



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Standing Committee
CONF/SC(2019)SYN1

MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
SYNOPSIS adopted at the meeting on 8 April
Monday 21 January 2019

Present: Anna Rurka, Anne Kraus, Anne Nègre, Christoph Spreng, Robert Bergougnan, Rares Craiut, Richard Pirolt, Katarzyna Sokolowska, Claude Vivier Le Got, Karl Donert, Simon Matthijssen, Miguel Cabral de Pinho, Gerhard Ermischer, Luminita Petrescu, Salomon Levy, Cyril Ritchie, Jeremy McBride, Annelise Oeschger, Heleen Jansen (INGO Service)

Secretariat: Daniel Popescu, Mary Ann Hennessey, Jane Crozier

Apologised for absence: Julianne Lagadec (proxy voting), Thierry Matthieu, Iamvi Totsi

1. The meeting was opened by Anna Rurka, President of the Conference of INGOs.
2. Rares Craiut and Richard Pirolt were nominated rapporteurs of the meeting.
3. [Agenda](#) - **adopted**
4. [Report of the meeting of 8 October](#) – **adopted**
5. Activity report 2018 of the Conference of INGO – **adopted**

The President thanked those who had sent in their report on time and also those who helped with the translation and corrections. After adoption by the plenary in April, the report would be circulated to partners and members. The Standing Committee members were invited to submit email addresses of people they thought should receive the report.

6. Code of conduct (Salomon Levy, Simon Matthijssen, Cyril Ritchie, Jeremy McBride)

The President thanked the drafting group (Salomon Levy, Simon Matthijssen, Jeremy McBride, Cyril Ritchie, and the assistance of François Debrowolska) and the Secretariat for their work. All INGOs had been given the possibility to send in proposals to the text. Over 100 proposals had been received and the drafting group had analysed them one by one. The drafting group met in September and November 2018 and the text that was now proposed to the Standing Committee for approval was a revised document. The President underlined the importance of adopting the Code by the Conference of INGOs. At its meeting on Sunday 20 January, the Bureau had made small changes to the document with regards to articles 8, 9 and 20.

The President proposed a 10 minute discussion session before proceeding to the vote.

The Secretariat presented the opinion of the translation department on the use of the word “*Charte*” or “*Code*” in French. “*Charte*” emphasised a voluntary engagement whereas Code had a

connotation which was binding. Simon Matthijssen pointed out that “voluntary and non-binding” was not the intention of the drafting group. The document was intended to be binding and article 21 clearly indicated this. Anne Nègre pointed out that code in French brought to mind legal obligations and not obligations that were self-induced. “*Charte*” meant rules of good conduct but without sanctions. She felt that code was too strong a word.

The President proposed to vote on 3 possibilities: “*Charte*” in French and Code in English, “*Charte*” in French and Charter in English, Code in French and Code in English. **The term code in French and code in English was adopted with 7 votes for, 3 against and 3 abstentions.**

In response to a proposal by Anne Nègre, Jeremy McBride suggested adding the phrase “participants should not engage in discriminatory and sexist behaviour while participating in Conference activities”. It was agreed that this would be included in paragraph 5 and in a new paragraph 7.

The President proposed a vote on the document as a whole. **The Code was approved with 11 voices for, 2 abstentions, 0 against**

7. Draft resolution relating to the Draft Additional Protocol to the Oviedo Convention concerning the protection of human rights of “persons with mental disorder” with regard to involuntary placement and involuntary treatment proposed by Autism Europe, EASPD, European Disability Forum, ENUSP, ENIL, Inclusion Europe, MHE, Validity

A consultation was carried out with the members of the Conference of INGOs and the results were sent to the Steering Committee on Bioethics and to the contributors. The draft resolution proposed by Autism Europe, EASPD, European Disability Forum, ENUSP, ENIL, Inclusion Europe, MHE and Validity expresses opposition to the Draft Additional Protocol in terms of the drafting process and the content.

The Standing Committee agreed that the content of the Draft Additional Protocol should be largely improved. However, taking into account that the Steering Committee on Bioethics would continue its work on the draft, **the Standing Committee decide to not take a position on the current draft and wait for the new version of the document. By the same, Standing Committee decided not to proceed with the draft resolution proposed by the group of INGOs.**

8. Global agenda for 2019 initiated by the Conference of INGOs (debates and side events, special events, fact finding visits, publications).

The President underlined that the principle of one side event by session meant one side event with interpretation.

- Country visits: proposals made by the Expert Council on NGO Law included Lithuania, Italy and France. Due to a possible conflict of interest with regard to the visit in France, someone else would need to take charge of the visit instead of the President;
- Side event on LGBT and religious freedom proposed by LGBT Christians Group would be co-organized with the Human Rights Committee (April Session);
- Side event “Duty or offense of solidarity” – Task force migration (April Session);
- Education and Culture Committee wished to organize a side event in 2020 after finalization of the white paper on European cultural identity;
- The project with the Directorate General of Democracy (DG2) on Freedom of Association was nearing finalization and would be open for voluntary contributions for the Member States;
- Training on monitoring (Human Rights Committee): a think-tank could be invited to instruct people on how to use cameras and how to report recurring infringements;

- The Expert Council was carrying out a number of scoping studies. Decisions would be taken during the next meeting of the Expert Council at the end of February.

Anne Kraus reminded members to make sure that youth were systematically included in the 2019 activities. Anna Rurka pointed out that since the last reform of the Council of Europe, the Conference of INGOs had engaged in a rejuvenation process. Nevertheless, the Conference needed to continue its efforts to engage more with youth.

9. Support of INGO-Service to the global agenda 2019 of the Conference of INGO, budget of the thematic committees and integrated approaches, rules of reimbursement – Annelise Oeschger (President), Heleen Jansen (Treasurer)

Annelise Oeschger and Heleen Jansen presented the new rules for reimbursement and insisted that they had to be respected by all. They also said that there had been a drop in the number of financial contributions by 15% in 2018 probably due to a deficit of communication. INGO-Service would have an information stand during the April session and asked each committee for 3 to 5 minutes to present INGO-Service during the meeting.

Anna Rurka pointed out that it was the responsibility of the official representative to make the connection between INGO-Service and the treasure of INGO that he/ she represented.

Simon Matthijssen requested a good conference call system to connect the working groups.

Heleen Jansen concluded by saying that INGO-Service would improve the system of reimbursement and asked people to submit their reports on time.

10. Agenda of the April Session of the Conference of INGOs including leading themes and side events

Following the contribution made by the Claude Vivier le Got to the event organized by ESAN (European Social Action Network), the Education and Culture Committee was currently working on a draft Recommendation on the poverty of students.

UNESCO was invited to the next meeting of the Education and Culture Committee.

After the discussion in the Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice (CDPPE), Claude Vivier Le Got wished to make the Standing Committee members aware of the difficulties of the DGII to continue the project on the Holocaust remembrance. The Secretariat said that the Holocaust remembrance project was cut due to the general budget cuts. Anna Rurka said that the Conference needed to deliver a strong text to be voted in April which would encompass the transmission of the European memory, the rise of anti-Semitism and hate speech in Europe. The Education and Culture Committee proposed to prepare a draft from the education perspective. The drafting group would include Salomon Levy and INGOs which are concerned (such as LICRA).

The Secretariat offered 5 days of interpretation during the April session, given that, because of the public holiday on 1 November, the session at the end of October would be shorter (4 days).

Anna Rurka recalled the decision to have a main topic for each session and the proposal of the Bureau for the April session was “digital civic space”. Karl Donert, as coordinator of the WG “Digital Citizen”, accepted to work on the preparation which would involve discussion in interactive groups and input from different bodies working on the topic. He proposed a short questionnaire that would be prepared and sent out before the April session to get the members thinking about the challenges. He would also solicit input from outsiders in an effort to stimulate the debates and the discussions. Anne Kraus mentioned that the European Union-Council of Europe partnership in

youth and the Advisory Council on Youth could also help but they would need to be contacted as soon as possible. Karl Donert mentioned that he had them already in mind.

INGO-Service would continue organizing the common dinner for INGOs.

The President made a final reminder to everyone to send in the agendas in a timely fashion. The working groups could meet on Monday, Thursday and Friday afternoon.

The calendar of meetings of the session was adopted with a possible switch between the Education and Culture Committee and the Democracy, Social Cohesion and Global Challenges Committee as well as moving the meeting for new Representatives to Tuesday instead of Wednesday.

11. Contribution of the Standing Committee to the World Forum for Democracy 6-8 November 2019, provisional theme "Information & democracy".

The concept note and the call for lab proposals would shortly be made available. The Standing Committee could make a contribution on the following subjects: digital citizenship, the role of the digital media in the social relations between the majority and minorities.

12. How to reinforce interactions between the INGOs and the Committee of Ministers (CM) and the impact of the Conference of INGOs on the work of other Council of Europe organs.

The President presented the evolution of the interaction between the CM and the Conference of INGOs since 2014. Since then, regular exchanges of views are organised by the GR-DEM and the Ministers' Deputies with the President of the Conference of INGOs. The new "momentum" was the subject for further discussion and development. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Poland and the University of Warsaw were organising in the context of the 70th Anniversary of the Council of Europe, a one-day conference (22 March) regarding the role of the INGOs in Council of Europe.

13. [Drafting group](#) in charge of proposals regarding the [Rules of Procedure](#) or other statutory provisions of the Conference of INGOs. Preliminary Report and inquiry (Christoph Spreng, Salomon Levy, Gerhard Ermischer, Jeremy McBride, Miguel Cabral de Pinho).

After some words of introduction regarding the preliminary report sent to the Standing Committee, an interactive exercise was carried out to gather information from the Standing Committee members. The drafting group would continue its work the following day. Time for discussion on the preliminary report was planned during the plenary meeting of the Conference of INGOs in April.

14. [Action plan 2018-2021](#) – proposal for mid-term assessment (Katarzyna Sokolowska, Robert Bergougnan)

The Bureau had prepared an Excel sheet dedicated to the mid-term evaluation of the Action Plan. The survey would remain open all the time. It should be filled in each time an action was carried out. The respective indicators were agreed by the Standing Committee and included in the Action plan.

15. Communication (Rares Craiut, Richard Pirolt, Anne Kraus)

Richard Pirolt informed the Standing Committee on latest developments concerning the use of the official e-mail address (@ingo-coe.org), the shared agenda (Google calendar set up by Anna Rurka), and the shared data storage (for the moment a Google drive set up by Anna Rurka but a solution via the Council of Europe's web was being evaluated). Rares Craiut had prepared a template for contributions to the INGO Conference Blog. It should be sent out to all members of the INGO Conference as an invitation to contribute to the Blog. The Blog would nevertheless need to be moderated.

16. Drafting group regarding the updating of the Code of good practice for civil participation (Gerhard Ermischer, Cyril Ritchie, Julianne Lagadec, Katarzyna Sokolowska): Progress report

Gerhard Ermischer reported on the progress of the drafting group which had held its first joint meeting with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on 6 November. The group was at the moment collecting remarks and a first draft would follow at the beginning of March. Gerhard Ermischer, as head of the drafting group, was invited to the meeting of the Current Affairs Committee of the Congress in Stuttgart on 28 June to present the draft revised document.

A joint event between the INGO Conference and the Congress was planned for the Congress session in October 2019 at which the updated code of good practice for civil participation would be officially launched.

17. List of the representatives to the steering committees: The list was updated.

18. Training of the equality rapporteurs

The Council of Europe had some 40 gender equality rapporteurs. One of the rapporteurs had accepted to come to the April session and deliver a short training course to the INGOs.

19. Other business

Jeremy McBride informed the Standing Committee that he had asked Cyril Ritchie to represent the Expert Council at the Standing Committee. He, himself, would try to be present as often as possible, but Cyril Ritchie, as Honorary President of the Expert Council, would ensure the connection with the Standing Committee.

Anna Rurka presented the research project "Social rights in Action":

The consortium of universities mentioned below proposes to the Conference of INGO to be associate or full partner of the research proposal. The aim of the research project is to develop innovative ways of promoting social rights and protecting citizens against social risks. This will be done by a Europe-wide study of the actions taken by citizens, communities, NGOs, activists, practitioners and state agencies to implement social rights and make them accessible for citizens at risk of poverty, social exclusion and discrimination. Individual work packages in the project will focus on: citizens' understandings of social rights; life histories; citizen, NGO and activist work; practitioners in state agencies; courts and legal systems; policy makers. A final work package will synthesise findings and develop indicators, practice manuals, theory and recommendations for practitioners and policymakers. The project would run for 3 years from late 2019 until late 2022 and involves university partners from six countries across Europe: Aalborg (DK), Lisbon (PT), Lincoln (UK), Paris Nanterre (FR), Warsaw (PL) and Thrace (GR). The application is for Horizon 2020 funding, so all direct costs related to the research project would be covered by the European Commission.

After discussion the Standing Committee decided that the Conference of INGOs through INGO Service (as an institutional partner) would apply as a full partner of the project.

20. Date of the next meeting – 8 April 2019