



Standing Committee
CONF/SC(2020)SYN5

Standing Committee meeting
21 September 2020
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Online meeting

Meeting Report

1. Opening of the meeting by Anna Rurka, President of the Conference of INGOs

Present for the entire meeting: Anna Rurka, Anne Kraus, Anne Negre, Annelise Oeschger, Christoph Spreng, Claude Vivier Le Got, Cyril Ritchie, Gerhard Ermischer, Miguel Cabral de Pinho, Robert Bergougnan, Simon Matthijssen, Salomon Levy

Present during the morning: Iamvi Totsi (proxy to Anne Negre for the afternoon), Jeremy McBride, Thierry Mathieu.

Secretariat: Ellsworth Camilleri, Jane Crozier, Mary Ann Hennessey

Absent: Karl Donert (proxy Claude Vivier Le Got), Lumininta Petrescu, Katarzyna Sokolowska (proxy Anna Rurka), Richard Pirolt (proxy Anne Kraus), Rares Craiut (proxy Miguel Cabral de Pinho),

2. Appointment of the rapporteurs of the meeting: Miguel Cabral de Pinho and Anne Kraus

3. Draft agenda – for adoption

After discussion on the need to add new points to the agenda as follow up from the previous meeting and on an eventual switch in the order of some points, the agenda was adopted unanimously.

4. Report of the meeting of 2 July 2020 – for adoption

After small changes in the wording, the report was adopted unanimously.

5. Declaration of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe on the place and role of civil society in safeguarding human rights, democracy and the rule of law (for adoption)

Anna Rurka provided the background to the declaration, which is currently in its 4th version in a process that has also included an online meeting between members of the Standing Committee. After some discussion, the Standing Committee agreed to delay approval of the document and to work to make it shorter and more focused on the intended topic.

6. Draft Rules of Procedure of the Conference of INGOs

Anna Rurka introduced the discussion. She pointed out that the draft constituted an amendment to the current Rules of procedures. The amendment procedure open to

the INGOs constitutes amendments to the amendment by the Standing Committee and not amendments to the current Rules themselves. As such, it is up to the Standing Committee to accept or not the amendments suggested by INGOs. She also pointed out that there had been several opportunities for the INGOs to provide input and meetings open to all the INGOs (the last one in September). Additionally, she underlined that the Committee of Ministers were now aware of the reform process and were waiting for an update on it.

Christoph Spreng said that he was working on compiling the contributions, but that in some cases he was stuck because the contributions were not amendments as such. Among other problems, some contributions were trying to completely revise the rules and the proposal, and some were more of a programmatic rather than a reglementary nature. An additional problem was that some proposals had not respected the "amendment proposal" form, as they included more than one article per proposal.

Anna Rurka also pointed out that she had asked the Verification and Dispute Committee for its opinion. The Committee had produced an opinion which was presented to the Standing Committee during the meeting and which would be published on the website, as defined by the rules.

A discussion took place where several points were raised: whilst the idea that the definition of an amendment should have been decided beforehand was defended, it was also recalled that there had been the same understanding of what was an amendment during previous revision processes. The need to involve INGOs was raised as well as the reminder that this was a 2-year process in which the INGOs had been involved in several stages. A discussion also took place on how to move forward with the electronic voting process. 2 votes took place.

The first one: Should the Standing Committee follow the opinion of the Verification and Dispute Committee?

There were 10 votes in favour and 5 against, no abstention.

The second one: Do you wish to give the INGOs which had more than one article per form, 2 more days to correct their proposals?

There were 7 votes in favour, 6 against and 2 abstentions.

In light of the decisions taken, Anna Rurka summarised that the INGOs authorised to revise their submissions will be given 48 hours to do so. As soon as possible, she will elaborate an excel table so that all members of the Standing Committee can vote by written procedure on the admissibility of the amendments received from the INGOs in order to elaborate the Standing Committee opinion on each of them. The excel table will be based on the admissibility criteria established by the Verification and Dispute Committee in its opinion. All Standing Committee members will have until midnight, 25 Friday to submit their opinion.

After the lunch break the discussion continued on how to proceed with the technicalities of voting.

Mary Ann Hennessey provided some information on the technicalities of e-voting. In July after our last meeting we did proceed in trying to explore voting systems that could be used for decision-making. However, due to the current needs of PACE, the Council of Europe IT Department is working on a common solution for the Council of Europe as a whole. Anna Rurka also proposed to open the on-line vote some time (one or two days) before the session, to make sure people have the time to vote and overcome any technical difficulty.

A discussion then took place on the adequacy of allowing people to vote before the presentation of the amendments during the meeting. The scenario could be to open the vote one or two days before the meeting and close it after the meeting (9.30-13.00)

allowing the authors of amendments to express themselves and allowing the undecided INGO representatives to vote after hearing these presentations.

This scenario was put to a vote. It was passed with 9 in favour, 3 against and 3 abstentions.

It was also highlighted that any change to the rules required a 2/3 majority of the votes cast. This was also the understanding of the legal department of the Council of Europe.

In addition, a point was made on the need to create a sequence of steps for amendments following the logic, so that the voting process results in a coherent document.

There should also be a final vote for the entire document.

7. Autumn Session (14-16 October 2020)

Anna Rurka reminded the Standing Committee on the previously agreed session agenda. Mary Ann Hennessey informed the SC that no one other than the technical team and the Secretariat will probably have the chance to be in the COE buildings, due to the current increase in COVID-19 cases in the region. Anna Rurka then informed that there were at least two documents for adoption: the Declaration previously discussed, and a Resolution related to the statutory revision of the Pompidou Group. Miguel Cabral explained the context for this resolution: the Pompidou Group is a Council of Europe partial agreement, that gathers the States who are interested in the theme of drug addiction and drugs policy. On the occasion of its 50th anniversary, the Pompidou Group is considering revising its Statutes and increasing its scope. As such, it has reached out to the CINGO for input and we have organized a first consultation with some INGOs that might be interested in this field. From that discussion we are now drafting a document that will support work in an area that is more based on human-rights and which also has a greater scope to include all kinds of addictions, even non-substance addictions.

Regarding some of the topics to be addressed during the session, the topic of Belarus was considered essential and Simon Matthijssen was willing to take the lead in collaboration with Cyril Ritchie. Anne Negre would also lead a topic on the Istanbul Convention in the light of the recent attacks in this field. Simon Matthijssen also pointed out that there was a need to address the refugee situation in Moira. Claude Vivier le Got highlighted that there needed to be some time for education, since she had already carried out a survey to establish priorities among INGOs interested in this field. Anna Rurka would send a new proposal for the agenda, having in mind the need for everyone to be flexible, given the time needed for the vote on the rules.

Miguel Cabral briefly summed up the current plans for the seminar on 16 October that would focus on poverty and health services, in line with the articles under reporting for the European Social Charter. Due to the current COVID-19 scenario, the intended ceremony would not take place and the seminar would be online.

8. Planning of the activities of the Standing Committee for the second semester of the year

This item was not taken due to time constraints, but a webinar was being prepared by the youth delegates on the topic of "Participation and representation".

9. Online conference on Citizens' Assemblies – cooperation with the Community of Democracies

Anna Rurka briefly explained the role of the CoD, an intergovernmental organization based on the Warsaw agreement, and that includes countries from Europe, but also Africa and North and South America. There is a plan to do a webinar in November

focused on Citizens' Assemblies as democratic innovation. The Conference of INGOs is invited to be a partner of the Community of Democracies for this event. Anna Rurka will contribute to the elaboration of the programme.

10. World Forum for Democracy 2020 – update

This item was not taken due to time constraints.

11. Request from Licra and Emisco regarding the situation of the Uyghur people

This item was not taken due to time constraints.

12. INGO Service - information point

This item was not taken due to time constraints

13. Any other business

A point was raised regarding the need to update the calendar on the website of the CINGO and also to assure communication when resources are frequently moved on the website.