



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

STANDING COMMITTEE

CONF/SC(2014)SYN7

Strasbourg, November 2014

MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

DRAFT SYNOPSIS OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2014

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

Apologies for absence: Betty Doornenbal, Maritchu Rall, Michel Muller, Antonina Dashkina, Taras Poljanec

2. Adopted the agenda with the addition of an item on requests from INGOs for participatory status with the Council of Europe. This item was proposed by Jean-Marie Heydt to be taken under item 2.

Formal framework: The secretariat carried out a check of the applications for participatory status, after which the Secretary General of the Council of Europe submitted the applications to the Standing Committee for opinion. The latest applications were from the following organisations:

- Active - Sobriety, Friendship and Peace
- European Association for the Defence of Human Rights (AEDH)
- European Muslim Initiative for Social Cohesion (EMISCO)
- World Federalist Movement Institute for Global Policy
- Social Platform – Platform of European Social NGOs
- International Union of Architects

Reservations had been expressed about the European Muslim Initiative for Social Cohesion (EMISCO) because of comments made by one of the organisation's leaders. This was something that needed to be clarified. It was suggested that in future, the observations submitted by members of the Standing Committee to the President should be better argued and more tenable, especially where the arguments went beyond the formal framework.

3. Nomination of a Rapporteur for the meeting: Anna Rurka
4. Synopses of the meetings held on 23, 25 and 26 June 2014 [[CONF/SC\(2014\)SYN4](#), [SYN5](#) and SYN6]: for approval

The synopsis of 25 June was approved with the following amendment in the decision under item 4: the section containing details of the rules was deleted and the last sentence would read as follows: "since the Conference of INGOs only adopted resolutions and recommendations, it was proposed that the plenary be asked to lend its **support** to that text".

Item 5 of the synopsis of 23 June, texts to be adopted, was amended accordingly. The synopsis of 26 June would be approved after the decision taken on item 9 of the current meeting agenda.

5. Preparation of the January session of the Conference

- Order of Business of the Session

The January 2015 session would begin on 26 January with the meeting of the bureau and the Standing Committee (last meeting of the current team). Sabine Rohmann said that holding working group sessions during committee meetings created problems and led to lower attendance at the latter. Gérard Greneron and Anne Marie Chavanon agreed. The logistics of changing the timetable would be discussed at the meeting between the president, the secretariat and the committee chairs and vice-chairs that same day.

- Information on a side event to be held by the Working Group “Human Rights, Co-development, migrations”. A reservation was expressed by Michel Aguilar, who would confirm whether the side event would take place.

- Preparation of the Conference’s annual activity report:

Decision and timeframes:

- Mid-October: Alain Mouchoux sends the committee chairs a suggested grid for writing their reports;
- Mid-October: the working groups send their reports to their committee chairs;
- Mid-November: all the reports are sent to Mr Mouchoux for processing;
- 1 December: Mr Mouchoux sends the entire report to the Secretariat for re-reading and translation, including the Conference report drafted by himself.

- Preparation of the elections: practical arrangements and timetable – candidatures for the posts of President of the Conference, Bureau members or gender equality expert. Prior to the call for candidatures, the Verification and Dispute Committee must decide how the candidatures and supporting letters were to be submitted (by post only or by post with a copy to be sent by email). The call for candidatures would be issued on 29 October at the latest, with candidatures to reach the secretariat by 29 November. The official candidature must be submitted by the INGO, not the candidate himself or herself. In the case of the Presidency, at least 10 supporting letters from INGOs with participatory status must also be submitted to the secretariat. The Verification and Dispute Committee must then meet on 2 December to consider and approve the candidatures.

6. Representation of the Conference in intergovernmental committees: approval of new representatives further to the changes in the leadership of the three committees: ([link to the updated list](#)).

Thierry Mathieu proposed that the Conference be represented on the committees relating to health, in conjunction with the Working Group on health that was going to be set up within the Democracy, Social Cohesion and Global Challenges Committee.

The Secretariat pointed out that expenses could be claimed for attending steering committee meetings but not meetings of committees of experts, and that the budget was capped. Given the increase in the number of intergovernmental committees tracked by the INGO Conference, some of these travel expenses would have to be met by INGO-Service.

7. Contribution of INGO-Service to the activities of the Conference of INGOs:

INGO-Service activity report by its treasurer, Marie José Schmitt: 167 members of the Conference had paid contributions to INGO-Service in 2014, totalling €16,000. The Council of Europe had contributed €4,000. Where INGO-Service reimbursed travel

expenses, the daily allowance was €87. INGO-Service's expenditure had come to €13,000 in 2014. The accounts were audited by a chartered accountant, at no extra cost. There were various types of expenditure:

- invitations to experts to attend meetings of the conference;
- defrayal of working meeting expenses incurred by committee chairs and rapporteurs;
- travel by INGO Conference members to intergovernmental meetings.

Ms Schmitt asked the committee chairs to draw up a forecast of their expenditure in 2015, given that INGO-Service assigned each committee an annual budget of 2,500 euros (although the amount could be altered if necessary). New statutes for INGO-Service were being drawn up, and the draft version was due to be voted on at the General Assembly in January 2015.

8. Contribution of the Conference of INGOs to the World Forum for Democracy "From participation to influence: can youth revitalise democracy?" Strasbourg, 3-5 November 2014): for information ([link to the forum website](#))

Jean-Marie Heydt and Israël Mensah were on the Forum's steering committee. The conference was sponsoring 3 labs which would be moderated by Jean-Marie Heydt, Israël Mensah and Jean-Luc Simon. Eladio Fernandez-Galiano, Head of the Democratic Initiatives Department, outlined the latest developments regarding the Forum.

9. Draft agreement, as a basis for partnership and collaboration in Tunisia, with the "Centre d'Information, de Formation, d'Etudes et de Documentation sur les Associations" (IFEDA) (Centre for Information, training, research and documentation on NGOs)

Background: while in Tunisia, Christoph Spreng had helped run a training course on the intercultural dialogue toolkit. During his visit, he had met IFEDA, a public service organisation operating under the authority of, and financed by, the prime minister's office. From the information gathered by Standing Committee members concerning this organisation, it appeared that co-operation was an option. The members did, however, have some doubts about the legal aspect of any agreement between IFEDA and the Conference, and the three-year co-operation programme with Russia was cited as an example of what could be achieved without signing an agreement. It was pointed out that the INGO Conference was not a legal entity, and therefore could not sign agreements.

Decision: the Conference would develop co-operation with IFEDA without signing an agreement.

10. Information on recent and future events: for information

- Turin, 17 October: Marie-José Schmitt presented the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty event organised by the NGOs and co-financed by INGO-Service and the Council of Europe. This event was taking place in parallel to the High level meeting on the European Social Charter ([link to the Social Charter Website](#));
- 13-19 October: Anne-Marie Chavanon underlined the importance of participating in the European Local Democracy Week;
- Warsaw, 23-25 October: Anna Rurka participated in the Dialogue for Democracy organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Zagreb, 27-28 November: Sabine Rohmann would represent the Conference in the second annual Conference in South-East Europe on "The inclusive education in practice";
- Brussels, 4 and 5 December: Luk Zelderloo, from the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD), would represent the Conference of INGOs at the Conference on including people with disabilities in disaster preparedness and response ([link to the European and Mediterranean major hazards Agreement's Website](#)). Several members of the Standing Committee

showed their interest in the issue of this Conference which presented by Eladio Fernandez-Galiano;

- Brussels, 9 and 10 December: Anna Rurka was waiting for confirmation of the invitation to the Conference of INGOs to participate in the Conference on the best interest of the child organised in the frame of the Belgium Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the International Convention of the Rights of the Child (ICRC);
- Brussels, 18 and 19 December: Sabine Rohmann would participate in the informal meeting of the Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice (CDPPE);
- Strasbourg, Spring 2015 : Michel Aguilar mentioned the organisation of a colloquy by the Human Rights Committee and the International League against Racism and Antisemitism (LICRA).
- Anna Rurka informed the Committee that the “Lanzarote” Working Group would hold a training seminar in co-operation with the Italian Ministry of Justice of Castiglione delle Stievère.

11. Situation of civil society in member states and possible action by the Conference:

Cyril Ritchie outlined the activities of the Expert Council on NGO Law:

Azerbaijan: the Expert Council was updating its assessment of NGO legislation in Azerbaijan following the 2013 amendments. The Expert Council was also working on a comparative study on the regulation of the political activities of NGOs.

Belarus: The Criminal Code continued to present problems for NGOs which were not registered and had no legal personality.

Cyprus: the Expert Council had been invited to help prepare a strategy for the development of civil society.

Russian Federation: the legislation on NGOs had not changed and created problems for NGOs receiving funds from abroad and engaged in political activity.

In his capacity as INGO Conference rapporteur for Belarus, Cyril Ritchie was meeting with a group of civil society representatives from Belarus, who were on a working visit to the Council of Europe.

Ivan Nikoltchev reported on support for civil society in Ukraine, as part of the Council of Europe’s short-term action. Priority was being given to dialogue between the authorities and NGOs in the legislative and constitutional reform process. These issues were also being addressed through co-operation with the European Union’s Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.

12. Any other business

Cyril Ritchie wished to draw the Standing Committee’s attention to the speech by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on the priorities for his second term. The President invited the Standing Committee and in particular the committee chairs to consider how the INGO Conference might contribute to these priorities.

Decision: Standing Committee members’ proposals to be submitted by 9 October at the latest to Cyril Ritchie who would draft a document on the Conference’s action in support of the implementation of the Secretary General’s strategy. The President would write to the Secretary General on this subject.

Also, since the Secretary General had addressed the Conference only once since taking office, it was suggested that he could perhaps be invited again, to mark the start of his second term.