Terms of reference of the

European Committee on Organs, Tissues and Cells (CD-P-TO)

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: Advancing social justice, good health and a sustainable environment
Sub-programme: Quality of medicines and healthcare

Main tasks

Under the authority of the Committee of Ministers, in its composition restricted to the representatives of the States Parties to the Convention on the Elaboration of a European Pharmacopoeia, without prejudice to the competences of the other relevant committees, the CD-P-TO oversees and co-ordinates the Council of Europe's work in the field of transplantation and/or human application of organs, tissues, cells and other substances of human origin (excluding blood and blood components) and advises the Committee of Ministers on all questions within its field of competence. The overall aim is to promote the principle of non-commercialisation of organ, tissue and cell donation, strengthen measures to avoid trafficking of organs, tissues and cells, elaborate high ethical, safety and quality standards in the field of donation and transplantation/human application of organs, tissues and cells and, in general, support member States in the development of ethical, safe and efficient donation and transplantation services.
In particular, the CD-P-TO 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. monitor practices in Europe and identify and study emerging challenges with regard to ethical, quality and safety standards for the donation and transplantation/human application of organs, tissues, cells and other substances of human origin[3];
iv. elaborate quality and safety standards in the field and provide guidance for their implementation; in particular, by revising and updating, on a regular basis, the Guide to the quality and safety of organs for transplantation and the Guide to the quality and safety of tissues and cells for human application;
v. assist member States in improving their donation, transplantation/human application services, whilst promoting the principle of voluntary non-remunerated donation;
vi. examine the organisational structures concerning donation and transplantation/human application of organs, tissues, cells and other substances of human origin[3] with a view to addressing the causes of shortage;
vii. regularly collect and analyse international data on donation and transplantation/human application of organs, tissues, cells and other substances of human origin[3] for publication;
viii. draft proposals for recommendations and resolutions for adoption by the Committee of Ministers and elaborate policy guidelines, position papers, technical reports and any other means that may be deemed appropriate;
ix. support national initiatives and assist member States in improving their transplantation/human application services, in particular by developing links between national health authorities responsible for the donation and transplantation/human application of organs, tissues, cells and other substances of human origin[3] and experts throughout Europe and ensure the transfer of knowledge and expertise;
x. provide, upon request, assistance to States with observer status to the European Pharmacopoeia Commission in developing policies, laws and regulations relating to the donation and transplantation/human application of organs, tissues, cells and other substances of human origin[3], improving their donation and transplantation/human application programmes, combatting their shortages and improving access to related health services;
xi. actively contribute to the fight against trafficking of organs, cells, tissues and other substances of human origin, in co-operation with the work of the Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs, by:
    a. collecting information on possible illicit transplantation activities in the member States through the network of National Focal Points on Travel for Transplantation (NETTA), in accordance with Committee of Ministers Resolution CM/Res(2013)55 on establishing procedures for the collection and dissemination of data on transplantation activities outside a domestic transplantation system and Committee of Ministers Resolution CM/Res(2017)2 on establishing procedures for the management of patients having received an organ transplant abroad upon return to their home country to receive follow-up care;

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

b. elaborating technical and guidance documents for health authorities and health professionals to prevent, detect and combat organ trafficking and trafficking in human beings for the purpose of organ removal, in accordance with the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;
c. providing training and supporting multidisciplinary co-operation among relevant Authorities and bodies involved in the fight against transplant-related crimes through NETTA;
d. actively promoting and disseminating the aforementioned conventions, contributing to their broad ratification, acceptance and implementation;
e. supporting the Committee of the Parties of the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs with regard to ethical and technical matters;
f. raising awareness, collecting information and supporting the Council of Europe governing bodies in addressing the trafficking of tissues, cells and other substances of human origin;[4]

xii. co-operate with the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) in the implementation of all aspects of the fight against trafficking in human beings for the purpose of organ removal covered by the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS 197);
xiii. co-operate with the Committee of the Parties of the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs (CETS 216) in the implementation of all aspects of the fight against trafficking covered by this Convention;
xiv. co-operate with the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO) in the implementation of all aspects of transplantation covered by the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (ETS 164) and its Additional Protocol on transplantation of organs and tissues of human origin (ETS 168);
xv. support the successful execution of European Union (EU)/EDQM funded activities aimed at implementing both EU and Council of Europe standards and harmonising practices in Europe;
xvi. reinforce co-operation and synergies with other international organisations and professional societies working in the field;
xvii. contribute to the training of health professionals on donation and transplantation/human application of organs, tissues, cells and other substances of human origin4 through the identification of needs and the elaboration of tailored support material;
xviii. raise awareness among the general public on the donation and transplantation/human application of organs, tissues, cells and other substances of human origin4 and provide information on matters of interest;
xix. promote the organisation of the European Donation Day (EDD), hosted by a different Council of Europe member State every year, with the support of local governmental organisations and/or others;
xx. 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;
xxi. 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;
xxii. 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 Traveller5 issues;
xxiii. where relevant, contribute to strengthening meaningful engagement with civil society organisations and national human rights institutions in its work;
xxiv. where relevant, 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,6 in co-operation, where appropriate, with the relevant convention-based bodies, and report back to the Committee of Ministers;
xxv. contribute to the achievement of, and review progress towards, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular with regard to Goal 3: Good health and well-being and Goal 5: Gender Equality.

Main deliverables

Under the authority of the Committee of Ministers, the CD-P-TO is instructed to complete the following deliverables, within the following deadlines:

	Priority ▼	Deadline ▼
1. Guide on the quality and safety of organs for transplantation (9th edition), appendix to Recommendation CM/Rec(2020)4	1	31/12/2024
2. Draft Recommendation or Resolution on the establishment and maintenance of harmonised transplant registries and international data sharing	1	31/12/2024
3. Guidance document on best practices for physical examination of deceased potential organ and tissue donors	2	31/12/2026

[4] Excluding blood and blood components.
[5] 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.
[6] Cf. relevant decisions of the Committee of Ministers (CM/Del/Dec(2013)1168/10.2) and list of Conventions in document CM(2025)132.

4. Report/publication on the state-of-play on gender issues in donation and transplantation	1	31/12/2024
5. Guide to the quality and safety of tissues and cells for human application (6th edition), appendix to Recommendation CM/Rec(2020)5	1	31/12/2026
6. Booklet for the general public on add-on treatments during medically assisted reproduction	1	31/12/2025
7. Recommendations for professionals and/or relevant health authorities on donor family aftercare (organ and tissue donors)	1	31/12/2026
8. "White paper" summarising the state-of-the-art in xenotransplantation and the main challenges ahead and providing European recommendations	2	31/12/2026
9. Training programme and guidance on training for professionals on physical examination of potential deceased donors	2	31/12/2027
10. Draft Recommendation or Resolution promoting best practices on family approach for deceased donation	1	31/12/2025
11. Draft Recommendation or Resolution on establishing harmonised measures for the protection of gamete donors	2	31/12/2026
12. Booklet for the general public on genetic testing during medically assisted reproduction treatment	1	31/12/2026
13. Report/publication on the state-of-play of certification schemes for transplant co-ordinators, the accreditation of education programmes and the modalities of career progression in member States	1	31/12/2026
14. Draft Recommendation or Resolution on certification schemes for transplant co-ordinators and the accreditation of education programmes	2	31/12/2027
15. Landscape analysis on organ donation after medical assistance in dying in Europe and post-transplant results using these organs	2	31/12/2026
16. Draft Recommendation or Resolution to address sex-based disparities in access to transplantation	1	31/12/2027
17. Annual Newsletter Transplant	1	31/12 each year
18. Annual analysis of international travel for transplantation activity elaborated by NETTA	1	31/12 each year
19. Awareness raising: European Donation Day (EDD)	1	31/10 each year

Composition

- Members

Governments of the States Parties to the Convention on the Elaboration of a European Pharmacopoeia are invited to designate one representative of the highest possible rank with expertise in the field of organ transplantation and/or one representative of the highest possible rank with expertise in the field of tissues and cells for human application. 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 voting.
The Council of Europe will bear the travel and subsistence expenses for one representative from each member State (two in the case of the State whose representative has been elected Chair) under the EDQM budget.

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

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;
- Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights;
- Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe;
- Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO);
- 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:

- Council of Europe member States other than those mentioned above under "Members" and other States with observer status to the European Pharmacopoeia Commission;
- European Union;
- Observer States to the Council of Europe: Canada, Holy See, Japan, Mexico, United States of America;
- World Health Organization (WHO).

- 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-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. However, with a view to reaching its objectives and enabling multidisciplinary working methods, the committee may, in derogation of Resolution CM/Res(2021)3 and within the limit of budgetary attributions, create subordinate bodies. 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	39	2	2	-	1	2
2025	39	2	2	-	1	2
2026	39	2	2	-	1	2
2027	39	2	2	-	1	2

Extraordinary meetings of the CD-P-TO may be convened upon request by the Chair or Vice-Chair.
Representatives taking part in the committee and its subordinate bodies shall complete a declaration of interests and confidentiality undertaking form.
Subject to the agenda, the Chairs of its subordinate structures may be invited to attend CD-P-TO Bureau meetings and/or plenary meetings.
The CD-P-TO 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	2	2	2	15.5	1.4	-	1 A, 1 B
2025	2	2	2	15.5	1.4	-	1 A, 1 B
2026	2	2	40	70.3	5.4	163.7	2 A, 1 B
2027	2	2	40	75.7	5.4	119.1	2 A, 1 B

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