

Opinion
of the Verification & Dispute Committee
of the Conference of INGOs
18/09/2020

1. **Request for an opinion** presented by Anna RURKA, President of the Conference of INGOs on the following points:

- a. the principle of electronic voting at the October 2020 session of the Conference of INGOs;
- b. the preferred offer of the service provider if the Council of Europe does not provide the system for this vote;
- c. proposals submitted as amendments and on the possibility of voting on groups of identical or similar amendments;
- d. the possibility of opening the vote a few days before the meeting (Monday 13 October or Tuesday 14 October) and closing it on Thursday 16 October 2020 afternoon during the meeting;
- e. the role of the V&D Committee in the electronic voting process in relation to the Provider and the Secretariat.

1. Responses from the Verification and Dispute Committee (the Committee):

- a) **Favourable opinion of the Committee on the principle of electronic voting**, taking into account the current health context, provided that there is only one method of voting, including for members who may be physically present in Strasbourg. A trial run prior to voting operations is desirable.
- b) Among two offers transmitted, the Committee's proposal is to select the Neo Vote service provider if the Council of Europe does not provide the system for electronic voting. Not to allow access to partial results during the voting, except for the technicians of the service provider.

c) **Amendments :**

The Committee recommends that the following proposals **not be retained as "amendments"** to be put to a vote:

- Technical proposals, e.g., "General Assembly" is an improper designation, "Plenary Session" (of the Conference of INGOs) is the appropriate designation. The Committee proposes to incorporate the latter.
- The word "membership" (Art. 2 in French) does not correspond to the Statutes: INGOs having obtained participatory status are de facto members of the Conference and therefore do not have to accede to it (Cf. the Preamble to Resolution (2016)3 of the Committee of Ministers of 6 July 2016 on the participatory status of INGOs. The Committee proposes to comply with the English version: "The objective pursued as a member of the Conference";
- The translation of Committee / Commission / Comité. It is proposed that the choice of term be clarified in the draft text submitted to the vote.
- Proposals for a general rewriting of the text:
 - Proposals that aim to rewrite the whole of one or more of the following of several provisions (preamble or operative part) constitute a draft of alternative text that cannot be considered as an amendment to the meaning of the form.
 - During the process of drawing up the draft rules of procedure, several oral and written consultations were held, which gave INGOs the opportunity to make specific or global proposals and to submit alternative projects or to oppose the project. Counter-proposals are therefore no longer admissible at this advanced stage of the process.

In addition, there is a requirement for fair treatment of those INGOs that responded to the form requested - which was identical for both consultations (2016 and 2020).

Proposal that constitute "wishes", guidelines or "recommendations" for the future work of the CINGO should not be included in the rules but be submitted in a timely manner to the competent organs of the Conference.

> The Committee proposes that identical or similar amendments be grouped together for voting.

- d) **Favourable opinion of the Committee** for the opening of the vote a few days before the session provided that the operations specified in paragraph 2.b above have been ensured and explained.
- e) **Favourable opinion of the V&D Committee** to delegate one or two of its members to participate as scrutineers in the voting process in partnership with the Provider.