



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

STANDING COMMITTEE CONF/SC(2014)SYN4

Strasbourg, 8 September 2014

DRAFT SYNOPSIS

OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 23 JUNE 2014

1. Opening of the meeting by Jean-Marie Heydt, President of the Conference of INGOs
Apologies for absence: Anna Rurka, Antonina Dashkina, Israël Mensah, and Marie-José Schmitt

2. Agenda:

Harry Rogge asked whether it was possible to discuss Simon Matthijssen's letter sharing his observations, proposals and what he considered to be problems in the way the Conference operated.

- **It was decided** to discuss this subject at the end of the meeting when they could have interpretation.
- At Annelise Oeschger's request, **it was decided** to discuss the new statutes of INGO-Service under item 10.
- The agenda **was adopted** with these two modifications.

3. Appointment of a rapporteur: Alain Koskas

4. Synopsis of the meeting held on 7 April 2014

Clarification with regard to paragraph 10: A link between each committee and its working groups and the state of play of their work could be found on the website and in the synopses of the corresponding committees.

Clarification with regard to paragraph 12: the full list of INGOs with participatory status could be found in the database on the website, and the relevant information on this status could be found under the heading "participatory status".

- Adoption of the synopsis

5. Preparations for the session:

- The elections of the chairs and vice-chairs of the committees would be held at the same time. The Verification and Dispute Committee would inform the Conference of the procedure for the elections and for particular cases, in particular when it is

impossible for a candidate to stand for election because his or her INGO no longer has participatory status.

- Texts to be adopted during the session. A preliminary discussion was necessary to ensure that texts were not submitted at the last minute at the meeting of the Conference.

Anne-Marie Chavanon pointed out that the Democracy, Social Cohesion and Global Challenges Committee would present a report on intercultural dialogue and would adopt a position on 'climate and human rights'. Given the size of the text (11 pages), it would not be photocopied. Edith Wenger would briefly present the position when it was put forward for support.

Annelise Oeschger informed members that two texts had been put forward for adoption: a recommendation on 'Gender Based Violence as a Political Weapon', proposed by the working group headed by Anje Wiersinga and a recommendation on 'Combating anti-Semitism in Europe', drafted by the *task force* with the same name. The two texts would be put forward for adoption at the meeting of the Human Rights Committee and subsequently at the meeting of the Conference.

Sabine Rohmann informed members that the Education and Culture Committee was preparing reports and that she was aware that they were not texts for adoption. They would be mentioned at the Wednesday meeting of the Standing Committee.

- Information on events during the session

It was extremely important that a round table on "Gender perspectives – Peace and security" ([link to the programme](#)) was being held at the June session so that a contribution could be made to the report on "The situation of women in the emerging democracies in the wake of the Arab Spring" that was in the process of being drafted by Fatiha Saïdi and would be presented to the Parliamentary Assembly in October. Jean-Marie Heydt said that he had already had several opportunities to meet the parliamentarians responsible for these issues.

Thematic debate on "How to enhance civil dialogue, the contribution of the Conference of INGOs to an enabling environment for NGOs in Eastern Europe" ([link to the programme](#)):

6. Information on recent major events:

- Conference "[The professional image and ethos of teachers](#)" (Strasbourg, 24-25 April) jointly organised by the Education and Culture Committee of the Conference of INGOs and the Pestalozzi Programme. A manifesto was being drafted. It was the outcome, among other things, of the analysis of the answers to a questionnaire that had been disseminated throughout Europe. It would be presented to the Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice (CDPPE) whose Bureau would meet on 12 and 13 September and would be sent to the Civil Society Division to be put online. The manifesto was intended for anyone working in education (ministries of education in member states, heads of school, teachers, ONGs, etc.).
- Sabine Rohmann proposed that she present her final version at the meeting of the Conference of INGOs in January 2015.
- Thematic debate of the Ministers' Deputies on "the role and functioning of NGOs in the Council of Europe" (Strasbourg, 10 June) in which Jean-Marie Heydt ([link to his speech](#)) and Annelise Oeschger had taken part. The debate had been prepared by sending a document describing the current situation ([link to the](#)

[document](#)). It had been particularly useful inasmuch as some Ambassadors were relatively new to the Council of Europe and had little information about the Conference of INGOs. Many of them said that they would like to see civil society (and particularly a number of larger INGOs) making a greater contribution to the Committee of Ministers' debates while others were opposed to this idea. Although the Conference was not the subject of the debate, the Ambassadors were quite positive about it and said that they would send members of the Permanent Delegations to some of its meetings. Several members of the Standing Committee agreed that the large number of contacts that Jean-Marie Heydt had had with the Ambassadors as President of the North-South Centre had played an important role in promoting the Conference of INGOs.

- On 18 June, the Committee of Ministers had entrusted the Rapporteur Group on Democracy (GR-DEM) with following up the various aspects of the debate, without fixing a date.
 - Meeting of NGOs from Eastern Europe on the subject of "Civil society participation in decision-making: dreams, reality, and challenges" Chisinau, 12-13 June 2014 ([link](#)). The Conference of INGOs had been represented by Maria Pomazkova, who was also the representative of the Expert Council on NGO Law. Ihor Kohut, Director of the Ukrainian School of Political Studies, was rapporteur at this meeting. The thematic debate on "How to improve civil dialogue", which would be held on Wednesday 25 June (see Item 5 paragraph 2 above) was the Conference's response to the meeting and would be organised by the Civil Society Division and the Council of Europe Office in Chisinau.
7. Presentation of the dialogue toolkit: recent action and perspectives. Christoph Spreng had helped run a training course on "diversity and citizenship" in the context of the [Carrefour du dialogue citoyen](#) project, which had taken place on 22 and 23 February in Tunisia. Meeting with the *Centre d'Information, de Formation, d'Etudes et de Documentation sur les Associations (IFEDA)*, a public service organisation supporting the creation of NGOs and NGO events in Tunisia and which wished to work with the Conference of INGOs by proposing its dialogue toolkit to NGOs. A draft agreement between the Conference of INGOs and IFEDA was submitted for discussion. Several members of the Committee spoke of their doubts and concerns with regard to the political direction taken by the organisation and called for caution.
- It was decided to defer the final decision until the Bureau members had received reliable information. Alain Mouchoux was given the job of centralising the information.
8. [World Forum for Democracy](#) on the theme "From participation to influence: can youth revitalise democracy?", which would take place in Strasbourg from 3 to 5 November 2014. Eladio Fernandez-Galiano, of the Democratic Initiatives Department, DGII, said that the 2013 Forum had generally been considered a success. The idea of the Labs would be continued at the 2014 Forum, which would be jointly organised by the Council of Europe in collaboration with the City of Strasbourg and the French government. The contract between the three parties would expire this year and the City of Strasbourg would like to have a permanent secretariat for the Forum. A Steering Committee would therefore meet for the first time the following week. It would comprise members of the European Parliament, the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress, and the Conference of INGOs, which would be represented by Jean-Marie Heydt and Israël Mensah, and of the City and the Region. It would meet four times a year at the same time as the Parliamentary Assembly sessions to prepare forthcoming Forums. The subjects currently proposed for 2015 were digital governance and diversity. A scientific committee would become a subordinate committee to the Steering Committee.

- All proposals concerning subjects for the 2015 Forum should be sent to one of the representatives of the Steering Committee before its meeting on Friday 27 June.
9. Consideration of the three years of work done by the committees: Given that there was no written report, the Committee Chairs would orally present the strong points and the weak points of the past three years' work on Wednesday 25 June.
10. New statutes of INGO-Service: to be reviewed,
- The Extraordinary General Assembly scheduled for Thursday 26 June was deferred to a later date (still to be decided).
11. North/South Prize: deadline for candidatures: 30 June.
- Proposals to be sent to Jean-Marie Heydt: the proposed candidates should be one man and one woman who had shown exceptional commitment to enhancing North-South relations.
12. Other business:
- Hearing of Simon Matthijssen (representative of the European Ombudsman Institute) on the functioning of the Conference

Proposals for improvement:

- Restrict speaking time at meetings and improve preparations by making the session documents and reports, including the agenda, available a long time ahead of the session;
 - Do more to integrate new representatives;
 - If it was impossible to have interpretation at the meetings of the working groups, find a member of the group who could provide simultaneous translation to ensure that everyone can take part ;
 - Make available equipment such as a computer, a printer and a scanner.
- Next meeting: Wednesday 25 June from 4.15 to 5.15 p.m.