



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

STANDING COMMITTEE CONF/SC(2016)SYN2

Strasbourg, 5 June 2016

MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

List of decisions taken on Monday 25 April 2016

1. Opening of the meeting by Anna Rurka, President of the Conference of INGOs

This Standing Committee meeting was both political and operational. The President of the Conference explained that she intended to hold strategic meetings with the Directorate General of Democracy (DGII) and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe (SG). The Bureau would be called on to prepare the the INGO Conference's project for 2018-2020, which would be part of the terms of reference of a forthcoming team.

2. Agenda

The agenda was adopted after a financial item concerning INGO-Services had been added.

3. List of decisions taken on Tuesday 26 January 2016 [\[OING/SC\(2016\)SYN1\]](#) :

The list of decisions was adopted.

4. Activities of the members of the Standing Committee since January 2016 – exchange of information

Each member reported on the activities of the thematic committees and/or his or her responsibilities (steering committees, transversal lines of action) on behalf of the Conference (see. proceedings of the summer session and lists of decisions to be presented at the summer session).

5. [World Forum for Democracy “Education and democracy: how to bridge the social divides”](#) Strasbourg, 7-9 November 2016: Lab and other contributions on behalf of the Conference of INGOs and the Standing Committee:

The working group (Sabine Rohmann, Anne Kraus, Roseline Moreau, and Maritchu Rall), which had been tasked by the Standing Committee with preparing the lab, submitted its proposals to the members of the Standing Committee before the 15 May deadline. The results of selection should be made known at the steering committee meeting on 7 June,

The project would be based on the following key-words: civil society, leverage/support, education for active citizenship and democracy.

6. [Validation of the slogan by the INGO Conference des OING](#)

85 INGOs had chosen “Together for a strong Europe in solidarity!”; this slogan was validated by the Standing Committee.

7. Preparation of the summer session of the INGO Conference, 21-24 June 2016

The current affairs debate on migration that was to take place on 24 June was being organised and a preparatory meeting would be held in the afternoon of 23 June. The *side event* on women and religions would take place on 21 June and the speed dating on 22 June.

The chairs of the thematic committees explained in detail the work of their respective committees and working groups during the session.

The proceedings for the summer session were approved (*see: final programme*).

As with the summer session, which would have a main theme – the current affairs debate on migration – it was suggested that it would be a good idea to find a common theme for the January session, if not all of the 2017 sessions, which could serve as a transversal line of action for the thematic committees and their working groups, connected to the Secretary General's political agenda and the Conference's Action Plan 2015-2018. The theme could be based on freedom of associations, freedom and privacy, etc. This theme could be introduced at the June session.

The President of the Conference distributed a text on the organisation of the Conference's side events which Michel Aguilar had drawn up for collective consideration. This text would be studied at the next meetings.

A farewell party would be held during the session to thank Jutta Gützkow for her efficient assistance to the INGO Conference and to wish her well in her new post.

8. Position to be taken on the situation of refugees following the EU-Turkey agreement

The Standing Committee approved the President's proposal to issue a press release on "The consequences of the political agreement between the European Union and Turkey on the fate of refugees arriving in Greece and Turkey: acts incompatible with international law and respect for human dignity".

9. Other requests to adopt a position:

- concerning the situation of Nadia Savtchenko, prisoner of war - (requested by the European Centre of the International Council of Women):
 - One vote in favour, 8 abstentions, one vote against,
 - concerning the debate on surrogacy, requested by Anne Nègre and the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (FAFCE) following the rejection of the report submitted by Petra de Sutter (Belgium, SOC) by the PACE Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development Committee:
 - the charter of confidentiality with regard to the debates of the PACE committees made it impossible to discuss these debates outside the committees,
 - a digest of case-law on the subject was to be prepared. The Chair of the HR Committee agreed to hold a discussion with the different INGOs involved with a view to proposing a written position.

10. Information on the work in progress on the revision of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of INGOs by the Chair of the Verification and Dispute Committee, Salomon Levy:

Salomon Levy, Chair of the Verification and Dispute Committee, detailed the main changes to the Conference's Rules of Procedure:

- the President of the Conference would be able to hold office for two consecutive three-year terms;
- the Chair of the Council of Experts on NGO Law, whose appointment was validated by the Conference, had consultative status with the Conference and should not therefore have voting rights. His expert advice should remain unbiased and exempt of any attempt to persuade anyone or influence the outcome of ballots.

- The Gender Equality Expert would be replaced by a post of Vice-President of the Conference.

11. Information on the work in progress on Resolution (2003)8 by Jutta Gützkow

Progress was being made in revising the resolution, with genuine interaction between the INGO Conference and the Civil Society Division.

12. Communication strategy of the Conference of INGOs - Didier Schretter and Jessica Chamba

Members of the Standing Committee could still give feedback on the documents sent to them.

The new flyer presenting the Conference would be finalised in mid-May by the students that Oren Gostiaux had enlisted to help. It should abide by the Council of Europe's graphic design specifications. The Civil Society Division would earmark a budget for preparing and printing it.

A banner with the new slogan would be prepared in time for the summer session.

13. Other business:

INGO-Services now had 85 INGO members and received 12.250€ in membership fees. A reminder concerning membership fees would be sent out in June.

It was difficult for the association to foresee future expenses for the activities of the thematic committees. The action sheets were there to help prioritise expenditure in keeping with the sums available.

Thought would have to be given to the risk of the tax adjustment which the INGO-Services association might have to undergo to cover the reimbursement of travel expenses for speakers from INGOs which were not members of the association.

14. Date of the next meetings:

The next meetings of the Standing Committee would take place on 21 and 23 June 2016.