Extract from CM(2025)131-addfinal (pages 102-105)

Terms of reference of the
Steering Committee for Culture and Cultural Heritage (CDCULT)

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-consolidated on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

Category: Steering committee
Duration: 1 January 2024 - 31 December 2027
Programme: Anchoring democratic values in European societies
Sub-programme: Culture and cultural heritage
Revised deliverables and priorities for 2026-27

Main tasks

Under the authority of the Committee of Ministers and in the framework of the European Cultural Convention, building notably on the outcomes of relevant ministerial conferences, the CDCULT oversees the Council of Europe's intergovernmental work in the field of culture and cultural heritage. The CDCULT advises the Committee of Ministers on all questions within its area of competence and guides the implementation of its sector-specific acquis. The CDCULT provides States Parties to the European Cultural Convention and other relevant Conventions with standards, policies and good practices to sustainably manage cultural, cultural heritage resources, as a basis for democratic and inclusive societies in a digitally evolving environment, impacted by environmental degradation.
In particular, the CDCULT is instructed to:

i. take due account of the Reykjavik Declaration[1] 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 annual reports on the state of democracy, human rights and rule of law[2] and contribute, where relevant, to the process towards a New Democratic Pact for Europe;
iii. focus on the following tasks:
    a. devise and follow-up innovative policies and strategies related to the sustainable management of culture, cultural heritage and reflecting environmental and climate change challenges;
    b. develop standards and co-operation mechanisms as appropriate and act as a forum where States share information and good practices on their implementation;
    c. develop policy measures to promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue;
    d. promote policy measures to meet the challenges and opportunities of digitalisation and artificial intelligence in the sectors under its supervision;
iv. continue to follow up the results and recommendations of relevant ministerial conferences, in particular the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Culture (Strasbourg, 1 April 2022), in line with Committee of Ministers' decisions;
v. facilitate the use of and implementation by member States of sector specific conventions, Committee of Ministers' recommendations, tools and guidelines on culture and cultural heritage policies at national, regional and local level, as appropriate;
vi. promote, follow-up and guide the implementation of the Faro Convention on the value of cultural heritage for society and the European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century;
vii. promote, follow-up and guide the implementation of the Nicosia Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property (in co-operation with the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC));
viii. explore the specific contribution of culture, cultural heritage to topical issues for the Council of Europe such as freedom of expression, environment, non-discrimination and democratic participation;
ix. at the request of member States, facilitate the delivery of peer reviews, policy and legal advice, technical assistance, co-operation and capacity-building initiatives in the areas covered by these terms of reference;
x. maintain, further develop and/or make the best use of European platforms and networks – including digital ones (in particular HEREIN) – to collect good practice, exchange data and experiences among stakeholders and member States and develop new approaches to policies and strategies on culture and cultural heritage;
xi. follow up existing standards of the Council of Europe on culture, cultural heritage and, where necessary, develop new ones or adapt existing ones taking into account the outcomes of exchange platforms and conferences and as appropriate, reviews of technical co-operation, Joint Projects and field projects, as well as the information on any developments and activities of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes;
xii. promote dialogue with representatives of other international organisations and of observer organisations to make use of each other's know-how and experience and identify opportunities for co-operation and synergies in the achievement of the goals of the Council of Europe in the fields of culture, cultural heritage;

[1] Reykjavík Declaration - United around our values.
[2] Cf. Secretary General's report 2025 "Towards a New Democratic Pact for Europe".

xiii. without prejudice to the mandates of intergovernmental committees of the Council of Europe that already follow the work of monitoring mechanisms, follow the activities of the relevant monitoring and other bodies or convention mechanisms;

xiv. 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;

xv. hold an exchange of views annually 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;

xvi. 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 Traveller[3] issues;

xvii. where relevant, contribute to strengthening meaningful engagement with civil society organisations and national human rights institutions in its work;

xviii. 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 responsibility,[4] in co-operation, where appropriate, with the relevant convention-based bodies, and report back to the Committee of Ministers;

xx. 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 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities; Goal 13: Climate action, Goal 15: Life on land and Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; and contribute to the reflection on the potential establishment of culture as an independent goal in its own right in a future development framework.

Main deliverables

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

	Priority ▼	Deadline ▼
1. Examine the proposals of the jury for the 8th Session 2022-2023 of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe, and forward their proposals concerning the award winner, and, wherever appropriate, special mentions, to the Committee of Ministers	1	31/12/2024
2. Thematic report on networking concerning freedom of artistic expression	2	31/12/2024
3. Guidelines given the latest technological developments, such as artificial intelligence, complementing Council of Europe standards in the fields of culture, creativity and cultural heritage	1	31/12/2024
4. Exploratory study and working group reports on the creation of a legal mechanism to support international co-production of audiovisual works in the form of series (2022-2024)	1	31/12/2024
5. Draft Recommendation to facilitate the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe ("Landscape and health")	2	31/12/2024
6. HELP awareness raising course on freedom of artistic expression	2	31/12/2025
7. Draft Recommendation on the culture and heritage sectors' importance in promoting non-discrimination and protection of vulnerable groups in co-operation with the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI)	1	31/12/2026
8. Guidelines on the prevention aspects associated to the Council of Europe Convention on Offences related to Cultural Property	3	31/12/2025
9. Report of the Twelfth Council of Europe Conference on the implementation of the European Landscape Convention	2	31/12/2025
10. Second general report on the state of freedom of artistic expression in Europe	1	31/12/2026
11. Guidance document on youth involvement in culture and heritage in a digital world in co-operation with the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ)	1	31/12/2027
12. A new environment for Democracy and Artistic Freedom: CreateToBeFree Discursive Platform for cross-sectoral exchange on artistic freedom between culture organisations, authorities and civil society	1	31/12/2026
13. Guiding principles on putting Cultural Rights into practice to foster democratic life in Europe, including the Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy	2	31/12/2027
14. Draft comprehensive brochure on next year's annual theme of European Heritage Days suggesting event ideas and giving examples of good practices	1	31/12 of each year
15. Digital #Exhibition "Free to Create – Create to be Free" and associated activities	1	31/12 of each year
16. Faro Convention action plan: strengthening/facilitating the implementation of the Convention principles by authorities and civil society	2	31/12 of each year
17. Promotion and networking of activities on the Council of Europe Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property	2	31/12 of each year

[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(2025)132.

Composition

- Members

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. The participation of non-member States referred to by Decision CM/Del/Dec(2022)1429/2.5 and Resolution CM/Res(2022)3 is restricted to meetings and activities convened pursuant to Art. 6 of the European Cultural Convention.
Governments of member States of the Council of Europe and of other States having acceded to the European Cultural Convention are invited to appoint one or more high ranking representatives with top responsibilities for the development and management of policy in the fields of culture, cultural heritage.
The Council of Europe will bear the travel and subsistence expenses of one representative from each State Party (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.

- Participants

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;
- Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe;
- Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe;
- Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB);
- Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI);
- Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU);
- Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ);
- Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI);
- Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF);
- European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC);
- 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, Japan, Mexico, United States of America;
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO);
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD);
- Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE);
- European Free Trade Association (EFTA);
- Nordic Council of Ministers;
- Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO);
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN-ECE);
- International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM).

- Observers

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

- Israel;
- 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-consolidated 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-consolidated on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods. Online participation in meetings will be available.

	Plenary meetings ▼			Bureau meetings ▼		
	Members incl. Chair	Meetings per year	Days per meeting	Members	Meetings per year	Days per meeting
2024	49	1	2.5	9	2	1.5
2025	49	1	2.5	9	2	1.5
2026	49	1	2.5	9	2	1.5
2027	49	1	2.5	9	2	1.5

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

Budgetary information*

	Meetings per year	Days per meeting	Members reimbursed	Plenary in €K	Bureau in €K	Working groups in €K	Secretariat (A, B)
2024	1	2.5	49	58.5	10.5	-	0.5 A; 0.5 B
2025	1	2.5	49	58.5	10.5	-	0.5 A; 0.5 B
2026	1	2.5	49	62.7	14.4	-	0.5 A; 0.5 B
2027	1	2.5	49	62.7	14.4	-	0.5 A; 0.5 B

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