



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

STANDING COMMITTEE CONF/SC(2013)SYN5

DRAFT SYNOPSIS OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2013

1. Opening of the meeting by Jean-Marie Heydt, President of the Conference of INGOs

The President welcomed members and apologised for the absence of Sophie Dimitroulias and Antonina Dashkina, Vice-Presidents, Alain Koskas and Veysel Filiz, Rapporteurs, and Harry Rogge, Yosanne Vella, Daniel Zielinski and Michel Muller.

The Standing Committee:

2. **Adopted** the meeting agenda [[CONF/SC\(2013\)OJ5](#)]
3. **Adopted** the synopsis of the meeting held on Monday 24 June 2013 [[CONF/SC\(2013\)SYN4](#)]
4. **Approved** unanimously the four INGOs which had requested participatory status, viz:
 - European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers,
 - European Lawyers' Union,
 - European Union of the Deaf Youth (EUDY),
 - Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe (EUROPARC)

Proposed that a welcome letter be sent to the new INGOs.

It was also pointed out that the Secretariat had drawn up the list of INGOs from which participatory status was going to be withdrawn following the evaluation of the four-yearly reports and that the Standing Committee had two months to give its opinion.

5. **Resolution (2003)8 on participatory status for INGOs – “10 years of participatory status for INGOs – 10 proposals for improving the operation of the status”** (Jean-Marie Heydt)

Underlined the importance of conducting a review after 10 years of participatory status further to the reform initiated by the Secretary General, so that the Conference of INGOs could report back both to the INGOs and to the various Council of Europe bodies. On 6 September 2013, a working group comprising Cyril Ritchie, Rémy Berthier, Jutta Gützkow, Jane Crozier and the President had met, and a working document had been drawn up and presented to Standing Committee members. The ensuing discussion showed that the following points would have to be mentioned in the new version:

- The distinctive characteristic of the Council of Europe in granting participatory status with its fundamental aspects, including the quadrilogue;
- The special composition of the Conference of INGOs, in which small and large INGOs carried the same weight according to the “one organisation, one vote” principle;
- Examples of best practice, experience from grassroots work demonstrating INGOs' ability to meet citizens' expectations;

- Confirmation that the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the steering committees took account of the Conference of INGOs' proposals and recommendations on a political level;
- The breadth of the INGOs' presence in almost all international bodies and on the ground, which helped raise their overall profile;
- The value which the NGOs added to all the pillars of the Council of Europe.

Marie-José Schmitt and Claude-Laurent Genty would be joining the working group. The President would inform Standing Committee members about the timetable and the next meetings in mid-December.

6. Expert Council on NGO law – for validation

- Opinion on the so-called foreign agents law – for validation

Approved unanimously on behalf of the Conference of INGOs, the opinion prepared by the Expert Council on “The law introducing amendments to certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation regarding the regulation of activities of non-commercial organisations performing the functions of foreign agents”. [opinion in [English](#) and in [Russian](#)] Some amendments to the introduction were suggested to the Chair of the Expert Council.

- Recommendation on the opinion: for adoption

Adopted unanimously, on behalf of the Conference, the recommendation on the opinion and on the action to be taken [[CONF/PLE\(2013\)REC5](#)].

- Preparation of a meeting of the Expert Council and a seminar in Moscow, 30-31 October – for information

Noted with satisfaction the programme of the round table to be held in Moscow on 31 October on the subject of “Developments in legislation on non-commercial organisations: International experience”. The round table would be preceded and followed by a meeting of the Expert Council. [[programme of the round table](#)]

7. Proposal for a thematic focus on digital culture (Sabine Rohmann)

Noted that the Working Group on Access to the Digital Media for All headed by Richard Storck had highlighted the challenge of digital culture and education work in this area.

Said that a round table on the issue was being prepared for session in June 2014 and would take account of the proposals made by the World Forum for Democracy on the matter.

8. Living diversity – taking stock of on-going activities of the INGO Conference, the Committees and the working groups with a view to achieving complementarity and coherence of action

The committee chairs made several statements on this item, underlining results and on-going work:

- The dialogue toolkit had been presented several times and had been very well received;
- The work done by the Working Group on Religions had highlighted the importance of “living diversity”. It was necessary to capitalise on all this work through a joint project that would raise the profile of the Conference's activities;
- The Working Group on Living Together looks at the role of education in building an inclusive society;
- A new Working Group on Social Cohesion and Intercultural Dialogue had been created to study the question from a philosophical and anthropological angle.

Asked the three committee chairs to send details of the work done on the subject of “living diversity” to Alain Mouchoux so that a synthesis could be presented to the Conference of INGOs in January 2014 and that possibilities for future joint action could be identified.

9. World Forum for Democracy – 27-29 November – “Rewiring democracy: connecting institutions and citizens in the digital age” – update (Eladio Fernandez-Galiano)

The Forum would promote various initiatives through the 19 labs that were being held. Eladio Fernandez-Galiano invited all NGOs to play an active part and become “agents for change” at the event. All the necessary information was available on the website.

10. Nord-South Prize – selection of the candidates to be presented on behalf of the INGO Conference (Jean-Marie Heydt)

Agreed that, in view of his ties with the Conference of INGOs, it was preferable for Israel Mensah’s candidature to be presented by Boulogne-Billancourt municipal council. The President was going to recommend his candidature to the mayor.

Said that the Conference would present the candidature of Zaina El Tibi (Lebanese), the active chair of a women’s NGO that campaigned for women’s participation in politics.

11. Future flagship projects in the field of democracy (Eladio Fernandez-Galiano, Head of the Democratic Initiatives Department)

The future flagship projects being discussed by the Committee of Ministers depended on budgetary considerations. A cut in the Council of Europe budget for 2014 and 2015 had been agreed by member States. Snezana Samardzic-Markovic, Director General of Democracy, had presented two new projects, one on strengthening democracy and another on promoting “living together”.

In addition, the civil society sector was going to be reinforced.

12. Preparation of the January 2014 session of the Conference

Noted that several points would be covered during the preparatory phase:

- Election of a member of the Bureau: vacant seat following the resignation of Veysel Filiz.
- Appointment of the members of the Verification and Dispute Committee: five new members were appointed by the President of the Conference every three years. The committee itself chose its chair.
- Distribution of tasks for the preparation of the 2013 activity report of the Conference of INGOs: the chairs of the three committees and the gender equality expert were asked to finish their activity reports by 15 November.
- Thematic meetings on the eradication of poverty and on diversity:

Noted that the thematic meeting on the eradication of poverty would be held during the January session as well as a side-event on “the abolition of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment”.

Indicated that plans for a thematic meeting on diversity were being prepared.

13. Other business

Agreed to ask the three chairs to produce summaries of the main activities carried out during their three years in office and to structure the information by theme and not by committee. The item would have to be discussed at the Conference session in January 2014. The three committees’ summaries would be presented in June 2014.

Various updates were given on:

- The INGO-Service association: it was pointed out that details of expenditure planned or committed by committee chairs and by NGOs represented on the various steering committees should be submitted as quickly as possible. That enabled the association to plan its budget and prepare for expenditure more effectively in line with the available funds;
- Follow-up to the strategy on contacts in the countries around the Mediterranean: little progress had been made since June: Gérard Greneron said the recommendation on the situation of the

police and police trade unions in Tunisia adopted by the Conference of INGOs on 27 June 2013 had been passed on to the two trade unions;

- Study day held by the association, “Méditerranavenir”, on the subject of “Promoting South-North dialogue differently with the aid of civil society: new types of co-development and co-operation”, had been attended by Alain Mouchoux;
- A conference on the subject of “The professional image and ethos of teachers” due to be held at the Council of Europe on 24 and 25 April 2014 was mentioned by Sabine Rohmann. The conference was being held by the Pestalozzi Programme and the Education and Culture Committee of the Conference of INGOs. A proposal would be made to Standing Committee members. They agreed in principle. It was hoped that the Oran Conference could take place in the autumn following the presidential elections in Algeria.

14. Date of the next meeting

The Standing Committee would meet on **Monday 27 January 2014**

Rapporteur: Maritchu RALL (AIC)