



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

WINTER SESSION HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE CONF/HR(2015)SYN1

Strasbourg, 30 March 2015

<p>DRAFT SYNOPSIS OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 JANUARY 2015</p>

The Human Rights Committee

1. **observed** a minute's silence in tribute to Marc Leyenberger. On behalf of the Committee, Maritchu Rall spoke of his strong commitment to human rights and to the Council of Europe's work;
2. Opening of the meeting
The Chair **thanked** his predecessors for their work; he was well aware of how much remained to be done. Following the recent events in France on 7, 8 and 9 January 2015 and in the aftermath of the profound feelings generated by the attacks, Iamvi Totsi read out a declaration presenting condolences to the victims' families and friends.
3. **adopted** the meeting agenda.
4. **unanimously adopted** the draft synopsis of the meeting held on 24 June 2014 [[CONF/HR\(2014\)SYN2](#)]
5. The Chair presented the functioning of the Committee, highlighting the following points:
 - The working groups must submit their report within one month of the meeting at the latest, in English and French, with at least a summary in the minority language of the group;
 - A meeting would be held with the heads of the working groups at the January and June sessions;
 - Each working group had: objectives and a limited duration and had to submit an interim report;
 - Gérard Gréneron said that he had been entrusted with planning the use of Room 2, where the working groups met and that, out of concern for efficiency, he wanted the schedule to be fixed a week before each session.
6. Unanimously adopted the Committee's activity report for 2014.
7. The Committee Chair **presented** the follow-up to the Committee's activities since the June 2014 session. The document had been distributed to the participants.

8. **were informed by** Jean-Bernard Marie, representative of the INGO Conference on the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) and its draft groups, that:

- the Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the UN Guiding Principles on business and human rights had been adopted on 16 April 2014, following the draft prepared by the CDDH and its drafting group on “human rights and business enterprises”.
- a Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on the promotion of the rights of older persons [CM//Rec(2014)2] had been adopted on 19 February 2014
- a preliminary study on existing standards and outstanding issues relating to “The impact of the economic crisis and austerity measures on human rights in Europe” had been carried out in June 2014 [CDDH(2014)011]. New activities in this area would be presented on 30 June 2015. The representative of the INGO Conference had approved such a project and of the preparation of relevant instruments.

Presentation of the work currently being undertaken by the drafting groups:

- Drafting Group F on the Reform of the Court had been instructed to prepare a report containing opinions and proposals with regard to the long-term future of the Convention system in response to the Brighton Declaration of 2012.

A 2nd high-level conference was to be held in Brussels (26-27 March 2015) on “Implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights: our shared responsibility”, and would be followed by a Declaration by the government representatives attending the conference. The INGO Conference had been invited to take part in the conference.

9. The leaders of the working groups presented their current activities:

- a) Human rights, co-development, and migration (Hugo Castelli)

The working group and its objectives had been refocused to place emphasis on human rights and co-development in the member states of the Council of Europe, which had to intervene in the event of failure to comply with the guiding principles set out in the Committee of Ministers’ Declaration of 16 April 2014. A calendar would be prepared, along with an action plan.

- b) Inter-field co-operation for the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (Lanzarote Convention) (Gérard Gréneron)

The first meeting of the group of experts on the rights of children (DECS-ENF), set up by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to increase member states’ participation in evaluating the implementation of the current strategy on the rights of the child (2012-2015) and the preparation of the next strategy (2016-2019), had taken place on 13 and 14 November 2014. The Committee of Ministers had instructed the group to prepare a report on the implementation of the strategy on the rights of the child 2012-2015 and a draft strategy on the rights of the child for the period 2016-2019. The next meeting would be held on 12 and 13 May. The terms of reference would expire on 31 December 2015.

- c) For the abolition of torture (Nicolas Huet)

On behalf of the working group, the *Fédération Internationale de l’Action des Chrétiens pour l’Abolition de la Torture* (FIACAT), had organised a side-event in January 2014 on the situation of torture in Europe. Over the year it had also met permanent delegations (Austria, Belgium, Spain, Italy, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey) to express its concerns and

discuss with them their commitment to abolishing torture. In 2015, it will continue to meet further delegations with the aim of meeting all 47 Council of Europe member states. Other meetings took place with Council of Europe bodies such as the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Punishment or Treatment (CPT), the Directorate General of Human Rights and the Commissioner for Human Rights.

d) Human rights defenders (Dimitri Makarov)

The working group remained concerned by recent events, the conclusions adopted at the previous session and the challenges facing Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation. The conclusions of the Commissioner for Human Rights' report assessing the situation in Crimea condemns "grave breaches of fundamental human rights" in the territory since its annexation by the Russian Federation. Representatives of civil society and militants from Crimea would be invited to the next session.

e) Fighting against hate speech (Michel Aguilar)

The working group was generating genuine interest and a group leader would shortly be appointed. Three decisions had been taken:

- to seek out existing case-law on hate speech;
- to collect examples of good practices in this field;
- the work would be continued in a qualitative manner and taking the time required.

10. Jean-Gabriel Prieur reported on International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October 2014 in Turin organised by the "Extreme Poverty and Human Rights" working group, co-chaired by Maritchu Rall. The key aspects of the Day were as follows:

- Speeches by Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and Mr Salim Muslumov, Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Azerbaijan. - A fruitful partnership had been established with the associations present, which helped to make the Day a success – this had been a real challenge for the working group. The personal accounts given by people living in poverty had been very interesting and had given a clear idea of their situation. The visit to various projects was also a highlight of the day's events;
- [A record of the Day's proceedings](#) is available in English and French and thanks were addressed to the Secretariat of the INGOS;
- [A document on the case-law relating to Article 30](#) is also available;
- A message was forwarded and read out by the Chair of the Conference of INGOS at the High-Level Conference on the European Social Charter of the Council of Europe which took place in Turin at the same time.

Sylvie Clause **gave an account** of her experience to the Governmental Committee of the Social Charter at its meeting in Turin on 16 October.

The working group **had prepared** an excerpt of the texts on poverty in Europe adopted by the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional authorities and the Conference of INGOS. This collection of texts was a tool that would be disseminated among non-governmental organisations, associations, public authorities and the persons directly concerned by poverty.

Xavier Godinot (ATD Quart Monde) presented the report "[Towards Sustainable Development that Leaves No One Behind](#)". 12 countries and persons living in poverty had contributed to the report.

The evaluation showed that poverty was a form of real violence against people as it also entailed denial of their social rights, stigmatisation and humiliation. The Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights' adopted by the United Nations in 2012 provided human rights-based policy guidance. Development programmes needed to reach out to the people in most difficulty and it was essential that new methods be introduced for assessing the effectiveness of policies.

11. Projects under preparation

a) Brigitte Kahn, President of the "Regards d'enfants" (Children's Views) Association, presented its aims and current activities. Every year the association proposed a competition. In 2015 the theme would be: "Explain human rights to me" with a "Put on your human rights sneakers" sports day and the design and creation of a human rights garden. An educational booklet was being prepared for ordinary and special needs teachers with the help of young European citizens. A board game called "Respecto" had been invented for and by young people with questions about human rights. It was important to teach children human rights as early in life as possible.

b) Marie-José Schmitt, Head of the working group on "the European Social Charter" said that Mr Nicoletti, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly and Rapporteur General of the Turin Conference, had incorporated the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty message to the High-Level Conference in Turin on 17 October 2014 into his report. In June 2015 the working group would hold a meeting with Régis Brillat, Head of the European Social Charter Department on the question "How can the INGOs continue to strengthen the Turin process?"

She also said that a Conference on "The future of the protection of social rights in Europe" would take place on 13 and 14 February 2015. The Conference was a contribution by the Belgian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe to the Turin process, which had been launched at the High-Level Conference on the European Social Charter (Turin, 17-18 October 2014). The Conference of INGOs would be represented.

Finally, she drew attention to a project that was being developed, i.e. to organise a day's training for INGOs twice a year; the training, on the theme "What does making a collective complaint entail?", would also be open to all social workers,

c) **With regard to the issue of disabilities**, Marie-Josée Schmitt said that the Unit in charge of implementing the Action Plan for persons with disabilities 2006-2015 had cut down on its activities. Nevertheless, a Conference on the end of the Action Plan would be held in St Petersburg in late 2015. In this connection, she suggested that a working group on "disabilities" be set up to represent the position of the INGO Conference on the strategy that should be put in place to ensure follow-up to the Action Plan for people with disabilities. A recommendation would be proposed to the Conference at the June session.

d) François Becker of the "human rights and religions" working group said that various texts had been adopted and that the group's mandate had therefore been completed. However, a follow-up group had been put in place to ensure that these documents were widely disseminated to different bodies. A booklet including the three texts adopted by the INGO Conference had been published. It had been distributed to the participants at the Conference on "Intercultural dialogue: interaction between culture and religion", which had taken place in Baku on 1 and 2 September with the Council of Europe.

e) Gilles Bloch from the League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICRA) presented the "Hate Speech" symposium that was being jointly organised with the INGO Conference and would take place at the Council of Europe on 28, 29 and 30 May 2015 on the theme: "No hate Web No hate Speech". For further information and registration, please consult the website: www.nohateweb.eu or by mail: sg@nohateweb.eu

Sebastien Crozier, Director General, and Thierry Chatelier (Company Orange Horizons) spoke on the subject of the digital era, human rights and freedoms. Three main subjects were addressed:

- The use of personal data by economic agents
- The increase in cyber-crime and its consequences for freedom;
- The right to be connected: a debate on this subject should lead to a proposal to make this a fundamental human right .

Michel Aguilar, Committee Chair, announced the establishment of a “Human rights and digital technology” working group.

12. Summary and general conclusion

The Chair said that the Committee had taken the following decisions:

- a meeting between the Committee Chair, the two Vice-Chairs and the heads of the working groups would be held prior to each session;
- Gérard Greneron had been given responsibility for scheduling meetings in Room 2: a meeting schedule would be drawn up one week before each session;
- a representative would attend the conference on "The future of the protection of social rights in Europe" in Brussels on 12 and 13 February 2015;
- a “Hate Speech” symposium would be held at the Council of Europe from 28 to 30 May;
- Two one-day training sessions would be held on collective complaints;
- A “Human rights and digital technology” working group would be set up

Maritchu Rall
Committee Rapporteur