



Standing Committee
CONF/SC(2023)SYN12

Standing Committee meeting
Report
14.12.2023
09:00-11:00
Hybrid meeting
AGORA – Room B4.06.C & Zoom

Present: Gerhard Ermischer (GE), Christoph Spreng (CS), Geneviève Laloy (GL), Ruth Allen (RA), Simon Matthijsen (SM), Goran Miletic (GM), Anu Juvonen (AJ), Bénédicte Kern (BK), Piotr Sadowski (PS)

1. Opening of the meeting by Gerhard Ermischer, Chair of the Standing Committee

- Meeting opened by Gerhard Ermischer.

2. Rapporteurs will now act according to the actual list.

- Piotr Sadowski replaces Olga Sadovskaya for today's meeting as the rapporteur.

3. Draft agenda - for adoption.

- Any other business items will be discussed at the end of the meeting and the agenda is adopted with no changes.

4. Draft minutes of the last meeting - for adoption.

- Minutes of the last meeting are adopted.

5. Representation of Conference of INGOs in future CDDEM, request by [EPD | European Partnership for Democracy](#)

- The previous CDDG (Committee on Democracy and Governance) was dissolved a short while ago and a CDDEM (Steering Committee on Democracy) will be established in 2024. There is a suggestion from Christoph Spreng that a Conference of INGO Committee on Democracy could be set up as well during next April's elections and committee formation process, to act as a valid link and liaison point between the Conference of INGOs work on democracy and CDDEM.
- Gerhard Ermischer reports that the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) has approached him with a possible request to act as the representative of the Conference of INGOs to the new CDDEM. Gerhard Ermischer will have an initial meeting with him next week and this proposal will be put on the January Standing Committee meeting.

- Ruth Allen reiterates the need to make the process of any such designations very transparent vis-à-vis the wider Conference of INGOs membership, including to offer the opportunity to other members to potentially get involved and thus have better buy-in into the operations at both the Conference and Standing Committee level.

6. Response to situation in Committee on the Artificial Intelligence (CAI) (short report by Francesca attached)

- Gerhard Ermischer updates on the developments in the Drafting Committee on the AI, the tensions associated with the pressures coming from various national stakeholders, which make the process of fighting for the Council of Europe values and approach very difficult – including the style of presiding over the meetings. There is an aim to have the Council of Europe Convention ready and finalised for the end of spring 2024 in time for the 75th anniversary of the creation of the Council of Europe.
- Simon Matthijssen and Ruth Allen reflect that there is a need to update and refresh the understanding of the wider Conference of INGOs membership on the process and activities, as the language in the updates is somewhat technical and perhaps not accessible to all. Piotr Sadowski suggests he will contact Francesca Fanucci (ECNL/CINGO Member Participant at the Council of Europe CAI) to organise a webinar for the Conference of INGOs membership to update, in a user-friendly language, on the proceedings, and explain why it is so important to keep up the fight of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the process of finalizing the Convention. Idea to hold it in the second half of January 2024.

7. Report from last General Assembly (GA)

- Urgent request by the Secretariat (AJ and BK) to share the finalised reports as we are already late with publishing them on the website; Ruth Allen will collate the final version now and share with the Secretariat.

8. Communiqué

- The end-of-year communiqué, building on the social actions taken by CINGO which chime, but also expand further, from the Reykjavik Declaration, as drafted by Christoph Spreng, is discussed. Everyone being in favour of it, it is decided that Gerhard Ermischer will incorporate this into his formal letter.

9. Brainstorming for an online event on the 27 Feb. World NGO Day.

- Agreement is taken that there will be an observation and engagement in the Day, beginning no earlier than 11:00 in Strasbourg, with attendance, where possible, from some of the Standing Committee members. The format will be hybrid so that it enables wider participation of those who cannot make it in person.

10. Check feasibility (time, place) of Country Visits in early 2024.

- Gerhard Ermischer confirmed this would possibly take place in March 2024, and one of the prominent locations that could be considered would be Georgia. There is support from the Georgian Ambassador, of course formal channels would have to be gone through, and to identify an NGO to be the CINGO link (which PS and GE confirm we have).

- Goran Miletic mentioned that Civil Rights Defenders also has an office in Tbilisi and could possibly support the Georgia Country Visit, as was done on the previous occasion in the Balkans.

11. Any other business

- Anu Juvonen and Bénédicte Kern request that the draft agenda for the next General Assembly in spring 2024 is needed urgently, so that the Secretariat can set up a service agreement with the providers of the election process.
- Anu Juvonen reminds that the Conference of INGOs correspondence on the removal of the participatory status of the European Ombudsman Institute needs to be finalised by the Standing Committee and that Gerhard Ermischer should forward it to the Secretariat as soon as possible.
- Gerhard Ermischer reports that he has learned that because of the process initiated in Reykjavik, wishes are being sought regarding public access, retrievability, of Council of Ministers documents. The Standing Committee is asked to reflect on this.

The meeting is closed at 10:55. The next meeting takes place on 11 January 2024, 9:00-11:00. Olga will take over the Rapporteur role at the next meeting.