



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

SUMMER SESSION CONFERENCE OF INGOS CONF/PLE(2014)SYN1

Strasbourg, 16 May 2014

MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF INGOS

DRAFT SYNOPSIS Thursday 30 January 2014

- Opening of the meeting by Jean-Marie Heydt**, President of the Conference of INGOs
The President presented his best wishes to all the INGOs and said that he hoped that their respective commitment and activities would help improve the well-being of Europe's citizens. He also referred to the three INGO representatives who had passed away. They had all worked for many years to bring about a better world, while ensuring that organised civil society was dynamic, capable and recognised. The meeting rose for a minute's silence in their memory.

He also announced that Anne-Marie Chavanon was absent following the death of her father and that Alain Mouchoux would leave the meeting at the beginning of the afternoon to represent the Conference at the Holocaust Remembrance ceremony at the main building.
- Agenda:** for adoption
The President proposed that the agenda be amended with the deletion of item 10 (Verification and Dispute Committee).
Anje Wiersinga wished to move a resolution. It would be presented under item 13 (Any other business). The agenda was adopted as amended.
- Synopsis** of the meeting held on 27 June 2013: for adoption [[CONF/PLE\(2013\)SYN2](#)]
The synopsis was adopted.
- Exchange of views** with Snezana Markovic, Director General of Democracy
The Director General gave a presentation based on the crisis affecting society in Ukraine and the issues of democracy. Her comments were targeted and frank and showed that the INGOs' activities were recognised but would have to be stepped up still further, as various expectations were placed in them. An exchange of views ensued.
- 2013 activity report** of the Conference INGOs: for discussion and adoption (Alain Mouchoux). The report was adopted unanimously.

6. **Election of a member** (rapporteur) of the Bureau (Sophie Dimitroulias)

Anna Rurka was elected in the first round with 61 votes or 57% of the votes cast.

8. **Initiatives of the Conference of INGOs** in action: recent activities and outlook for 2014 (Alain Mouchoux)

- **Expert Council** on NGO Law – Cyril Ritchie

Underlined the establishment in 2008 of the Expert Council on NGO Law, which had been renewed and expanded in 2013. This new group had sought to create an enabling environment for all NGOs in Europe.

- **Dialogue Toolkit** – Asma Soltani, member, and Christoph Spreng, co-ordinator

The website had had 5 693 visitors in 2013. The requests made through the site showed that an organisation in Lebanon was willing in principle to take part in partnerships on the ground. The toolkit had been used in the Paris region; a two-day training course had been very well received. A project submitted in Cyprus had been based entirely on the toolkit and the decision of the funders on the spot was pending. The following month, the co-ordinator would be taking part in a two-day training course as part of the *Carrefour du Dialogue Citoyen* in Tunisia, a citizens' dialogue project run by three NGOs from France and Tunisia.

9. **Exchange of views** with a group of civil society representatives from Ukraine on recent developments in the country: questions of freedom of association and civil participation in decision-making processes

A delegation of Ukrainian NGOs presented the situation as they were experiencing it. Opposing and contradictory views came from some INGO representatives from Russia and from Ukraine who did not see the situation in the same way; debate did, however, take place and a resolution prepared by the Standing Committee in consultation with the Ukrainian delegation was presented. In spite of the contradictory approaches, Resolution [CON/PLE\(2014\)RES1](#) was approved unanimously by the participants.

10. **Transversal questions**: recent activities and outlook for 2014 (Antonina Dashkina)

Betty Doornenbal, **gender equality expert**, presented the latest developments concerning the subject.

Anna Rurka, representative for **family and childhood**

Two points were presented:

1. Monitoring of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201) and the Council of Europe's ONE in FIVE campaign. As at 30 January 2014, the convention had been ratified by 29 countries and signed by 17.

The Conference of INGOs was involved in the monitoring process through its participation in the Committee of the Parties. The monitoring process was based on thematic questionnaires issued to governments and civil society. The INGOs in the Conference whose field of action concerned family and childhood had received the questionnaire to fill out.

2. The Lanzarote Working Group established in the Human Rights Committee to work with the stakeholders on the ground on the issues covered by the convention. It had set itself three objectives which were due to evolve in keeping with the way in which the process developed:

- a) identify and publicise good professional and para-professional practices in Council of Europe member states, focusing on co-operation between public institutions and organised civil society working in the field of the sexual abuse and exploitation of minors;
- b) discuss with the stakeholders possible improvements that might be made in this field. Given the wide range of practices and of legislation in Council of Europe member states, the group would always carry out its work in a specific geographical area and work with stakeholders in the sectors concerned. The group had started working in Paris with stakeholders from the département, judicial experts, the département council, the national education department, the voluntary child welfare sector and national NGOs.

11. **Nomination of five members of the Verification and Dispute Committee** (Sophie Dimitroulias)
This item was removed from the agenda because the Rules of Procedure provide that the outgoing committee must make proposals to the President of the Conference who then notifies the plenary of the new members. That would take place at the June 2014 session.
12. **Adoption of texts** prepared by the Committees (Sophie Dimitroulias)
CONF/PLE(2014)DEC1, decision on “Combating hate speech”, CONF/PLE(2014)APP1, “Human Rights and Religions – An appeal to the citizens of Europe and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs)”, CONF/PLE(2014)DEC2, “Religions and Human Rights – Proposed avenues of approach and action for members and leaders of religions”.
13. **Open questions** from INGOs (to be submitted in advance to Alain Mouchoux (alain.mouchoux@wanadoo.fr)). A question had been asked about organising the session in a way that would make for better working conditions and improved contacts: the Standing Committee would discuss the matter at its next meeting.
14. **Any other business**
It had been agreed in plenary in the morning that the resolution presented by the working group headed by Ms Anje Wiersinga would be discussed under this item. It was a resolution which had already been drawn up in June 2013 but had not been adopted by the Democracy and Global Challenges Committee. The committee had again failed to address the resolution in its discussions in the course of the week. The President had to ask the plenary Conference, which had the final say, whether it wished to make an exception to its own rules and present in plenary a text that had not been validated by a committee. (For the record, only thematic resolutions debated and adopted in the relevant committees could be presented and validated in plenary, except for motions under urgent procedure such as in the case of Ukraine, which came under the Standing Committee). In a vote, a very large majority came out in favour of compliance with the rules. The text was therefore discussed without a vote and without being approved. Nevertheless, the participants all agreed to take account of the content of the text. They recommended that the structure of the text be amended, in particular because the headings and subheadings were not consistent with the paragraphs. To give greater substance to the issue, which nevertheless was very important, they proposed that a side event be held on the subject in June 2014, after which an amended text could be presented in committee and in plenary.
15. **Date of the next meeting**
The next plenary sitting would be held on Thursday 26 June 2014.