

Strasbourg, 30 April 2026

CDENV(2026)R1

STEERING COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT (CDENV)

1st meeting
24-25 March 2026

MEETING REPORT

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING BY THE SECRETARIAT

The Steering Committee on the Environment (CDENV) held its 1st meeting in Strasbourg on 24-25 March 2026. The meeting was opened by the Secretariat and chaired by Mr Rafael BENITEZ, Director of Social Rights, Health and Environment, until the election of the Chair of the CDENV.

Mr Gianluca ESPOSITO, Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, delivered an address to the CDENV. He highlighted that the CDENV's work is grounded in the Reykjavík Declaration's strong political mandate to tackle the triple planetary crisis and recalled that the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment, adopted in May 2025, provides a concrete framework for action. He underlined the CDENV's central role in implementing the Strategy and its Action Plan through multidisciplinary and inclusive cooperation, bringing together member States, CoE bodies, international organisations and civil society. He announced a Memorandum of Cooperation with UNEP and the Council of Europe's engagement in COP17 and COP31. He expressed full support for the CDENV's work.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The CDENV adopted the agenda as it appears in Appendix I.

3. ROUND TABLE OF PRESENTATION OF PARTICIPANTS

The participants were invited to introduce themselves. The list of participants appears in Appendix II.

4. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR AND BUREAU MEMBERS OF THE CDENV

The CDENV elected Ms Sarah BARNIER-LEROY (France) as Chair, Ms Inga AKSAMITAUSKAITĖ (Lithuania) as Vice-Chair, Ms Ruzanna GRIGORYAN (Armenia), Ms Csilla FODOR (Hungary), and Mr Antonio ANTEQUERA (Spain) as Bureau members in pursuance with [Resolution CM/Res\(2021\)3](#) on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods. Ms BARNIER-LEROY (France) took over the Chair of the meeting during the second day, on 25 March.

5. NOMINATION OF A GENDER EQUALITY RAPPORTEUR

The CDENV appointed Mr Terje Birkrem HOVLAND (Norway) as Gender Equality Rapporteur and mainstreamed perspectives.

6. REQUESTS FOR OBSERVER STATUS TO THE CDENV

The Secretariat informed the CDENV that the written procedure launched on 6 March 2026 to grant observer status to the 8 organisations that had submitted a request for observer status with the CDENV before that date, and which had held observer status with its predecessor body, the Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME), was broken on 18 March 2026. The Turkish delegation made an intervention on the participation of the civil society organisations, suggesting that it should be grounded in expertise and relevance to specific agenda items, and subject to the prior consent of delegations on a case-by-case basis.

The Secretariat presented the requests for observer status to the CDENV as set out in documents CDENV(2026)3 and CDENV(2026)3Add. The CDENV considered those requests and, in line with Article 8 a. of [Resolution CM/Res\(2021\)3](#), unanimously decided to grant them observer status, namely:

- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
- Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
- Global Network for Human Rights and the Environment (GNHRE)
- Wildlife Justice Commission (WJC)
- Youth and Environment Europe (YEE)
- Amnesty International
- Greenpeace International
- Wild Legal
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- Child Rights International Network (CRIN)
- European Council of Spatial Planners - Conseil Européen des Urbanistes (ECTP-CEU)
- European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools (ECLAS)
- UNISCAPE
- Kimbé Rêd – French West Indies (KR-FWI) – France
- IFLA Europe – European Region of the International Federation of Landscape Architects
- Climate Justice for Rosa
- World's Youth for Climate Justice (WYCJ)
- Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland (ERCS)

The observers were invited to attend the rest of the meeting.

7. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CDENV

The Secretariat presented the Terms of Reference of the CDENV, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 18 November 2025. The CDENV took note of the terms of reference, mandate, deliverables and deadlines as set out in document [CDENV\(2026\)1](#). The main deliverables in 2026 concern the review of disinformation, misinformation and access to information on environment-related matters including good practices and recommendations for action (deliverable 2), the study on the conditions enabling child and young environmental defenders to access information, to safely and freely express themselves, to issue recommendations and access to justice (deliverable 3), the review of practices of courts, tribunals and legal professionals specialising in environmental law, including the identification of good procedural and substantive practices (deliverable 4), and the policy guidance and advice on capacity building measures for the adoption of Nature-based Solutions and ecosystem-based approaches embedded in the broader governance structures (deliverable 5).

8. DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The Secretariat recalled the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, held in May 2023, and in this context the Reykjavík Declaration and its Appendix V on the environment, noting that this marked the launch of the “Reykjavík process” which aims to strengthen

the Council of Europe's work in the field, and make the environment a visible priority for the Organisation.

Recognising the urgent need for enhanced environmental protection, as outlined in Appendix V of the Reykjavík Declaration, The Secretariat explained that it underwent a restructuring and, by decision of the Secretary General, a new Department was created which concentrated the Secretariat of all environment-focused initiatives and instruments.

The Secretariat then recalled the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe Strategy on Environment (2025-2030), in May 2025, highlighting its five key objectives, to the implementation of which the work of the CDENV will contribute:

- Integrating human rights considerations in environment-related strategies, instruments, legislation, policies and actions, and vice versa.
- Strengthening good democratic governance in environmental matters.
- Supporting and protecting environmental Human Rights Defenders, Environmental Defenders and Whistle blowers.
- Preventing and prosecuting environment-related crimes.
- Protecting wildlife, ecosystems, habitats, and landscapes.

The Secretariat further recalled the work of the ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME) – which drafted the Strategy. He noted that at its final meeting in December 2025, the GME reviewed progress on the Strategy's five objectives, adopted the first progress report, and took note of the updated Action Plan. He emphasised that the Action Plan, following up on the Reykjavík Declaration, is a living tool for ongoing actions and that the CDENV will conduct a mid-term review by December 2027 in line with its terms of reference.

9. INTEGRATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS AND INSTRUMENTS

The Secretariat introduced the session on the integration of human rights considerations in environmental matters and instruments.

9.1. EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS CASES

Ms Barbara BAZÁNTH, Legal Officer in the Department for the Execution of Judgments of the ECtHR, presented the state of play of the execution of ECtHR judgments related to the environment.

Ms BAZÁNTH briefly introduced the execution process and pending cases before the Committee of Ministers. She explained that most of the pending environment-related cases are under the enhanced supervision procedure as they are either pilot judgements or they raise complex or structural problems. There are currently seven leading cases that are raising new issues requiring new general measures to be adopted by the concerned States.

Ms BAZÁNTH presented in more detail the execution of two of the most recent cases that are under the enhanced supervision and are of most interest: *Verein Klimaseniorinnen Schweiz and Others v. Switzerland* and *Cannavacciuolo and Others v. Italy*. These cases have been recently examined by the Committee of Ministers that welcomed the measures adopted by the member States and invited them to adopt other measures. They will be on the agenda of the Committee of Ministers again respectively in December 2026 and March 2027.

9.2. EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL RIGHTS DECISIONS

Prof. Aoife NOLAN, President of the European Committee on Social Rights presented the state of play of the decisions of the European Committee on Social Rights and of the reporting mechanisms under the European Social Charter in environmental related matters.

Ms NOLAN highlighted how the Charter has been interpreted over two decades by the Committee to address a wide range of issues related to human rights and the environment within the reporting procedure and under the collective complaints.

She recalled the Committee's authoritative Statement of interpretation on Article 3 of the European Social Charter on the right to safe and healthy working conditions and climate change that was recently released and reiterated that the Charter is a wide ranging and flexible instrument that has consistently proven capable of engaging normatively with contemporary society's challenges.

Ms NOLAN equally highlighted that the Charter is a key instrument for CDENV's work in identifying and addressing the negative impacts of the triple planetary crisis on human rights and in proposing a right-consistent response to those threats, namely a right-consistent just transition.

9.3. INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE (ICJ) 2025 ADVISORY OPINION ON CLIMATE CHANGE OBLIGATIONS

The Secretariat recalled the recent advisory opinion of the ICJ on climate change obligations and the [Press release](#) that was circulated. He reiterated the importance of this advisory opinion for the CDENV.

9.4. NATIONAL CLIMATE LITIGATION

Mr Jean-Christophe BOULET, General Advisor at the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ) presented the [Study on national climate litigation](#), how it originated and its key findings with regards to both cases that targeted States and corporate actors. The study focused on climate litigation in Europe with the majority of cases being brought against States but where proceedings against corporate actors are also occurring.

According to the study it's now well established that States have the obligation to protect the climate system and avoid environmental damages. A second key finding is the growing integration of human rights in climate litigation against States, as demonstrated by the ECtHR's case-law. Finally, while international instruments do not impose direct obligations on corporations in the same way as they do for States, case-law has nevertheless recognised such obligations indirectly through the precautionary principle foreseen at the national level and interpreted in line with international human rights instruments.

The Secretariat further recalled that the fourth deliverable of the CDENV expected by the end of the year is the review of practices of courts, tribunals and legal professionals specialising in environmental law, including the identification of good procedural and substantive practices.

10. REVIEW OF DISINFORMATION, MISINFORMATION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON ENVIRONMENT-RELATED MATTERS (STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2)

Dr Elisa MORGERA, UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, delivered a short intervention underlining the critical importance of access to trustworthy, evidence-based information on climate change as a prerequisite for protecting fundamental human rights, including the rights to life, health, and democratic participation. She emphasised that climate disinformation is not incidental but follows a deliberate, well-documented "playbook" developed over six decades by fossil fuel companies and increasingly mirrored by large-scale food producers and amplified as a direct violation of human rights. She concluded by calling for urgent, proactive and proportionate action against climate disinformation, commensurate with decades of deliberate obstruction and its compounding human rights impacts.

The Secretariat presented the draft document on the review of disinformation, misinformation and access to information on environment-related matters, highlighting its objective to support member States in countering misinformation and disinformation while ensuring timely and reliable access to

environmental information. The Secretariat outlined key challenges addressed in the document, including widespread misinformation and disinformation about climate change and environmental issues, structural weaknesses in data collection and transparency, and the unethical use of AI, social media and targeted disinformation campaigns. The document reviews relevant Council of Europe and international legal framework, identifies good practices and integrates youth and children's perspectives. The Secretariat concluded by referring to the proposed recommendations, including endorsement of the Declaration on Information Integrity on Climate Change by the Council of Europe, promotion of the full implementation by member States of existing standards, wider ratification of the Tromsø Convention, and development of a new Committee of Ministers recommendation on countering disinformation and misinformation in environmental matters.

The CDENV then held an exchange of views on the draft document and the appended questionnaire to collect additional information in order to fine tune the study and its recommendations. Some member States proposed amendments to the questionnaire, following which the CDENV approved the questionnaire as set up in Appendix III and agreed to send it to member States for reply by 15 May 2026.

11. COMMENTS ON CONGRESS RECOMMENDATION 536 (2025) "AN ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE EUROPEAN CHARTER OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT ON THE ENVIRONMENT" (STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2)

The Secretariat recalled that the Committee of Ministers agreed to transmit [Congress Recommendation 536\(2025\) "An Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the Environment"](#) to the CDENV and the Steering Committee on Democracy (CDDEM) for information and possible comments before 7 April 2026.

Ms Meropi YDRAIOU, Representative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and Thematic Spokesperson on Environment and Climate Change presented the Congress's role in the context of the environmental protection that includes providing solutions to the challenges faced by municipalities and regions. She recalled the recent adoption by the Congress of reports on natural disasters, circular economy, water resources, and a report on coastal erosion that is underway.

Ms YDRAIOU presented Recommendation 536(2025) proposing an Additional Protocol to the European Charter of local self-government. She highlighted the practical contribution the Protocol would provide to environmental protection, in line with Strategic objective 2 of the Strategy on the Environment and its Action Plan, considering that the European Charter of Local Self-Government contains no specific environmental provisions.

She explained that the aims of the Protocol would be: to raise awareness among local and regional authorities of their current environmental responsibilities, establish a legal and institutional framework allowing local authorities to integrate environmental protection in their planning and policy making and clarify competencies at the various levels of governance, thus strengthening environmental protection and empowering local and regional governments.

The CDENV examined and exchanged views on the draft comments on Recommendation 536(2025) prepared by the Secretariat (CDENV(2026)6prov). Amendments to the document were proposed by some member States, following which the CDENV approved the document as set up in Appendix IV.

12. FIRST EUROPEAN FORUM ON ENVIRONMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS (STRASBOURG, 3-4 JUNE 2026) (STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3)

The Secretariat introduced the First European Forum on Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs), recalling that the protection of environmental human rights defenders is a core objective of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment. He informed the CDENV that the Forum is co-organised by the Council of Europe, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights and the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on

Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention, in cooperation with UNECE Aarhus Convention secretariat, several Human Rights Council Special Procedure mandate holders, and civil society organisations active in Europe. It will be hosted at the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg on 3-4 June 2026. The Forum aims to strengthen protection mechanisms, identify gaps in legislation and policy, and provide a space for environmental human rights defenders to engage directly with relevant stakeholders. Day 1 of the Forum will be a safe space for discussion among EHRDs when Day 2 will be open to a larger audience, including state representatives.

Mr Michel FORST, UN Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention, outlined the main trends documented in his recently published report, including the criminalisation of defenders, SLAPPs, defamation campaigns and disproportionate sentences against climate defenders in several Council of Europe member States. He stressed that environmental human rights defenders are essential actors in addressing the triple planetary crisis and expressed strong support for the First European Forum. He called on member States to participate actively and to ensure the Forum becomes a regular rather than a one-off event.

Mr Benjamin SCHACHTER, Coordinator of the Environment and Climate Change Unit at the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, expressed strong support for the Forum, noting that similar regional forums have proven highly valuable in other regions. He underlined that the Forum has been developed through a participatory process, with environmental human rights defenders actively contributing to shaping the programme. He encouraged member States to participate and confirmed the vision to hold such an event every two years, subject to continued support from States and stakeholders.

The CDENV also considered a [CINGO Study on recent adverse developments for non-governmental organisations in Europe](#), presented by Mr Jeremy MCBRIDE, President of the Expert Council on NGO Law of CINGO. The study highlights key challenges faced by environmental organisations such as failure of authorities to protect demonstrators from counterdemonstrators, shrinking access to funding including the withdrawal of USAID support and EU restrictions on advocacy activities, increasing use of SLAPPs by corporations, and the growing spread of foreign agent legislation which threatens organisations relying on international funding and promoting European standards.

13. CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH CRIMINAL LAW: ROUND TABLE ON SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION PROSPECTS (CETS No. 228) (STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4)

The Secretariat made a presentation on the [Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law](#) (CETS No. 228), outlining its key features. The CDENV was informed that the Convention was adopted in May 2025 and opened for signature in December 2025 in Strasbourg and has to date been signed by five signatories – Latvia, Luxembourg, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova and the European Union – with entry into force requiring ten ratifications, including at least eight Council of Europe member States. The Secretariat highlighted the CDENV's role in promoting the Convention and leveraging key international events in 2026 to build momentum for rapid signature and ratification.

The CDENV then held an exchange of views on the state of and prospects for signature and ratification of the Convention, and the best ways to promote it.

14. POLICY GUIDANCE AND ADVICE ON CAPACITY BUILDING MEASURES FOR THE ADOPTION OF NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS AND ECOSYSTEM-BASED APPROACHES EMBEDDED IN THE BROADER GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES (STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5)

Ms Caroline MARTIN, Secretary of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention, presented the document CDENV(2026)5 “Policy guidance and advice on capacity building measures for the adoption of Nature-based Solutions and ecosystem-based approaches embedded in the broader governance structures” that is directly related to the implementation of the Strategy on the

Environment and specifically its Strategic objective 5 for the protection of wildlife, ecosystems, habitats, and landscapes.

She highlighted the aim of the document that is to provide a framework for policy guidance to the Council of Europe and its member States for the adoption of nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches as integrated components of the governance structures serving natural resources, the fight against environmental challenges, in line with respect for human rights.

In presenting the key findings of the document, Ms MARTIN highlighted the importance to ensure coherence regarding nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches across governance systems, given the current fragmented approaches. Their integration into national sectoral and cross-sectoral policies and strategies is urgent as well as clear definitions and solid legal means are necessary to avoid the real risk of greenwashing and to ensure the credibility of the policies adopted.

She equally emphasised that a pan-governmental and inclusive approach to nature-based solutions is needed as the implementation of solutions can succeed only by mobilising all levels of governance, involving local communities from the outset, integrating gender perspectives and raising awareness and educating youth and citizens at large.

Finally, the document underlines the unique position of the Council of Europe in the field. The legal framework, institutional architecture and coordination mechanisms of the Council of Europe provide a solid basis for advancing nature-based, coherent, responsible and pan-European solutions. As a way forward, the document proposes to collect good practices from member States through a questionnaire and to commission an interdisciplinary study that will foster policy dialogue and strengthen long-term action capacities.

The CDENV welcomed the document and approved the way forward and the questionnaire as set up in Appendix V and agreed to send it to member States for reply by 15 May 2026.

15. CONTRIBUTION TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE LANDSCAPE CONVENTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE STRATEGY ON THE ENVIRONMENT (STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5)

Ms Marta RODRIGUES, Chair of the 13th Conference on the Implementation of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention, delivered an address to the CDENV. She highlighted that the Convention, adopted in 2000, is the first international treaty devoted entirely to landscape and a living instrument that continues to adapt to emerging challenges, including ecological transition, climate crisis and territorial resilience. She underlined its central role in the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment, linking landscape quality with human rights and democratic governance across its 41 State parties, and recalled that the Ministerial Conference in Florence marking the 25th Anniversary of the Convention on 27-28 October 2025, reaffirmed that protecting landscapes means protecting human rights. She called on the five remaining Council of Europe member States, as well as non-member States, to ratify the Convention, emphasising its flexible, participation-based framework. She also spotlighted the Council of Europe Landscape Award, most recently awarded in March 2025 to a Portuguese project regenerating the schist villages of Serra da Lousã, as a concrete illustration of the Convention's vision in action. She concluded by inviting the CDENV to designate a member of the Landscape Award Jury as a tangible bridge between environmental policy and landscape practice.

15.1. NOMINATION OF A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CDENV IN THE INTERNATIONAL JURY OF THE LANDSCAPE AWARD

The CDENV appointed Ms Giedrė GODIENĖ (Lithuania) as its representative in the international Jury of the Landscape Award.

16. CONTRIBUTION OF THE BERN CONVENTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE STRATEGY ON THE ENVIRONMENT (STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5)

Mr Carl AMIRGULASHVILLI, Chair of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention, presented the relevant contribution of the Bern Convention to the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and its Strategic Objective 5 on the protection of wildlife, ecosystems, habitats and landscapes.

He recalled that in a time when biodiversity loss is accelerating and ecosystems are under pressure, Strategic objective 5 sets a necessary policy goal that needs to be translated into action. He emphasised that the Bern Convention plays a crucial role in this regard, as it establishes the legal and institutional base for biodiversity conservation at the pan-European scale by setting common standards for the protection of wildlife flora and fauna and promoting the conservation of natural habitats.

Mr AMIRGULASHVILLI further recalled the unique monitoring mechanism set up by the Convention. The case-file system serves as a tool for the implementation of Strategic Objective 5 by protecting wildlife and ecosystems, monitoring biodiversity protection, addressing violations, and implementing concrete conservation measures in a transparent and participatory manner where prevention is particularly important. The case-file system equally serves the implementation of Strategic objective 3 on supporting and protecting environmental human rights defenders and environmental defenders, although not directly, but through a participatory system that enables NGOs, local authorities, civic society and citizens to participate.

Finally, Mr AMIRGULASHVILLI recalled the Bern Convention's Strategic Plan 2030 adopted in 2023 that provides the framework for policy direction, represents a strategic communication tool and a contribution to national agenda. He concluded by remarking that it has been proved that nature conservation benefits people and biodiversity.

17. PARTICIPATION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

The importance of active engagement in the context of the various COPs was highlighted throughout the meeting by Mr ESPOSITO and Mr BENITEZ. Member States expressed reiterated appreciation for the successful participation of the Council of Europe at COP30 in Belém.

17.1 UN BIODIVERSITY CONFERENCE – COP17 (YEREVAN, ARMENIA, 19-30 OCTOBER 2026)

Ms Ruzanna GRIGORYAN, Head of International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Armenia, made an intervention on the preparation of the upcoming UN Biodiversity Conference 2026 - COP17 that will take place from 18 to 30 October 2026 in Yerevan.

She explained that the main objective of COP17 will be the first Global review of the collective progress in the implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework that aims at assessing the progress of implementation, good practices, as well as identifying the gaps, challenges and needs for scaling-up the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) implementation toward 2030.

Ms GRIGORYAN expressed Armenia's commitment to ensure the truly inclusive nature of the Conference and provide an opportunity for every stakeholder to meaningfully participate in deliberations.

She also highlighted the importance to cooperate with the Council of Europe in organising the COP17, considering the strong normative framework and long-standing expertise in environmental

governance of the Council of Europe. She recalled the relevant three Conventions of the Council of Europe (the Bern Convention, the Landscape Convention and the recent Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law) and the unique role of the Council of Europe in linking environmental protection with human rights, democratic governance and the rule of law, including the role of the CDENV. Finally, she presented a promotional video.

17.2 UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE – COP31 (ANTALYA, TÜRKİYE, 9-20 NOVEMBER 2026)

Mr Sarp Ege ÖZPIRİNÇCI, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Türkiye to the Council of Europe, made an intervention to present Türkiye's priorities about COP31, as well as national recent developments in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation. He first recalled that COP31 is co-chaired by Türkiye and Australia. He then highlighted that protecting environment and combating climate change are high on the government agenda, both at national and international level.

The COP31 will take place on 9-20 November 2026 in Antalya. The pre-COP meeting will be held in Fiji to highlight the vulnerabilities of the Pacific region. Mr ÖZPIRİNÇCI stated that Türkiye's COP31 Presidency will work closely with Australia's President of Negotiations, Parties to the Convention, and all other stakeholders to ensure constructive dialogue and reach balanced and ambitious outcomes at the end of the process.

With the objective to make COP31 an "implementation COP", the focus will not only be on negotiated outcomes, but also on real-economy transformation and delivery on the ground by fostering enhanced partnerships among governments, international organisations, private sector and other stakeholders.

Mr ÖZPIRİNÇCI recalled the priorities expressed at a press conference in Istanbul on 12 March 2026 by Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change and COP31 President-Designate, H.E. Mr. Murat KURUM, together with Dr. Fatih BİROL, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency on the clean energy transition, zero waste approach focusing on mitigation, climate-resilient cities with reduced emission, climate implementation accelerator and green industrialisation, as well as food security, increasing resilience of the Mediterranean along with the Pacific and Africa, oceans and seas.

He also highlighted the importance of the active involvement of the Youth, through the Youth Climate Envoys and the commitment to making COP31 a success and a meaningful milestone in global climate action.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The CDENV did not raise any points under this agenda item.

19. PRELIMINARY DRAFT AGENDA, DATE and PLACE OF THE 2nd CDENV MEETING

The CDENV adopted the preliminary draft agenda for its 2nd meeting, which will be held in Strasbourg, on 13-14 October 2026 as set out in Appendix VI.

20. ADOPTION OF THE ABRIDGED REPORT

The CDENV adopted the abridged report of the meeting, as set out in Appendix VII, and agreed to adopt the report of the 1st CDENV meeting through written procedure subject to the Bureau's validation.

Appendix I – Agenda

Appendix II – List of Participants

Appendix III – Questionnaire on Disinformation, misinformation and access to information on environment-related matters: good practices and initiatives

Appendix IV – Comments of the CDENV on Recommendation 536 (2025) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe “An Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the environment”

Appendix V – Questionnaire on Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and Ecosystem-based Approaches

Appendix VI – Preliminary draft agenda for the 2nd meeting of the CDENV (13-14 October 2026)

Appendix VII – Abridged report of the first meeting of the CDENV

APPENDIX I

AGENDA

1st meeting of the CDENV
24-25 March 2026

Council of Europe - Agora G02

(opening at 9.30 CET on Tuesday 24 March and closing at 17.30 CET on Wednesday 25 March 2026)

1. Opening of the meeting by the Secretariat
2. Adoption of the agenda
[CDENV(2026)OJ1prov]
3. Round table of presentation of participants
4. Election of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Bureau members of the CDENV
[[CM/Res\(2021\)3](#)]
5. Nomination of a Gender Equality Rapporteur
[[CDENV\(2026\)2](#)]
6. Requests for observer status to the CDENV
[CDENV(2026)3, CDENV(2026)3add, [CM/Res\(2021\)3](#)]
7. Terms of reference of the CDENV
[[CDENV\(2026\)1](#), [CM/Res\(2021\)3](#), [Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment](#)]
8. Developments concerning the Council of Europe
9. Integration of Human Rights considerations in environmental matters and instruments (Strategic Objective 1)
 - 9.1. European Court of Human Rights cases [[Thematic factsheet](#), [Manual](#)]
 - 9.2. European Committee on Social Rights decisions [[CDENV\(2026\)10](#)]
 - 9.3. International Court of Justice (ICJ) 2025 Advisory Opinion on climate change obligations [[Press release](#)]
 - 9.4. National Climate Litigation [[Study](#)]
10. Review of disinformation, misinformation and access to information on environment-related matters (Strategic Objective 2)
[CDENV(2026)4]
11. Comments on Congress Recommendation 536 (2025) “An additional protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the environment” (Strategic Objective 2)
[CDENV(2026)6prov]
12. First European Forum on Environmental Human Rights Defenders (Strasbourg, 3-4 June 2026) (Strategic Objective 3)
[[CDENV\(2026\)7](#), [CINGO Study on recent adverse developments for non-governmental organisations in Europe](#)]
13. Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law: Round table on signature and ratification prospects (CETS No. 228) (Strategic Objective 4)
[[CDENV\(2026\)9](#)]

14. Policy guidance and advice on capacity building measures for the adoption of Nature-based Solutions and ecosystem-based approaches embedded in the broader governance structures (Strategic Objective 5)
[CDENV(2026)5]
15. Contribution of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention to the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment (Strategic Objective 5)
 - 15.1. Nomination of a representative of the CDENV in the international Jury of the Landscape Award [[CDENV\(2026\)8](#)]
16. Contribution of the Bern Convention to the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment (Strategic Objective 5)
17. Participation of the Council of Europe in International Conferences:
 - 17.1. UN Biodiversity Conference – COP 17 (Yerevan, Armenia, 19-30 October 2026)
 - 17.2. UN Climate Change Conference – COP31 (Antalya, Türkiye, 9-20 November 2026)
18. Any other business
19. Preliminary draft agenda, date and place of the 2nd CDENV meeting
[CDENV(2026)OJ2prov]
20. Adoption of the abridged report
[CDENV(2026)AR1prov]

APPENDIX II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

MEMBERS / MEMBRES	
ALBANIA / ALBANIE	
ANDORRA / ANDORRE	Mme Sílvia FERRER LÓPEZ (apologies/ <i>excusée</i>) Directrice du Département de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable Ministère de l'Environnement, de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage Mme Laura COLL MALÉ (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Responsable de secteur du Département de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable Ministère de l'Environnement, de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage
ARMENIA / ARMENIE	Ms Ruzanna GRIGORYAN Head of International Cooperation Department Ministry of Environment
AUSTRIA / AUTRICHE	Ms Alice IRVIN (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Director for General European Affairs Federal Ministry European and International Affairs Ms Noémie KEIL Assistant Permanent Representation of Austria to the Council of Europe
AZERBAIJAN / AZERBAIDJAN	Mr Ulfat MACHANOV Deputy-Head of Climate Diplomacy Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr Orkhan BAYRAMOV (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Advisor
BELGIUM / BELGIQUE	Ms Sophie THYS Legal Policy Advisor Government of Flanders, Environment Department Ms Leen CHANET (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Legal Policy Advisor Government of Flanders, Environment Department Ms Katrijn HEYLEN Legal Policy Advisor Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVIA / BOSNIE & HERZEGOVINE	Ms Rada MILISAV Head of the Department for Water Resources Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations

BULGARIA / BULGARIE	Ms Silvia RANGELOVA (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Director Directorate for Coordination of EU Affairs and International Cooperation Mr Kalin ILIEV (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Head of the Department for Strategic Environmental Planning Directorate for Coordination of EU Affairs and International Cooperation
CROATIA / CROATIE	
CYPRUS / CHYPRE	Dr Nasia DIKIGOROPOULOU (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Environment Officer Department of Environment
CZECH REPUBLIC / RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE	Ms Barbora CHRPOVA Officer Ministry of the Environment Ms Júlia TÓBIKOVÁ (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Officer Ministry of the Environment
DENMARK / DANEMARK	
ESTONIA / ESTONIE	Mr Mart KIIS Head of Biodiversity Strategy Biodiversity Conservation Department Ministry of Climate
FINLAND / FINLANDE	Ms Charlotta VON TROIL (apologies/ <i>excusée</i>) Senior Ministerial Adviser, Legislative Affairs Ministry of the Environment Mr Johannes JUSSILA Intern Permanent Representation of Finland to the Council of Europe
FRANCE	Ms Sarah BARNIER-LEROY Legal Adviser Directorate of Legal Affairs Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs
GEORGIA / GÉORGIE	Ms Tamta CHANKSELIANI (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) First Category Senior Specialist of Donor Coordination Division International Relations and European Integration Department Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia
GERMANY / ALLEMAGNE	Ms Mareike WELKE Deputy Head of Unit Bilateral Cooperation with EU/EFTA Member States and the UK

GREECE / GRÈCE	Mr Othon-Alexandros KAMINIARIS-KONTOSTAVLOS Expert Counselor D4 Directorate for Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Global Policies Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ms Alikì GKANA (online/ en ligne) Legal Advisor Department of Public International Law Ministry of Foreign Affairs
HUNGARY / HONGRIE	Ms Csilla FODOR EU and International Affairs Officer Ministry of Energy Department of Environmental Development and Strategy Ms Kinga ALBICZ (online/ en ligne) National Representative to the Council of Europe Landscape Convention Ministry of Agriculture
ICELAND / ISLANDE	Ambassador María Erla MARELSDÓTTIR (online/ en ligne) Ambassador Special Envoy to the Climate Ms Gudrun THORSTEINSDOTTIR (online/ en ligne) Adviser Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ms Diljá VALDIMARSDÓTTIR (online/ en ligne) Officer Ministry of Foreign Affairs
IRELAND / IRLANDE	Mr Andrew MALONE (online/ en ligne) Policy Officer Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
ITALY / ITALIE	Ms Silvia SCHIAVI Officer Directorate General for European and International Affairs and Sustainable Finance Ministry for the Environment and Energy Security
LATVIA / LETTONIE	Mr Dāvis BIČKOVICS (online/ en ligne) Director Spatial Planning and Land Management Department Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development Mr Dainis UPMACIS Lawyer Investment Management Department Ministry of Climate and Energy
LIECHTENSTEIN	

LITHUANIA / LITUANIE	Ms Inga AKSAMITAUSKAITĖ Advisor Group of Environment Protection Policy Coordination Ministry of Environment Dr Giedrė GODIENĖ (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Associate Professor Institute of Geosciences Vilnius University
LUXEMBOURG	Ms Svenja STOLTZ Jurist Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Biodiversity
MALTA / MALTE	Mr Darrin STEVENS (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Director Environment and Resources Directorate Mr Luke YOUNG (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Team Manager Environment and Resources Directorate
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA / REPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA	Ms Valeria HUTULEAC (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Deputy Secretary General Ministry of Environment Ms Paula TATAMIROV (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Acting Head of International Relations and External Assistance Section Ministry of Environment
MONACO	Ms Céline VAN KLAVEREN (apologies/ <i>excusée</i>) Experte Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Ms Margaux GIRARDIN Deputy Permanent Representative of Monaco to the Council of Europe Mr Gabriel CHABERT First Secretary Permanent Representative of Monaco to the Council of Europe
MONTENEGRO	Mr Nenad VITOMIROVIĆ (apologies/ <i>excusé</i>) Secretary of State Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development Ms Milena MIJAJLOVIĆ Head of Division Directorate for the Development of the North Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development

	Ms Sonja RAŽNATOVIĆ (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Acting Director General Directorate for Strategic Relations and Communications
NETHERLANDS / <i>PAYS-BAS</i>	Ms Sara VAN DEN BOOM Legal Officer Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ms Gudi ALKEMADE (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Coordinating Policy Officer Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management Ms Felice VAN DER PLAAT (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Coordinating Policy Officer Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
NORTH MACEDONIA / <i>MACÉDOINE DU NORD</i>	
NORWAY / NORVÈGE	Mr Terje Birkrem HOVLAND Research Coordinator Ministry of Climate and Environment Ms Liv Kirstine JUST-MORTENSEN (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Research Coordinator and National focal point for the Council of Europe Landscape Convention Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development
POLAND / POLOGNE	Mr Jan SZYDLO Specialist Department of International Affairs, Ministry of Climate and Environment
PORTUGAL / PORTUGAL	Ms Ana CASTELA RODRIGUES Senior Advisor Department of European and International Affairs
ROMANIA / ROUMANIE	Ms Adela DRAGOMIR (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Counsellor for European Affairs General Directorate for International Relations and European Affairs Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests
SAN MARINO / SAINT MARIN	
SERBIA / SERBIE	Mr Darko NINKOV Counsellor Sector for Multilateral Affairs Ministry of Foreign Affairs

SLOVAK REPUBLIC / RÉPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUE	Mr Marek ENGEL Director General Institute for Environmental Policy Ministry of the Environment Ms Zuzana BUZALKOVÁ (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) State Senior Advisor Ministry of the Environment
SLOVENIA / SLOVÉNIE	Ambassador Mateja VODEB (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Head of Department for Global Challenges Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs Ambassador Eva TOMIČ (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Department for Global Challenges Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs Ms Urška ŠKRABA (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Ministry of Environment and Energy Ms Elena DEL FABRO (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning
SPAIN / ESPAGNE	Ms Carmen Sofía SANZ ESTEBANEZ (apologies/ <i>excusée</i>) Head of International Affairs Secretariat of State for the Environment Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge Ms Elena VAZQUEZ GARCIA Head of Heritage Department Ministry for Culture Mr Antonio Jesús ANTEQUERA DELGADO Vice-Chair of the 13th Conference on the Implementation of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention
SWEDEN / SUÈDE	Ms Gabriella MODIN (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Legal Advisor Ministry of Climate and Enterprise
SWITZERLAND / SUISSE	Mr Sébastien TRUFFER Chef de section suppléant Office fédéral de l'environnement
TÜRKİYE	Ms İlay SARILAR (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Environmental Engineer, MSc, MASc. Department of Air Management General Directorate of Environmental Management Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change Mr Sarp Ege ÖZPİRİNÇİ Deputy Permanent Representative of Türkiye to the Council of Europe

UKRAINE / UKRAINE	Mr Bohdan SEMENENKO (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Coordinator Environment and Climate Change Unit
UNITED KINGDOM / ROYAUME-UNI	Mr Adam LAVIS Environmental Rights Lead Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

PARTICIPANTS /**PARTICIPANTS****COUNCIL OF EUROPE ENTITIES /****ENTITES DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE**

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe	Ms Aurora FLORIDIA Italy Member of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development
Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe	Ms Meropi YDRAIOU (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Thematic Spokesperson on Environment and Climate Change
Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe	Ms Cristina GENOVESE (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Advisor
Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe	Ms Sumeyra ARSLAN Representative of the Conference of INGOs Mr Jeremy MCBRIDE President of the Expert Council on NGO Law of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe

COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE /**COMITES DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE**

Bern Convention	Mr Carl AMIRGULASHVILI (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) President of the Bern Convention Standing Committee
CDENF	Ms Tanja GERWIEN Co-Secretary
CDCJ	Mr Jean-Christophe BOULET General Advisor
ECSR	Ms Aoife NOLAN (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) President
Landscape Convention	Ms Marta RODRIGUES Chair of the 13th Conference on the Implementation of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention
Advisory Council on Youth / CCJ	Ms Emilie TAMO KAMGUIA (online/ <i>en ligne</i>) Member of the Advisory Council on Youth

OBSERVER STATES TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE /
OBSERVATEURS PERMANENTS DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

HOLY SEE / SAINT-SIÈGE	Mr Paolo CONVERSI (online/ en ligne) Officiel de la Secrétairerie d'Etat
MEXICO / MEXIQUE	Ms Laura Patricia RODRIGUEZ CODALLOS (online/ en ligne) Director for Multilateral Environmental Affairs

NON-MEMBER STATES PARTIES TO THE BERN CONVENTION /
ETATS NON-MEMBRES MAIS PARTIES A LA CONVENTION DE BERNE

MOROCCO / MAROC	Dr Mostafa MADBOUHI (online/ en ligne) Chef de la Division de la Diversité Biologique Direction du Climat et de la Diversité Biologique Département du Développement Durable
TUNISIA / TUNISIE	Mme Sabria BNOUNI Directrice Générale de la Coopération Internationale Ministère de l'Environnement

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS /
ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES

The United Nations and its agencies	OHCHR	Ms Elisa MORGERA (online/ en ligne) UN Special Rapporteur on Climate Change and Human Rights Mr Benjamin SCHACHTER Coordinator, Environment and Climate Change Unit Ms Harriet HIRST (online/ en ligne) Human Rights Officer Ms Johanna ZABEL (online/ en ligne) Intern
	UNECE	Mr Michel FORST UN Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention Ms Laetitia Marie Annonciade BATTISTI Advisor Team of the Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention Ms Maryna YANUSH (online/ en ligne) Environmental Affairs Officer Aarhus Convention Secretariat
IUCN		Ms Agnes MICHELOT (online/en ligne) Professeure des universités, membre du Steering Committee WCEL IUCN
OECD		Mr Ivan HASCIC (online/ en ligne) Senior Environmental Economist

**OBSERVERS /
OBSERVATEURS**

Organisation	Nominated representative
Amnesty International	Ms Ann HARRISON (online/en ligne) Climate Justice Researcher and Policy Advisor
Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL)	Mr Sébastien DUYCK Senior Attorney
Child Rights International Network (CRIN)	Ms Sumeyra ARSLAN Climate Engagement and Policy Advisor
Climate Justice for Rosa	Mr Benjamin VAN BUNDEREN ROBBERECHTS (online/en ligne) Founder and Campaign Lead
Global Network for Human Rights and the Environment (GNHRE)	Ms Corina HERI (online/en ligne) Deputy Director for Europe
IFLA Europe – European Region of the International Federation of Landscape Architects	Ms Indra PURS (online/en ligne) President
Kimbé Rèd - French West Indies (F.W.I.)	Ms Sabrina CAJOLY (online/en ligne) Founder

**SECRETARIAT /
SECRÉTARIAT**

Name	Department
Mr Rafael BENITEZ	Director of Social Rights, Health and Environment
Mr Gianluca SILVESTRINI	Secretary of the Steering Committee on the Environment Reykjavik Process and the Environment Department
Mr Mikaël POUTIERS	Administrator Reykjavik Process and the Environment Department
Ms Nino LATSABIDZE	Policy Advisor Reykjavik Process and the Environment Department
Ms Catarina GARCIA	Policy Advisor Reykjavik Process and the Environment Department

Ms Laura MESSINA	Policy Advisor Reykjavik Process and the Environment Department
Ms Jenny MITCALF	Administrative Support Assistant Reykjavik Process and the Environment Department

APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRE ON DISINFORMATION, MISINFORMATION AND ACCESS TO
INFORMATION ON ENVIRONMENT-RELATED MATTERS: GOOD PRACTICES AND
INITIATIVES**Section I – General Information**

1. Responding country / entity:
2. Institution(s) responsible for completing the questionnaire:
3. Contact person (name, function, email):
4. Level(s) covered by the response:
 - ☐ National
 - ☐ Regional
 - ☐ Local
 - ☐ Combination (please specify)

Section II – Public Perception and Awareness

5. Has your country conducted a national survey assessing public concern about climate change or environmental issues?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please provide the key findings:

Section III – Disinformation and Misinformation on Environmental Matters

6. What are the main challenges or impediments related to climate or environmental disinformation and misinformation in your country?

Please describe their potential impacts (for example: on the adoption of environmental policies and legislation, climate mitigation and adaptation measures, nature-based solutions, or on public trust in environmental information).

Section IV – Policies and Programmes Addressing Disinformation

- 7.a. Does your country have policies, strategies, or programmes aimed at addressing disinformation or misinformation in the field of environment?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please provide details:

- 7.b. How does it ensure coordination with the broader policies on information integrity?

8. How does your country promote coordination and integration between environmental information and health policies?

Section V – Fact-Checking and Information Verification

9. Does your country support or operate any fact-checking mechanisms or platforms that help verify the accuracy of environmental or climate-related information?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please provide details:

Section VI – Access to Environmental Information

10. Is there legislation in force in your country that regulates or guarantees access to environmental information?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please specify:

Section VII – Environmental Education and Youth Access to Information

11. What measures are in place in your country to ensure access to environmental education and information for persons and groups in vulnerable situations and/or exposed to discrimination, including for children and young people?

Please describe relevant initiatives:

Section VIII – Environmental Reporting by the Private Sector

12. Are private sector entities in your country legally required to report on activities that may have an impact on the environment?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please provide details:

Section IX – Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs)

13. Does your national legal framework include measures to prevent or address Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please describe:

Section X – Multisectoral Cooperation and Networking

14. How does your country support cooperation and coordination between public institutions, scientists, the media, civil society, and other relevant sectors?

Section XI – Supporting the Work on Information Integrity

15.a. Does your country have agencies that work on information integrity?

☐ Yes, if yes please list them

☐ No

15.b. Does it support civil society organisations (including researchers or think tanks) and independent journalists that work on information integrity?

☐ Yes

☐ No

15.c. If yes, please describe the type of support provided to its recipients.

Section XII – Development Cooperation

16. Does your country implement or fund projects aimed at supporting information integrity abroad? In which countries and in which areas? If any, describe the relevant initiatives

Section XIII – Additional Good Practices and Initiatives

Please describe any additional good practices, initiatives, or programmes implemented in your country to combat environmental disinformation or misinformation, strengthen public access to reliable environmental information and promote transparency and public participation in environmental decision-making.

APPENDIX IV

COMMENTS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT (CDENV) ON
RECOMMENDATION 536 (2025) OF THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL
AUTHORITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE “AN ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE
EUROPEAN CHARTER OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT ON THE ENVIRONMENT”

1. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (hereinafter “the Congress”) adopted Recommendation 536 (2025) on “An Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the environment” on 29 October 2025. The Recommendation was subsequently submitted to the Committee of Ministers, which decided to forward it to the Steering Committee on the Environment (CDENV) and to the Steering Committee on Democracy (CDDEM), for information and possible comments, by 7 April 2026 (see [document CM/Del/Dec\(2025\)1544/12.1](#) of 26 November 2025).
2. In its Recommendation, the Congress acknowledges the role of local authorities as a central element of the response to the triple planetary threat that our societies face and stresses the importance of a comprehensive multilevel governance approach to address this threat effectively. To provide legal means for local authorities to fulfil their responsibilities and contribute effectively to the global response to climate change, the Congress considers that the European Charter of Local Self-Government should be supplemented with an additional protocol specifically dedicated to environmental protection at the local level. It therefore calls on the Committee of Ministers to consider drafting and adopting an Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government in order to ensure that member States enable local authorities to integrate environmental considerations in local governance to address the challenges arising from the triple planetary crisis and environmental degradation. The Congress invites the Committee of Ministers to initiate this process, in cooperation with the Congress, and taking into consideration the proposed contribution of the Congress (see paragraphs 3-5 of the Recommendation).
3. The CDENV considered the Recommendation at its first meeting, which was held in Strasbourg and online on 24 and 25 March 2026.
4. The CDENV welcomes the calls by the Congress for additional efforts to protect the environment, and to counter the impact of the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, as recognised in the Reykjavík Declaration, in particular Appendix V “The Council of Europe and the environment”. It recognises the critical role of local and regional authorities in responding to environmental and climate change challenges arising in their communities.
5. The CDENV underlines the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment adopted at the 134th session of the Committee of Ministers in Luxembourg on 14 May 2025. The Strategy provides guidance to Council of Europe institutions, bodies, programmes and administration, including the Congress, facilitating the co-ordination of their work to meet five strategic objectives. The CDENV reiterates, in particular, Strategic Objective 2 - *Strengthening good democratic governance*, – and the importance of local and regional authorities in its achievement (see paragraphs 12.b, 16.a.ii., 17, 22, 24, 34 and 35).
6. The CDENV also recalls that an Action Plan has been drawn up to facilitate the implementation of the Strategy. One of the actions (Action 2.12) provides, at the request of the Congress, for the “Consideration of a draft Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government dedicated to environmental protection”. This would entail the Committee of Ministers mandating an intergovernmental committee to prepare a feasibility study for an Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the environment and, subsequently, on the basis of a further mandate, to prepare a draft of such a protocol.

7. The CDENV notes that in its Recommendation 536 (2025), the Congress highlights environmental protection as an essential part of local governance. The Committee also notes that, according to the Congress, the proposal of an additional protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the environment is a clear and concrete contribution to the Council of Europe's effort to fight the triple planetary environmental crisis, that does not give additional meaning to the provisions European Charter of Local Self-Government but is rather a separate instrument that member States could choose to ratify. The effect of the Additional Protocol would be to support and guide local and regional authorities in helping member States to meet their existing environmental commitments.
8. The CDENV points out that in its [reply](#) to Congress [Recommendation 484 \(2022\)](#) ("A fundamental right to the environment: a matter for local and regional authorities – towards a green reading of the European Charter of Local Self-government") adopted on 18 October 2023 at the 1478th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, the Committee of Ministers already stated "that care should be taken over any suggestion that the existing Charter should be viewed or interpreted through a particular lens; it is important to ensure that no additional meanings are read into provisions of the Charter that are not there." (see paragraph 7 of the reply).
9. The CDENV considers that the aims articulated by Congress to "acknowledge the role of local authorities as a central element of the response to the triple planetary threat that our societies face" could be achieved via several means.
10. The CDENV further considers that the clarification of the distribution of competences between levels of government is a multilevel governance issue which is best addressed by the Steering Committee on Democracy (CDDEM).
11. In light of the above, the CDENV considers that any new initiatives relating to environmental governance be situated within the broader context of Council of Europe work in the area of environment, and, in particular, take account of ongoing discussions on the need for and feasibility of further instrument or instruments in the field of human rights and the environment. This would ensure a coherent, strategic and well-coordinated approach across the Organisation.

APPENDIX V

QUESTIONNAIRE ON NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS (NBS) AND ECOSYSTEM-BASED APPROACHES

Section I – General Information

1. Responding country / entity:
2. Institution(s) responsible for completing the questionnaire:
3. Contact person (name, function, email):
4. Level(s) covered by the response:
 - ☐ National
 - ☐ Regional
 - ☐ Local
 - ☐ Combination (please specify)

Section II – Policy and Strategic Framework

5. Does your country have policies, strategies, action plans, or programmes that explicitly refer to Nature-based Solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ NoIf yes, please list them (title, year, level, responsible authority).
6. Are NbS integrated into sectoral or cross-sectoral policies (e.g. climate, biodiversity, urban planning, disaster risk reduction, health, water, agriculture)?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ NoIf yes, please specify sectors and provide examples.
7. Are NbS addressed within just transition, sustainable development, or socio-economic transformation policies?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ NoIf yes, please briefly describe how.

Section III – Legal and Regulatory Framework

8. Are there legal definitions, standards, or regulatory provisions relevant to NbS or ecosystem-based approaches?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ NoIf yes, please specify the relevant legislation or regulatory instruments.
9. Are measures in place to prevent misuse of NbS concepts or greenwashing?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ NoIf yes, please briefly describe.

Section IV – Governance and Institutional Arrangements

10. Is a whole-of-government or cross-sectoral coordination mechanism in place for NbS?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please describe its structure and role.

11. Which public authorities are primarily responsible for design, implementation, and monitoring of NbS initiatives?

Section V – Participation, Inclusion, and Rights-Based Approaches

12. How are local communities and stakeholders involved in the planning and implementation of NbS?

(e.g. consultations, co-design, participatory governance mechanisms)

13. Are gender equality and inclusion explicitly addressed in NbS-related policies or projects?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please provide examples.

14. Are youth participation and intergenerational perspectives incorporated?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please explain.

Section VI – Implementation and Good Practices

15. Please describe up to three concrete examples of NbS or ecosystem-based initiatives implemented at national, regional, or local level.

For each example, please indicate:

- Location and level
- Objectives
- Main actors involved
- Key outcomes and benefits
- Challenges encountered

16. Are there monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to assess environmental, social, and economic impacts of NbS?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please describe.

Section VII – Capacity Building, Data, and Knowledge

17. Are capacity-building activities (training, guidance, toolkits) available for public authorities or stakeholders on NbS?

☐ Yes

☐ No

18. How are scientific data, evidence, or digital tools used to inform NbS decision-making?

Section VIII – Challenges, Needs, and Added Value

19. What are the main challenges your country faces in developing or implementing NbS?

20. What support or guidance would be most useful at European level?

- ☐ Policy guidance
- ☐ Legal analysis
- ☐ Capacity building
- ☐ Exchange of good practices
- ☐ Data and indicators
- ☐ Other (please specify)

21. Any additional comments or information you wish to share?

APPENDIX VI

PRELIMINARY DRAFT AGENDA

2nd meeting

13-14 October 2026

Council of Europe - Agora G03

(opening at 9.30am CET on Tuesday 13 October and
closing at 17.30pm CET on Wednesday 14 October 2026)

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda
[CDENV(2026)OJ2prov]
3. Developments concerning the Council of Europe
4. Integration of Human Rights considerations in environmental matters and instruments (Strategic Objective 1)
5. Review of disinformation, misinformation and access to information on environment-related matters (Strategic Objective 2)
6. Review of practices of courts, tribunals and legal professionals specialising in environmental law, including the identification of good procedural and substantive practices (Strategic Objective 2)
7. Outcome of the First European Forum on Environmental Human Rights Defenders (Strasbourg, 3-4 June 2026) (Strategic Objective 3)
8. Study on the conditions enabling child and young environmental defenders to access information, to safely and freely express themselves, to issue recommendations and to access justice. A child-friendly version of the report will be made available (Strategic Objective 3)
9. Convention on the Protection of Environment through Criminal Law: Round table on signature and ratification prospects (CETS No. 228) (Strategic Objective 4)
10. Policy guidance and advice on capacity building measures for the adoption of Nature-based Solutions and ecosystem-based approaches embedded in the broader governance structures (Strategic Objective 5)
11. Contribution of the Bern Convention to the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment (Strategic Objective 5)
12. Contribution of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention to the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment (Strategic Objective 5)
13. Upcoming International Conferences:
 - 13.1. UN Biodiversity Conference – COP17 (Yerevan, Armenia, 19-30 October 2026)
 - 13.2. UN Climate Change Conference – COP31 (Antalya, Türkiye, 9-20 November 2026)
14. Any other business
15. Preliminary draft agenda, date and place of the next meeting
[CDENV(2026)OJ3prov]
16. Adoption of the abridged report
[CDENV(2026)AR2prov]

APPENDIX VII

ABRIDGED REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE CDENV

24-25 March 2026

1. The Steering Committee on the Environment (CDENV) held its 1st meeting in Strasbourg on 24-25 March 2026. The meeting was opened by the Secretariat and chaired by Mr Rafael BENITEZ, Director of Social Rights, Health and Environment, until the election of the Chair of the CDENV.

Mr Gianluca ESPOSITO, Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law delivered an address to the CDENV.

2. The CDENV adopted the agenda as it appears in Appendix I. The list of participants appears in Appendix II.
3. The CDENV elected Ms Sarah BARNIER-LEROY (France) as Chair, Ms Inga AKSAMITAUSKAITĖ (Lithuania) as Vice-Chair, Ms Ruzanna GRIGORYAN (Armenia), Ms Csilla FODOR (Hungary), and Mr Antonio ANTEQUERA (Spain) as Bureau members in pursuance with [Resolution CM/Res\(2021\)3](#) on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.
4. The CDENV appointed Mr Terje Birkrem HOVLAND (Norway) as Gender Equality Rapporteur and mainstreamed perspectives.
5. In pursuance with [Resolution CM/Res\(2021\)3](#), the CDENV granted observer status to:
 - International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
 - Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
 - Global Network for Human Rights and the Environment (GNHRE)
 - Wildlife Justice Commission (WJC)
 - Youth and Environment Europe (YEE)
 - Amnesty International
 - Greenpeace International
 - Wild Legal
 - International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
 - Child Rights International Network (CRIN)
 - European Council of Spatial Planners - Conseil Européen des Urbanistes (ECTP-CEU)
 - European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools (ECLAS)
 - UNISCAPE
 - Kimbé Rèd – French West Indies (KR-FWI) – France
 - IFLA Europe – European Region of the International Federation of Landscape Architects
 - Climate Justice for Rosa
 - World's Youth for Climate Justice (WYCJ)
 - Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland (ERCS)
6. The CDENV took note of the developments in the Council of Europe of interest for the CDENV, and had an exchange of views concerning its terms of reference, deliverables and deadlines as set out in document [CDENV\(2026\)1](#).
7. Considering Strategic Objective 1, the CDENV held an exchange of views on the integration of Human Rights considerations in environmental matters and instruments and recent developments in the sectors of social rights, execution of judgments of the ECtHR, and legal co-operation.

8. With regard to Strategic Objective 2, the CDENV examined a document on the review of disinformation, misinformation and access to information on environment-related matters, and approved a questionnaire as set up in Appendix III and agreed to send it to member States for reply by 15 May 2026. Ms Elisa MORGERA, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Climate Change, addressed the CDENV on the issue of disinformation and misinformation on environment-related matters.
9. Pursuant to decision of the [CM/Del/Dec\(2025\)1544/12.1](#), the CDENV examined Recommendation 536(2025) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe “An Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the environment” and adopted its comments as set out in Appendix IV.
10. Considering Strategic Objective 3, the CDENV took note of the state of preparations of the First European Forum on Environmental Human Rights Defenders to be held at the Council of Europe Headquarters in Strasbourg on 3-4 June 2026 and had an exchange of views with Mr Michel FORST, Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention. The CDENV also considered a [CINGO Study on recent adverse developments for non-governmental organisations in Europe](#).
11. Considering Strategic Objective 4, the CDENV held an exchange of views on the state of and prospects for signature and ratification of the [Convention on the Protection of Environment through Criminal Law](#) (CETS No. 228), and the best ways to promote it.
12. Considering Strategic Objective 5, the CDENV examined a document on policy guidance and advice on capacity building measures for the adoption of Nature-based Solutions and ecosystems-based approaches embedded in broader governance structures, and approved a questionnaire as set up in Appendix V and agreed to send it to member States for reply by 15 May 2026.
13. Considering also Strategic Objective 5, the CDENV took note of the contribution of the Landscape and Bern Conventions to the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment. In addition, the CDENV appointed Ms Giedrė GODIENĖ (Lithuania) as its representative in the 9th Session (2025-2026) international Jury of the Council of Europe [Landscape Award](#).
14. The CDENV took note of the preparations for the UN Biodiversity Conference – COP17 (Yerevan, Armenia, 19-30 October 2026) and of the UN Climate Change Conference – COP31 (Antalya, Türkiye, November 2026).
15. The CDENV agreed to hold its next meeting on 13-14 October 2026 and adopted the preliminary draft agenda as set out in Appendix VI.
16. The CDENV adopted the present abridged report and agreed to adopt the report of the 1st CDENV meeting through written procedure subject to the Bureau’s validation.