



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**WINTER SESSION
DEMOCRACY, SOCIAL COHESION AND
GLOBAL CHALLENGES COMMITTEE
CONF/DEM(2012)SYN1**

Strasbourg, 6 June 2012

**DRAFT SYNOPSIS
of the meeting held on 26 January 2012
2.30 to 6 pm
Room G03, Agora**

The NGO members of the Democracy, Social Cohesion and Global Challenges Committee, meeting with Anne-Marie Chavanon in the chair,

1. **adopted** the draft agenda as it stood
2. **adopted** the draft synopsis of the constituent meeting held on 22 June 2011 as it stood
3. **noted** that the Committee's draft activity report for 2011 had been adopted by the Conference of INGOs the previous day.
4. **Round Table "*How should we construct social cohesion in Europe? New tools*"**

Following an introduction by the Chair, who pointed out that it was very important that all representatives of the quadrilogue be present at the launching of its social cohesion activities, **the Committee held an exchange of views** with

Gilda FARRELL, Head of the Council of Europe's [Social Cohesion, Research and Early-warning Division](#), who

- stressed the need for research and political debate to take account of long-term developments;
- underlined the usefulness of thinking in terms of responsibility and not only of respect for the law, for the well-being of all;
- called for well-established equality, the very foundation of social cohesion, based on the common good;
- mentioned as examples of the tools prepared by her division: the draft European Charter on shared social responsibilities, (still under discussion at the Council of Europe), a [methodological tool to develop co-responsibility for social cohesion](#), the guide "*Constructing an inclusive institutional culture*" to help public services adjust to a pluralist society; the "*Migrants and their descendants*" study and two

platforms, one on [ethical and solidarity-based initiatives for combating poverty and social exclusion](#), the other an open platform with the European Commission (<http://edgeryders.ppa.coe.int/>) aimed at young people, who alone are considered in a position to give fresh impetus to the political debate. (cf. Appendix 1)

Bernard MARQUET, Vice-Chair of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee [of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe](#) (Monaco), who

stressed the need to uphold the Council of Europe's specific contribution to democracy through its quadrilogue;

- paid tribute to the work done by the division and welcomed the high standard of the draft European Charter on shared social responsibilities,
- encouraged the INGOs to take ownership of the draft Charter and promote it among member states;
- drew attention to the texts on social cohesion approved by the Parliamentary Assembly, in particular the proposal to draft an additional protocol to the revised Social Charter on the right to a healthy environment,
- placed emphasis on the PACE's efforts to combat the risk of a regression in social rights in times of crisis, as progress could only be made by ensuring social inclusion. Cf. Appendix 2

Andrée BUCHMANN, member of the [Congress of Local and Regional Authorities](#), who

- drew attention to the threat posed to social rights and European solidarity by economic problems and austerity measures;
- underlined the role of local authorities and the work done by the Congress to prevent the economic crisis from becoming a social disaster;
- stressed the importance of the [European Charter of Local Self-Government](#) ;
- presented Congress activities and reports on social cohesion and democracy,
- pointed out that a Conference on integrating foreign residents and a Summit of Mayors for Roma had been held in 2010 and 2011;
- called on NGOs to work together to build an inclusive community;

Marinette GONON, President of the association "[Les 7 pains](#)", set up in 2002 with the backing of Caritas, an example of a social and solidarity action to help the most deprived members of society, who presented the combined mechanism of an association for integration aimed at the under 25s and the over 50s and the related activity of two solidarity restaurants in Strasbourg;

Yawo ABOTSI, originally from Togo, Secretary General of the Swiss association "[Co-habiter](#)" (Living Together), whose aim was to make it easier for migrant and native communities to live together in harmony, who presented the activities carried out by migrants for migrants (detecting racism, mediation, intercultural dialogue taking account of multiculturalism, warnings against drugs and prostitution, etc.).

5. Major international debates in 2012: World Water Forum, Rio and Doha Summits

After the Chair had reminded members of the Committee's vision of "Global challenges" (all the vital debates for humanity, policies and above all the implications in strategic terms for natural resources, the climate, food and energy security, human health, etc.),

the Committee held an exchange of views on [the World Water Forum](#) to be held in Marseille (France) from 12 to 17 March 2012 with

Bernard MARQUET, who called for Parliamentarians' participation in the Forum; he himself is a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean and author of the Council of Europe reports on "Water and the Mediterranean ", " Water: a strategic challenge for the Mediterranean Basin " and "Water, a source of conflicts";

- the need to take stock of international conventions on water and to improve knowledge of aquifers;
- the establishment of a parliamentary "help-desk" (sponsor required);

Andrée BUCHMAN on the responsibility of local authorities and the establishment of the "[Aqua publica europea](#)" association, a forum for discussion and mutual assistance among local authorities but also for lobbying to protect the resource and access to it.

Édith WENGER, Bureau Européen de l'Environnement (BEE), who reminded participants of the Strasbourg Declaration ("Water, a source of citizenship, peace and development") adopted at a European forum on 14 February 1998" and said that although the INGOs were not yet part of the decision-making process of the official forum (in which parliamentarians and local authorities had only recently begun participating), they were invited to contribute to the working groups of the Forum via the Internet and to support the contribution made by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

On a proposal by Patrice COLLIGNON, **the Committee had proposed** that the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress prepare a joint activity for the next World Forum (2015), which **Bernard Marquet** would present it to his committee.

Rio+20

The Committee **endorsed the message proposed by ATD Fourth World**, focusing on the need to take account of the poorest members of society in the priorities of the next summit [RIO + 20](#) (Brazil, 20 and 21 June 2012), in particular in the pursuance of green growth. Cf. Appendix 3;

It **suggested that there should be a supplementary declaration** based on the Committee's other themes and decided that a **draft would be presented and adopted online** to meet this request prior to the RIO summit and widely disseminated on the Internet Cf. Appendix 4. (see the Committee's websites on these specific themes)

DOHA – Climate Summit

It took note of the Committee's commitment (working group headed by Edith WENGER) to the next summit on the **climate**, which would take place in DOHA, Qatar, from 26 November to 7 December 2012

6. Council of Europe 2012 activities relating to other issues addressed by the committee **The Committee took note** of the information provided by Maguelonne DEJEANT-PONS, Head of the Heritage, Landscape and Technical Assistance Division, who

- welcomed the expert contribution that the Committee's NGOs had made to the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning ([CEMAT](#)) over the past years;
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- underlined the main policy choices of the Council of Europe, which considered human beings to be the central concern of spatial development, as well as the context and content of CEMAT meetings, in particular the ministerial declaration on essential services from the human rights standpoint, adopted at the previous conference (Moscow 2010);
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- presented the 16th session of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning in Europe, which would take place in Greece in October 2012, *ministérielle* which was of particular interest to the Committee. Its theme will

be *"Territorial democracy: the role of public participation in the process of sustainable territorial development of the European Continent"*;

took note of the emphasis which Patrice COLLIGNON (RED) placed not only on the need to base action in these fields on the Council of Europe's priorities but also on the work being carried out by the European Union in Brussels,

7 – Internal work of the Committee

7.1 **discussed** the initial contributions of the working groups on democracy and the political and social revolutions in Southern Mediterranean countries, with the presentation:

- of the working frame of the "Declaration/chart on true democracy" by **Giuseppe GUARNERI** (International Institute for Human Rights Studies), Head of the ad hoc working group- [Link to web page](#)
- of an expert opinion on "*Political and social revolution in the Southern Mediterranean countries*" by **Jean-Pierre ESTIVAL** (European Association of Railwaymen,) Cf. Appendix 5. Numerous members concerned by this theme suggested that the ad hoc working group, headed by Jean-Pierre ESTIVAL, conduct a joint study of these developments [Link to web page](#).

7.2 **adopted** the draft resolution/recommendation on "*Gender perspectives in political and democratic processes in the MENA Region*" by Anje WIERSINGA (Women's International Alliance), Head of the working group on "*including gender perspectives in political and democratic processes, in particular during and after conflicts*". Cf. Appendices 6 and 7.

7.3 **was informed of the work done by other working groups**, namely

- the "**Health and mobility**" working group, headed by Dr Thierry MATHIEU (International Association for Research in Hospital Hygiene),. Cf. Appendix 8 and [link to web page](#),
- the **Migration and democracy** working group, headed by Jean-Claude GONON (European Teacher's Association) [Link to web page](#)
- the **Climate and Human Rights** working group, headed by Edith WENGER Bureau European de l'Environnement. [Link to web page](#)
- and the **European citizenship** working group, headed by Hélène DUQUIN (Centre for Study and Strategic Prospective). [Link to web page](#)

7.4 **accepted** the proposal by Bernard AUBERT, Association internationale des Urbanistes (AIU), that a **new working group on housing and health**, which he would chair in collaboration with Guy SCHLAEDER, which would be submitted for approval to the Standing Committee at the April 2012 session(Cf. Appendix 9).

8. Committee representations

8.1 **The Committee took note** of the meeting reports, contributions and other reports in the file handed out to the participants concerning

- the Civil Society Forum held by the Conference of INGOs on the theme "*Living together – Combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe*", 13 and 14 November 2011 (Strasbourg - France): general report by Israël MENSAH, Committee Vice-Chair; Cf. Appendix 10)
- "*Multifunctional Landscapes*" Landscape workshops, 20-21 October 2011 (Evora - Portugal) by Patrice COLLIGNON;(Cf. Appendix 11)

- “*Sustainable Societies; Responsive Citizens*”- Conference of NGOs - DPI/ONU, 3-6 September 2011 (Bonn – Germany) [moderation of a round table](#) (video) by Anne-Marie CHAVANON;
- Bonn International Model United Nations (BIMUN) “Promoting Equality at Work: Eradicating Gender Discrimination” 1 December 2011 (Bonn – Germany) by Vera JOHN-MIKOLAJEWSKI, Committee Vice-Chair.

9. Other business

Functioning of the meeting:

On a proposal by Gehrard ERMISCHER (CIVILSCAPE), the Committee approved the decision to establish a golden rule that none of the working groups would be allowed to make a statement lasting more than 3 minutes if it was not based on a text to be submitted to participants

10. Next meetings

During the Summer Session: Tuesday 26 June 2012, from 9:30am to 1 pm.

The working groups could meet between sessions – without interpretation