



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Communication charter of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe

1. Aim of a communication charter

For any institution, harmonious communication is an essential factor for success whether internally between its constituent parts, or externally with all the components of its environment.

This charter sets out to establish for the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe the references, the aims, the conditions of implementation, and the directives and principles to be observed.

2. References

The Rules of Procedure of the Conference of INGOs as adopted by the Conference on 24 January 2013 is the basic document to which the Charter refers.

However, there are other documents that provide a mandatory framework for the implementation of the Charter. These are :

- [the Resolution \(2003\)8 of the Committee of Ministers](#) on participatory status for international non-governmental organisations with the Council of Europe
- the Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2007\)14](#) on the legal status of non-governmental organisations in Europe
- [the Code of good practice for civil participation in the decision-making process](#), adopted by the Conference of INGOs at its meeting on 1 October 2009 CONF/PLE(2009)CODE1
- [the Action Plan of the Conference of INGOs adopted on 25 June 2015](#)
- the communication strategy of the INGO Conference

3. Aims of communication

Those involved in this communication are found on three mutually interactive levels and are engaged in communication:

- within the Conference
- between the Conference and other Council of Europe entities
- between the Conference and the world outside the Council of Europe

3.1 Within the Conference of INGOs, given the mutual respect between the different participants, the communication policy of the Conference of INGOs aims:

- to enhance the cohesion of the members and bodies of the Conference, while bearing in mind its plural and representative character, its diversity and specificity;
- to involve the participants in the fulfilment of the Conference Action Plan, while taking account of the Conference's values, goals and missions;
- to permit, by the sharing of information, the development of synergies, collaborations and solidarity between the INGOs of the Conference and their member organisations at the national level;

- to inform the Conference of INGOs as a whole about the characteristics of the various member organisations and the specific issues addressed by them and likewise about the Committees and their working groups

3.2 Between the Conference and the other Council of Europe entities, the aim is to establish coherent and discriminating communication that reflects the objectives and priorities of the Conference Bureau and the Standing Committee. The other Council of Europe entities are: the Secretary General, the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the European Court of Human Rights and the Commissioner for Human Rights.

3.3 As to communication with the world outside the Council of Europe, the policy aims:

- to promote an attractive, coherent image of the Conference of INGOs;
- to make it known how the actions of the Conference, their effects and the resultant implementation are useful to civil society in the member countries;
- to give members information that enables them to better contextualise their choice of actions useful to them;
- to emphasise its values, character and priority approaches in accordance with its fundamental missions;
- to demonstrate knowledge of the projects and actions involved in the strategy of the Conference, including their development;
- to communicate to the competent political bodies the strengths of the Conference of INGOs and the obstacles that face it in implementing the fundamental goals of the Council of Europe.

4. Principles to be observed

- conformity with the statements at item 2 above
- responsibility:
Any member of the Conference of INGOs may directly approach any office-bearer of the Standing Committee to obtain information. It is for the person questioned to judge whether a response to this request falls within with his or her mission, to transfer the request to another office-bearer and/or to inform the members of the Bureau and the Secretariat.
- transparency:
All acts of communication by members of the Conference must be intelligible, accessible and available for consultation both in the committees and in the Standing Committee.
- confidentiality:
Some information may be deemed confidential by the issuing party, who shall be responsible for specifying such items, indicating to whom they may be transmitted and for how long the information is subject to an embargo. Anyone holding such information shall be required to observe secrecy.
- Limits to the issuing party's independence:
Where actions performed on behalf of the thematic committees, the Expert Council or of the Conference are concerned, members wishing to contact other Council of Europe entities must do so in consultation with the President / or the Bureau and the Secretariat.
- Responsibility for providing information applies to all members of the Standing Committee. The information concerned is that which governs the affairs and the actions of the Conference and its constituent bodies.
- A press release may not be sent on behalf of the Conference of INGOs or one of its constituent bodies except with the formal consent of the President, in consultation with the Secretariat.
- Where an INGO of the Conference sends non-confidential correspondence that concerns the Conference to any official body, whether or not part of the Council of Europe, proper procedure

requires copies to be sent to the President of the Conference, the Secretariat and, as the case may be, to the Chairs of the Committees.

5. Conditions of implementation of communication

5.1 Internally

The various members of the Standing Committee acting in that role shall:

- adhere to one and the same communication policy and in particular to this Charter;
- implement their communication in accordance with the communication strategy of the Standing Committee;

The member organisations of the Conference shall:

- observe the principles of this charter;
- assist, within the limits of their resources and according to their fields of action, in informing their members of the actions of the Conference and the Standing Committee;
- mention the Conference of INGOs in their common actions with the Conference of INGOs;
- maintain a constant concern for the quality of their communications;
- seek to promote a culture of mutual respect between individual representatives and member organisations of the Conference and the bodies of the Council of Europe;
- foster participation, consultation and the coherence and circulation of information.

5.2 Externally

The various members of the Standing Committee acting in that role shall:

- maintain contact with all stakeholders in relationship with the Conference of INGOs in order to determine their expectations;
- build up a coherent, comprehensive image which the various members and bodies of the Conference reflect as appropriate;
- target the areas requiring more intensive communication;
- choose the preferred channels to disseminate the image and the messages of the Conference of INGOs;
- strictly observe the principles of the Charter so as to guard against incoherence and invalidation in the communication and image of the Conference of INGOs as a whole;
- Implement the action plan in accordance with the communication strategy.

6. Compliance with communication ethics

In cases of non-compliance with this Charter, the President and the Secretariat are entitled to challenge the issuing party or parties and all concerned. To do so, the Standing Committee shall have available the “Strategic Plan of communication”, drafted and regularly updated in conjunction with this Charter.

However, it does not rest with them to settle possible disputes, especially as they themselves issue numerous messages and may also be challenged by the members of the Conference as to their compliance with this Charter. In the event of a dispute, the Verification and Dispute Committee shall adjudicate.

If the issue persists, or if the Verification and Dispute Committee does not consider itself competent to adjudicate, the case shall then be referred to the Standing Committee acting as an ethics Committee.