



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

STANDING COMMITTEE

CONF/SC(2014)SYN3

Strasbourg, 20 April 2014

MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

SYNOPSIS OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 APRIL 2014

1. **Opening of the meeting** by Jean-Marie Heydt, President of the Conference of INGOs.
2. **Agenda** adopted.
3. Appointment of meeting **rapporteur**: Alain Koskas (morning), Anna Rurka (afternoon).
4. **Synopses** of the meetings held on 27 and 29 January 2014 [CONF/SC(2014)SYN1] and [CONF/SC(2014)SYN2]: adopted.
5. **Preparation of the June session of the Conference**
 - Calendar of the session: adopted.
 - Those in charge of the committees were asked to submit by 1 June a review of their committee focusing on the new method of operation and giving an idea about any improvements that were desirable.

➤ **Texts to be adopted:**

- Annelise Oeschger: on the reform of the European Court of Human Rights and declaration on anti-Semitism in Europe;
- Anne-Marie Chavanon: declaration on “climate and human rights” and declaration on interculturalism;
- Anje Wiersinga: proposed resolution: the Standing Committee concluded that the text was inadmissible as it stood and proposed that it be rewritten, submitted to Anne-Marie Chavanon, Chair of the Democracy, Social Cohesion and Global Challenges Committee, and possibly presented to the Conference of INGOs at a roundtable to be held in June.

The Standing Committee's recommendations to the author were as follows:

- not focus solely on the position of Arab women;
- the text should be shorter;
- include the gender equality perspective in political and democratic processes;
- the revised text should be ready for 15 May and available in both languages by 1 June at the latest so that it could be presented to the Democracy, Social Cohesion and Global Challenges Committee at its meeting on 25 June.

Anje Wiersinga wished to present the Standing Committee's proposals to her working group for approval. For information, Vera John-Mikolajewski, Betty Doornenbal and Anje Wiersinga were going to work together on the text in Amsterdam on 9 and 10 May.

- **Elections of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Committees** (closing date for candidatures: 27 April)

- Declaration of the position of outgoing chairs/vice-chairs: Gérard Greneron was standing for the Vice-Chairmanship of the Human Rights Committee; Harry Rogge was not standing again; Marie-José Schmitt was not standing again, but wished to remain in charge of the Conference of INGOs' working group on the European Social Charter and to continue to work with the Committee of Experts on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CS-RPD) and the Bioethics Committee (DH-BIO) of the Council of Europe; Annelise Oeschger was not standing again at the Human Rights Committee, Israel Mensah needed some time to consider his position; and Vera John-Mikolajewski was not standing again because of factors at her organisation.

➤ **Side-event (women – MENA region)**

Discussion between Jean-Marie Heydt and Fatiha Saidi, member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe concerning the roundtable which the Conference wished to hold on the subject. Ms Saidi dealt with the involvement of women in democratic processes at the Assembly. The conclusion was that it was necessary to agree the arrangements for the roundtable as soon as possible, and it was underlined that the exchanges with the Assembly on the subject were confidential.

Decision by the Standing Committee: it was pointed out that invitations to the roundtable would not be official until the President of the Conference had confirmed them.

➤ **Contribution of the Conference of INGOs to creating an enabling environment in the countries of the Eastern Partnership**

1. Ukraine and civil society context, Ivan Nikoltchev

In connection with the priority given by the Secretary General to the involvement of civil society in the measures to support the constitutional process and the promotion of the rule of law, the Directorate General of Democracy (DG II) wished to organise a working programme with Ukrainian civil society. A visit to Kyiv was going to be arranged to look at the needs of Ukrainian civil society in the current crisis, as well as dialogue with the government. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities also wished to be involved in the programme. Jean-Marie Heydt had asked Anna Rurka to take part in the visit.

Cyril Ritchie, Chair of the Expert Council, underlined that the Expert Council had worked on the resolution concerning the situation in Ukraine. Vera John-Mikolajewski drew attention to the women involved in the conflict. Antonina Dashkina proposed that the NGOs which had members in Ukraine be involved in the work. Mr Heydt stressed that the Conference's role was to establish dialogue.

Decision by the Standing Committee: identify the INGOs in the Conference which had already established links with Ukrainian civil society and were working in Ukraine and pass on the information to Mr Nikoltchev.

2. Statement of intent between the European Union and the Council of Europe

A statement of intent between the European Commission and the Council of Europe had been signed on 1 April 2014. With the statement, the two institutions had reiterated their co-operation agreement concerning the EU enlargement and neighbourhood regions for the period 2015-2020. Three regions were concerned: countries in the pre-accession phase (Turkey and south-east Europe), the countries in the Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and the countries of the southern Mediterranean (primarily Morocco and Tunisia).

Cyril Ritchie referred to the role of the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-making Process and Resolution CM(2007)14. These tools were relevant in this context and it was in the Conference's interests to train civil society representatives in using them.

Decision by the Standing Committee: focus discussion on the training which the Conference could provide concerning the Code of Good Practice in partnership with other departments and establish an approved training programme.

A side-event would be held during the next session in preparation for the contribution of the Conference to creating an enabling environment in the countries of the Eastern Partnership. Anne-Marie Chavanon suggested calling on the resource persons she had met during her visit to Morocco. Antonina Dashkina suggested that persons from the countries covered by the agreement with the EU be invited. Cyril Ritchie proposed publicising the use of Resolution CM(2007)14 in the countries concerned.

Decision by the Standing Committee: Jutta Gützkow stressed that the first step was to listen to the INGOs, Antonia Dashkina's idea was taken up.

➤ **Joint INGO/Congress reflection group on the Code of Good Practice**

A meeting of the joint reflection group (five members of the INGO Conference and five members of the Congress) on the impact of the Code of Good Practice in the member states had been held on 24 March. The next meeting would be held during the June session. The aim was not to promote the code but to assess the impact of its application. Two versions of the code had been looked at. Israel Mensah stressed that the project strengthened the crosscutting aspects of the Conference's co-operation with other Council of Europe bodies. It was therefore also necessary to strengthen the crosscutting aspects of the working groups' activities.

6. **Assessment of the work of the Conference of INGOs on the theme "living together" (item deferred from January meeting) – Alain Mouchoux**

➤ Link to text by Alain Mouchoux

Proposal to set up a crosscutting group on the theme of Living Together. The Conference committees should co-operate more closely in building their agendas. Israel Mensah had reservations here, as it would be wrong to merge the activities because that would prevent a unique form of productivity. Alain Mouchoux believed that a crosscutting approach was needed for some activities. That would be a challenge for the new Bureau elected in January 2015.

Alain Mouchoux also reported on his participation in the Congress session in March. He had to report that little reference was made to the Conference at the Congress.

➤ Link to the synopsis of the meeting on "Living Together" in January by Sabine Rohmann

The first meeting had been held in January, and the process needed to be given greater structure.

7. **World Forum for Democracy**

- Follow-up to the 2013 Forum

- 2014 Forum "From participation to influence: can youth revitalise democracy" (Strasbourg, 3-5 November 2014) – Eladio Fernandez Galiano

Following the 2013 Forum, young people had called for greater account to be taken of their specific concerns. Young people from the Council of Europe's Youth Centre were going to be called on, as well as key figures from the Council of Europe holding senior posts or political posts in the Committee of Ministers. The Conference would be involved in the preparations. The aim would be to address the issue of young people and the institutions they dealt with. It was necessary to involve young people who were "outside the system", and voluntary online registration was not enough to get them on board, as they would not come forward. Cyril Ritchie would raise the awareness of the INGOs at the UN, as it was a world forum. Israel Mensah would co-ordinate the activity within the Conference.

8. **Follow-up to the Lisbon Forum: "Valuing civil society as an actor of governance: prospects for the South Mediterranean"**: participation and implementation of the conclusions by the Conference of INGOs: drawing up of a benchmark framework for citizen participation at local level and dialogue between civil society and elected representatives (Jean-Marie Heydt, Israel Mensah)

➤ Link to the conclusions of the Lisbon Forum 2013

Lisbon Forum: Jean-Marie Heydt and Israel Mensah had represented the Conference at the event. The joint INGO/Congress reflection group could take up the conclusions of the forum. It would be necessary to approach the Assembly so that the benchmark framework was taken into account.

The next Lisbon Forum would be held in September. Jean-Marie Heydt and Israel Mensah were working on the file.

9. Information on recent and forthcoming events

➤ Conference on the professional image and ethos of teachers (Strasbourg, 24 and 25 April) – Sabine Rohmann

There had been 300 requests for participation from all continents. The conference was being organised in partnership with the Pestalozzi programme. It would be held in the Agora building and at the European Youth Centre. Parents would be present, as would students' organisations.

➤ Mid-term review of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (follow-up to the Dubrovnik conference, 27-28 March) – Anna Rurka. Link to report

10. Activities of the working groups (item deferred from January meeting)

It was necessary to take stock of the establishment of groups, of which there were currently 27, and of their activities.

11. Václav Havel Human Rights Prize: call for nominations

Alain Koskas and Anna Rurka were instructed to consider the possibility of making a nomination.

12. Update on participatory status

Participatory status was to be withdrawn from 68 INGOs. 71 had been proposed by the Secretary General; the Conference had managed to have three removed from the list.

Decision by the Standing Committee: hold a debate in June on the consequences of the situation.

10 years of participatory status: a working group had been set up to move forward the review of participatory status – no follow-up for the time being.

Decision by the Standing Committee: item to be discussed in June.

13. Other business

The Conference of INGOs needed to find a way of having more exchanges and contacts.

Decisions by the Standing Committee:

- remember also to send documents issued to INGOs holding participatory status to Standing Committee members who were not in the database;
- review the operation of the Conference in June before the election of the new Bureau;
- propose a questionnaire at the June session on the way INGOs were dealing with the One in Five Campaign and the Lanzarote Convention;
- propose an informal meeting between the INGOs involved in social work to see what activities were being carried out in connection with the Strategy for the Rights of the Child;
- contribution by the Conference to creating an enabling environment: invite persons from the countries covered by the agreement between the EU and the Council of Europe;
- discuss the training which the Conference could arrange in partnership with other Council of Europe bodies;
- identify the INGOs in the Conference which had already established links with Ukrainian civil society and were working in Ukraine and pass on the information to Ivan Nikoltchev;

- invitations to play an active part in conferences or meetings held by the Conference would not be official until the President of the Conference had confirmed them.