



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

WINTER SESSION HUMAN RIGHTS CONF/HR(2012)SYN1

Strasbourg, 28 February 2012

DRAFT SYNOPSIS OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2012

1. Annelise Oeschger, Chair of the Committee, opened the meeting and welcomed Ambassador Andrey Tehov, Chair of the Rapporteur Group on Human Rights (GR-H), Luis Jimena Quesada, Chair of the European Committee of Social Rights, and Régis Brillat, Head of the Department of the European Social Charter, and thanked them for their interest in the Committee's work and the partnership that had been established with them

The Committee

2. **adopted** the meeting agenda [[CONF/HR\(2012\)OJ1](#)] and added to item 7 a discussion on human rights defenders in the Russian Federation;

pointed out that an INGO delegation would be meeting Ms Michelle Bachelet, UN Deputy Secretary and Executive Director of UN Women.

3. **adopted** the synopsis of the meeting held on 22 June 2011 [[CONF/HR\(2011\)SYN2](#)]

pointed out that the Committee's newsletter was a tool for communication and the exchange of views.

4. **heard** Ambassador Andrey Tehov, Luis Jimena Quesada, and Régis Brillat describe the ways in which the European Social Charter was being promoted by the Committee of Ministers and the European Committee of Social Rights;

declared its support for the Committee of Ministers' Declaration on the 50th anniversary of the European Social Charter on 12 October 2011, reaffirming that all human rights are indivisible and interdependent and underlining the fundamental role of the European Social Charter;

instructed its Working Group on the Social Charter to do more to explain to INGOs with participatory status how they could help implement and monitor the Social Charter by commenting on national reports and collective complaints.

5. **heard** Giuseppe Guarneri, representative of the Conference of INGOs on the Steering Committee on Human Rights (CDDH), describe the progress made in the Reform of the European Court of Human Rights; the main points of his statement concerned:

- the workload of the European Court, which had doubled in five years;

- the five countries from which the largest number of admissible applications were received: the Russian Federation, Poland, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine;
- following the two interministerial conferences – held in Interlaken in 2010 and in Izmir in 2011 – the Committee of Ministers had instructed the Steering Committee for Human Rights to implement the work programme;
- some of the proposals concerning the reform of the Court were giving cause for concern (see the position paper);
- a conference on the reform of the Court was to be held in Brighton (U.K.) from 18 to 20 April 2012.

unanimously adopted with one abstention the position paper on the reform of the Court, stressing the importance of maintaining the outstanding mechanism for the protection of human rights. The text, now in the form of a [recommendation](#), had been adopted by the Conference of INGOs on 27 January.

6. **unanimously adopted**, with 15 abstentions, the [recommendation](#) on combating discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity presented by Nigel Warner (ILGA).

7. **unanimously adopted** the [recommendation](#) on the protection of human rights defenders in the Russian Federation, presented by Dmitri Makarov (YHRM).

8. **referred to** the follow-up to the resolutions adopted by the Conference of INGOs, concerning human rights, the rule of law and democracy in Belarus (22 June and 4 October 2011)

adopted a [resolution](#) presented by Cyril Ritchie on the critical situation of civil society in Belarus, in particular the regime of financial penalties whereby the funding of NGOs from abroad was considered to be a criminal offence; this was an attempt to prevent the activities of democratic civil society and to bring criminal charges against its leaders. The Conference of INGOs was continuing to monitor these serious fiscal, legal and political obstacles closely. The text is accessible on the web site.

9. **heard** the heads of the following [working groups](#) present the main thrusts of their work:

- European Social Charter
Human Rights Defenders
- Extreme poverty and human rights
- Violence against the elderly and human rights

asked the INGOs to consult the website regularly to keep abreast of developments in the activities. The Chair reminded members that there would be no session for the INGOs during the April session of the Parliamentary Assembly. However, members attending the Parliamentary Assembly could hold working group meetings if they so wished;

asked that the persons in charge of the working groups disseminate the groups' work objectives among the INGOs and keep them regularly involved in their activities;

listened to the heads of past working groups to talk about the work carried out and about possible future avenues for investigation, for example:

- Education for democratic citizenship and human rights in the digital media
- Sectarian excesses and human rights
- Religions and human rights

10. **decided** to step up its co-operation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, particularly in response to the reports by Lars O. Molin, Chair of the Congress Monitoring Committee: "The role of local and regional authorities in the implementation of

human rights” and “Developing indicators to raise awareness of human rights at local and regional level”;

pointed out that since the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government, held in Kyiv in November 2011, the Conference of INGOs had been invited to take part in the discussions on human rights at local level;

pointed out that the Committee Chair would attend the meeting of the Congress Monitoring Committee in Stockholm in February 2012

11. No other business.