



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

SUMMER SESSION HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE CONF/HR(2015)SYN2

Strasbourg, 30 March 2015

<p>DRAFT SYNOPSIS OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JUNE 2015</p>
--

At the opening of the meeting a presentation was made by the Regards d'Enfants association, of which Brigitte Kahn is President. A number of children presented their ideas of human rights.

Human Rights Committee,

1. Opening by Michel Aguilar, Chair – presentation of the action plan Statements by the vice-chairs, Gérard Greneron and lamvi Totsi

- Presentation of the Committee's action plan by the Chair, who said that the work would focus on discrimination.
- Unanimous adoption of the draft synopsis of the meeting held on 27 January 2015. The Chair said that steps were being taken to improve communication between the different bodies of the Conference
- Information provided by the different heads of the working groups whose main aims were: improving awareness of the work being done by the working groups and establishing connections between all of the groups.
- Reminder of the importance of regularly updating the database on the website (expertise and NGOs' fields of competence).

2. Activities of the Chair and the Vice-Chairs since January 2015

- The Chair informed the committee of the activities conducted since January 2015:
 - colloquy at UNESCO on migration;
 - meeting with Christine Lazerges, Chair of the National Consultative Committee for Human Rights for France (CNCDH);
 - meeting with the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA);
 - DH-BIO colloquy on human rights challenges raised by emerging technologies.

Underlined the importance for the INGOs of taking part in the consultation launched by the Bioethics Committee on the draft additional protocol to the European Human Rights Convention and Biomedicine, relating to the protection of human rights and dignity of persons with mental

disorders with regard to involuntary placement and involuntary treatment. Working document [DH-BIO/INF(2015)7]. The consultation would close on 15 November 2015.

3. Tracking of discrimination's 'discrete elements'

Anne Nègre, Gender Equality Expert

Anne Nègre said that although democracies were based on human rights through human rights declarations, international treaties, constitutions, and laws, equality was a single rule that should apply to everyone as an inescapable, vital but insufficient precondition for guaranteeing equality for all citizens, in particular women. As a result a second new legal principle had emerged and been perfected by European case-law, the principle of non-discrimination.

4. Work of the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH)

Jean-Bernard Marie, representative of the Conference of INGOs to the CDDH

Jean-Bernard Marie reported on his participation in the various committees and drafting groups of the CDDH and highlighted the following work:

- the feasibility study on the impact of the economic crisis and austerity measures on human rights, which was strongly supported by the Conference of INGOs, and about which the CDDH was due to take a decision in December 2015;
- a draft recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on human rights and business setting out specific measures to be taken, which was due to be adopted by the end of the year;
- a compilation of existing Council of Europe texts on freedom of thought, conscience and religion, which had just been completed and published;
- the draft final report on the longer-term future of the European Convention on Human Rights system, which was due to be completed for adoption by the CDDH in December 2015.

5. Reports and projects of the Committee's working groups

Iamvi Totsi, Vice-Chair, provided the following information:

- At each session one working group would be entitled to interpretation;
- Oren Gostiaux was responsible for booking meeting rooms for the working groups;
- A short summary of each meeting should also be drawn up in the less-used language;
- Minutes of meetings should be prepared within a month and sent to Michel Aguilar, Iamvi Totsi and Gérard Greneron.

"Extreme poverty and human rights" working group – headed by Maritchu Rall and Jean-Gabriel Prieur

- preparation of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (being held this year on 16 instead of 17 October) on the theme "Children in situations of poverty and exclusion";
- monitoring guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights and their implementation by member states and NGOs;
- sustainable development objectives in relation to the poorest populations;
- continuation of the Turin Process on the future of social rights in Europe.

'Human rights, co-development and migration' – headed by Hugo Eyre Castelli and Marie-Christine Davy

- How should European multi-national companies, with branches throughout Europe, take the need for co-development into account?

- Preparation of a resolution asking member states to oblige such companies to respect the interests of countries and their populations;
- Preparation of a *side-event* on this theme for June 2016.

'Violence against the elderly – headed by Jean-Michel Caudron

- At the request of the French Minister responsible for elderly persons and autonomy, the FIAPA had presented a draft international Convention on the rights of the elderly to the UN. The aims of the working group would be to gain member states' support for this process as, to date, not a single country had given its support.

Léon Dujardin of ESAN (European Social Action Network) said that the Secours Populaire intended to celebrate its 70th anniversary on 19 August in Paris by making it the "Day for those who have no holiday. 70,000 children and their families would come together on the *Champ de Mars*. 1,000 children from over 70 European and other countries would be invited so as to foster solidarity without frontiers with the "Copain du Monde" movement.

6. **Announcement concerning side-events in 2016**

- Organisation on 22 September in Brussels of a training session by the Social Charter Department and the INGO Conference on the collective complaints procedure ([link to the social platform on the subject](#));
- organisation of a colloquy, organised by the MIAMSI and sponsored by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, in Pozzallo (Sicily) where migrants are arriving. The general theme will be 'A highway across the Mediterranean' with the sub-title 'Migration of peoples, cultures and religions' (contact: Daniel Guéry);
- organisation of a training session for the trainers of trainers on the theme 'fostering an inclusive Europe' with the aim of establishing dialogue between persons of different beliefs. This training session is being held by the Education and Culture Committee and the Human Rights Committee and the initial session will take place in Strasbourg in October 2015.

7. Adoption of the Recommendation on Disability

On behalf of the "Disability" working group, Marie-José Schmitt presented a draft Recommendation to the Committee of Ministers on "A new strategy with regard to disability". Several action plans had been adopted at the Council of Europe; the first of these had been adopted within the framework of a Partial Agreement. The current Action Plan in favour of people with disabilities, entitled "Improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe 2006 - 2015", was coming to an end.

Given the importance of having a strategy for the future and as the Action Plan was coming to an end this year, the working group comprising members of various NGOs representing people with disabilities had proposed that the Human Rights Committee adopt the recommendation.

- The Committee unanimously adopted the draft recommendation, which would be presented for adoption at the Plenary Conference in 25 June 2015.

8. Adoption of the text of the Marangopoulos Foundation on "Violation of the economic, social and cultural rights through austerity measures: a serious threat to democracy"

Théodora Kristofori of the Marangopoulos Foundation presented the text.

- The text was unanimously adopted and would be presented for adoption at the Plenary Conference in 25 June 2015.

9. Report on the 'No hate Web, no hate speech' Symposium (26-28 May 2015, Strasbourg) and announcement of the reactivation of the working group on hate speech

Gilles Bloch, Head of the working group on the eradication of hate speech, presented the "No hate Web, no hate speech" symposium (fight against hate speech), which took place from 28 to 30 May 2015. The minutes were in the process of being drafted. The working group would ensure appropriate follow-up to the symposium, which was designed to lead to the preparation of various tools (good practices handbook, fact sheets, etc.).

10. Address by Ambassador Drahoslav Štefánek, Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the Council of Europe, President of the Rapporteur Group on Human Rights of the Committee of Ministers

Mr Štefánek underlined the importance of stepping up and developing the partnership with NGOs. He referred to the considerable expertise and commitment and the diversity that NGOs brought to the Organisation: "You are our real partners in many different contexts". The relevance, the visibility and the credibility of the Council of Europe can only be improved through closer interaction with NGOs. His comments gave rise to a fruitful discussion.

11. The European Social Charter

Address by Régis Brillat, Head of Department, European Social Charter, Executive Secretary of the European Committee of Social Rights

Régis Brillat made 4 main points concerning the collective complaints procedure, i.e.:

- When the Council of Europe was founded, the aim was that all fundamental rights should be enshrined in the European Human Rights Convention and the European Court of Human Rights was to have jurisdiction for all such rights. However, social rights had always been considered to be less important than civil and political rights, despite declarations that the different categories of rights were indivisible and interdependent;
- The Social Charter was an important text enshrining rights that were essential to everyday life and it was accompanied by a monitoring mechanism based on a system of reports to which the NGOs could contribute;
- The aim of the 'Turin Process' was to improve the implementation of fundamental economic and social rights in Europe: in October 2014, the Council of Europe and numerous NGOs had contributed to the Turin High-Level Conference on the process for reinforcing the Social Charter, which had underlined the Charter played in upholding the values of the Council of Europe;

What could the Social Charter and the Conference achieve by working together? What form could their co-operation take? 43 of the 47 member states had ratified the Social Charter. However, only 15 states had ratified the collective complaints protocol. Much remained to be done to publicise the protocol and persuade states to ratify it.

12. General debate

- Anje Wiersinga told members about her participation in the International Women's Day Forum held by the UN on the theme 'the empowerment bridge: building a lifetime of opportunity for women and girls' . There was still a great deal to be done, and many of the obstacles and constraints acknowledged by the signatories still existed. Human rights were deteriorating and NGOs' influence was under threat in several countries because of the legal context. Women's rights were diminishing and a stop had to be put to this decline. Men's participation was essential in achieving this.

Maritchu RALL
Committee Rapporteur