United around our values.](#)

- ix. raise-awareness about Council of Europe standards and tools in its field of competence in the member States and beyond, through the neighbourhood policy and in other international and global fora where relevant;
- x. hold regular exchange of views in order to evaluate its activities and advise the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General on future priorities in its sector including possible new activities and those that might be discontinued;
- xi. take due account of the following mainstreamed perspectives in the performance of its tasks: gender, youth, children’s rights, rights of persons with disabilities, and Roma and Traveller³[9] issues;
- xii. where relevant, contribute to strengthening meaningful engagement with civil society organisations and national human rights institutions in its work;
- xiii. in accordance with decisions CM/Del/Dec(2013)1168/10.2 of the Committee of Ministers, carry out, at regular intervals, within the limits of the available resources and bearing in mind its priorities, an examination of some or all of the conventions for which it has been given responsibility⁴and report back to the Committee of Ministers;
- xiv. contribute to the achievement of, and review progress towards, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular with regards to Goal 3: Good health and well-being, Goal 5: Gender equality, Goal 10: Reduced inequalities and Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions;
- xv. where relevant, take account of, and propose effective responses to, the challenges posed in its field of competence by the Russian Federation’s war of aggression against Ukraine.

Main deliverables

Under the authority of the Committee of Ministers, the CDBIO is instructed to complete these deliverables, within the following deadlines:

| | Category ▼ | Priority ▼ | Deadline ▼ |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Online Guide of good practice for the participation of children in decision making processes on matters relating to their health in non-official languages | A | 2 | 31/12/2024 |
| 2. Report on artificial intelligence applications in healthcare | A | 2 | 31/12/2024 |
| 3. Report on promoting dialogue amongst the public, practitioners and policy makers for the purpose of the development of regulations on genomics medicine | A | 2 | 31/12/2024 |
| 4. Draft Recommendation promoting the use of voluntary measures in mental health care services | A | 1 | 31/12/2024 |
| 5. Report on the case law of the European Court of Human Rights relevant to mental health | A | 1 | 31/12/2024 |

³ The term “Roma and Travellers” is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term “Gens du voyage”, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

⁴ Cf. relevant decisions of the Committee of Ministers ([CM/Del/Dec\(2013\)1168/10.2](#)) and list of Conventions in document [CM\(2023\)132](#).

| | | | |
|---|---|---|------------|
| 6. Horizon scanning conference | C | 1 | 31/12/2024 |
| 7. Report on equitable access to innovative treatments and technologies in healthcare systems | A | 3 | 31/12/2025 |
| 8. Youth forum on bioethics ⁵ | A | 1 | 31/12/2025 |
| 9. Final report of the Strategic Action Plan on Human Rights and Technologies in Biomedicine 2020-2025 | C | 1 | 31/12/2025 |
| 10. Draft Strategic Action Plan on Human Right in Biomedicine 2026-2029 | C | 1 | 31/12/2025 |
| 11. Interpretative guide to adapting the existing human rights framework to neurotechnologies | C | 1 | 30/06/2026 |
| 12. Report following the examination of the additional protocol concerning genetic testing | B | 2 | 30/06/2026 |
| 13. Report following the re-examination of the additional protocol concerning biomedical research | B | 2 | 31/12/2027 |
| 14. Report following the re-examination of Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)6 on research of biological materials of human origins | B | 3 | 30/12/2027 |
| <p>Key</p> <p>A: deliverable under preparation (2022-2023 terms of reference or Committee of Ministers' decision) or deliverable foreseen in the terms of reference provisionally approved for 2024-2025 and reviewed where relevant in the framework of the preparation of the draft Programme and Budget 2024-2027</p> <p>B: review of implementation/re-examination foreseen by the recommendation/protocol/convention</p> <p>C: newly proposed deliverable</p> | | | |

Composition

Members

Governments of the member States are invited to designate one or more representatives of the highest possible rank, with appropriate expertise in the various aspects of bioethics, in particular legal, medical and scientific aspects, including in relation to emerging technologies and to the functioning of their health system, and able to consider these from a human rights perspective.

The Council of Europe will bear the travel and subsistence expenses of one representative from each member State (two in the case of the State whose representative has been elected Chair).

Each member of the Committee shall have one vote. Where a government designates more than one member, only one of them is entitled to take part in the voting.

In accordance with decisions CM/Del/Dec(2013)1168/10.2 of the Committee of Ministers, in cases where there is no convention-based body including all the Parties, non-member States are invited to take part, with a right to vote, in the committee meetings pertaining to the conventions to which they are Parties.

Participants

⁵ Subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and at the charge of their corresponding administrative budgets:

- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
- Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe;
- European Court of Human Rights;
- Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe;
- Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe;
- Consultative Committee of the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (T-PD);
- Conference of the Parties of the Council of Europe Convention on the counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes involving threats to public health (Medicrime Committee);
- Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH);
- Steering Committee on the Rights of the Child (CDENF);
- European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ);
- Committee on Transplantation of Organs and Tissues (CD-P-TO);
- Committee on Blood Transfusion (CD-P-TS);
- Committees or other bodies of the Council of Europe engaged in related work, as appropriate.

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and without defrayal of expenses:

- European Union (one or more representatives, including, as appropriate, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA));
- Observer States to the Council of Europe: Canada, Holy See, Japan, Mexico, United States of America;
- Other international organisations (WHO, UNESCO, United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, OECD and European Science Foundation (ESF)).

Observers

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and without defrayal of expenses:

- non-member States with which the Council of Europe has a Neighbourhood Partnership including relevant co-operation activities;
- States having been invited by decision of the Committee of Ministers to participate in the negotiations;
- interested organisations from Civil Society: the Council of Europe welcomes and promotes the widest participation of civil society, in line with the Guidance note on Civil Society Participation in the Intergovernmental Work of the Council of Europe CDDEM(2024)14, as Observers. Observer status may be requested in accordance with Article 8 of Resolution CM/Res(2021)3 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.”

Working methods

The rules of procedure of the Committee are governed by Resolution CM/Res(2021)3 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

| | Plenary meetings ▼ | | | Bureau meetings ▼ | | |
|------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | Members incl. Chair | Meetings per year | Days per meeting | Members | Meetings per year | Days per meeting |
| 2024 | 47 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 2 |
| 2025 | 47 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 2 |
| 2026 | 47 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 2 |
| 2027 | 47 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 2 |

The CDBIO will appoint from amongst its members up to 5 Rapporteurs on mainstreamed perspectives, including a Gender Equality Rapporteur.

Subject to the agenda, the chairs of its subordinate structures may be invited to attend CDBIO Bureau and/or plenary meetings. The CDBIO will hold regular exchanges of views with the Steering Committee for Human (CDDH).

Budgetary information *

| | Meetings per year | Days per meeting | Members reimbursed | Plenary in €K | Bureau in €K | Working groups in €K | Secretariat (A, B) |
|------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 2024 | 2 | 4 | 47 | 113.5 | 30.4 | - | 1 A; 1 B |
| 2025 | 2 | 4 | 47 | 113.5 | 30.4 | - | 1 A; 1 B |
| 2026 | 2 | 4 | 47 | ↔ | ↔ | - | ↔ |
| 2027 | 2 | 4 | 47 | ↔ | ↔ | - | ↔ |

*The costs include the per diem, travel costs, interpretation, translation and document printing. These costs are calculated on the basis of standard costs.