



**PROPOSED TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION:
THE "FUTURE MONITORING PROCESS AND RESOLUTION OF ISSUES BY PARTIES"**

During the Bureau meeting on 18 February 2025, item 5.4 on the agenda raised the issue of **monitoring process and on-site visits**. Following the Bureau's discussion, it was suggested to hold a similar discussion with all members of the Committee of the Parties (hereinafter, CoP). The aim would be to determine a path forward for revising the monitoring process under Rule 26.5 of the Rules of Procedure.

The discussion points to guide the CoP are the following:

1. How to collect information on the theme decided by the Committee?

a. by questionnaire,

- followed by bilateral meeting (online or on-site), which may be either mandatory or optional.
- On-site visits are typically arranged by mutual agreement between the Party and the Secretariat or by direction of the Bureau

b. by on-site visit

- Where the Party does not respond to the questionnaire, the Bureau may decide to carry-out an on-site visit by the Secretariat, supported by experts, to the Party to ascertain the information necessary to complete the questionnaire. Priority for mandatory on-site visits will be given to Parties that are Council of Europe member States, followed thereafter by Parties which are non-member States.
- Where the Party requests an on-site visit to discuss and receive support in responding to the monitoring round questionnaire and addressing related matters.
- Where the Secretariat or Bureau deems an on-site visit necessary to ensure the completion of the monitoring round process.

2. Who should attend the bilateral meeting?

On site visits and online bilateral meetings should involve all relevant State authorities involved in, or responsible for, compiling the responses to the questionnaire. This ensures that all issues raised by the Party and the Secretariat are comprehensively addressed.

3. What is the outcome of the bilateral meetings?

The conclusion of bilateral meetings (both on-site and online) will result in a final correspondence. This correspondence serves as the last step before the final monitoring report is presented to the CoP for adoption. No new information or details should be added after these meetings.

4. Additional opportunities for bilateral discussions

To provide further support to the Party contact point, additional bilateral discussions may be held in advance of the report drafting process to clarify any issues. These discussions could take place during structured side meetings at the plenary meetings.

5. What type of information is required to be provided in Questionnaire responses and Bilateral meetings/discussions?

To ensure clarity and accuracy, the Party contact point should provide responses supported by references to relevant legislation or other structured documents. Experts should not need to independently investigate a Party's legislation to verify responses. The Party contact point must also be aware of the most current laws in place. This approach avoids simple "Yes/No" responses without supporting information, which cannot be effectively assessed for the purpose OF thematic monitoring purposes.

6. Is a Bilateral meeting always required for each Party during a monitoring process?

A bilateral meeting (online or on-site) is not typically required if there is agreement between the Secretariat and the Party regarding the content of the draft report. Such meetings are generally held only when necessary to resolve discrepancies or clarify issues, and there is no structured mechanism mandating their use in all cases.

Rule 26.5 of the Rules of Procedure:

5. The secretariat may request additional information if it appears that the replies are not exhaustive or are unclear. Where warranted, with the consent of the Party or Parties concerned and within the limits of budgetary appropriations, the bureau may decide to carry out an on-site visit to the Party or Parties concerned to clarify the situation. The bureau shall establish guidance as to the procedure governing the on-site visits.