



CONF/SC(2021)SYN3

**Standing Committee
Exceptional meeting
Report
13 March 2021
10.30 – 11.30
Online meeting (Bleujeans)**

Members present:

Anna Rurka, Anne Kraus, Anne Negre, Christoph Spreng, Miguel Cabral da Pinho, Richard Pirolt, Simon Matthijssen, Claude Vivier Le Got, Robert Bergougnan, Gerhard Ermischer, Katarzyna Sokolowska, Karl Donert, Thierry Mathieu, Annelise Oeschger,

Not present: Luminita Petrescu, Rares Craiut

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

The president Anna Rurka introduces the matter of the exceptional Standing Committee meeting following the resignation of the three members of the Verification and Dispute Committee (Jack Hanning, Francois Debrowolska, Philippe Grolleau). Each of these delegates resigned for his own reasons.

2. Appointment of the rapporteur of the meeting

Rapporteur of the meeting - Richard Pirolt.

3. Resignation of three members of the Verification and Disputes Committee of the Conference of INGOs

Considering the urgent matter (point 1) and the exceptional situation, the Standing Committee has to act in order to allow the Verification and Disputes Committee to continue its mission and manage ongoing affairs. After three resignations, according to the advice of the Council of Europe legal department, the Verification and Disputes Committee cannot work and take decisions being composed of only 2 of its 5 members.

The colleagues who resigned sent their letters by email, Jack Hanning notified twice the President of the Conference and the President of the Verification and Disputes Committee by email that he resigned on the date of 22 February 2021. François Debrowolska et Philippe Grolleau sent their resignation letters by email on 12 March 2021

The registered letters have been sent out but with the sanitary crisis there may be some delays receiving them as the Secretariat is not often on the Council of Europe premises.

The Standing Committee may like to consider Articles 80, 84, 85 and 86 of the new Rules of Procedure. According to article 86, the Standing Committee has to act carefully and not to make a case of precedence for the future.

The President proposes to take note of the resignation of Jack Hanning, Philippe Grolleau, François Debrowolska.

Decision: Standing Committee takes note of the resignations.

The decision to activate art 86 was taken by the majority with 2 abstentions. Art 86 is activated in the exceptional context of the health crisis which is having an impact on sending and / or reception registered letters.

Miguel Cabral would like the following to be included in the minutes: "The Verification and Dispute Committee is a very relevant body of the Conference of INGOs, especially in the upcoming weeks. As such, this Standing Committee is faced by a very delicate situation, since we are activating a very severe measure (determining that a Member of the Verification and Dispute Committee has become permanently unable to discharge his or her responsibilities). This is done, in a very specific scenario and due to the limitations of COVID-19 on the formal processes needed. I vote in favour of this decision just as a way to speed up what would naturally happen, in light of the resignation of these members. This is done given the urgency to have a functioning Verification and Dispute Committee (VDC) when it is very needed. In a very objective manner, we are removing from office the majority of the VDC, in a process that took less than 18 hours, when it will be up to the President of the Conference to nominate their replacements, thus having the ability to potentially influence the decisions of the VDC in the following election process. I believe the current scenario provides enough clarity and certainty to proceed, but given the very concerning precedent we might be setting with this decision, I would like to make it very clear that it is not being taken lightly. "