

Verification and Dispute Committee

Strasbourg, 19 April 2016

Draft Rules of Procedure of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe

Submitted for adoption by the Conference of INGOs on 24 June 2016

Explanatory memorandum

From its first year in operation, the Verification and Dispute Committee has encountered problems regarding the interpretation of the Rules of Procedure adopted in 2013. It has quite naturally, therefore, suggested some changes which, as well as providing greater clarity, introduce a number of additional arrangements. These changes concern the composition of the Bureau (§2.1) and the Standing Committee (§3.1.1) as well as elections (§5). We felt it was only right to preserve the sanctity of the vote of delegates from INGOs belonging to the Conference, by allowing only those who have been elected by the Conference as a whole the right to vote.

With a view to clarifying the position and place of everyone in the Standing Committee, there needs to be a distinction between the status of member and participant. Alongside the members elected by the members of the Conference – the President, the Vice-Presidents, the rapporteurs, the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the committees -, the Standing Committee also comprises the President of INGO-Service, the President of the Verification and Dispute Committee, the Presidents of the Expert Councils, the outgoing President of the Conference of INGOs to ensure continuity of the action, and finally, the Honorary Presidents. The elected members have voting rights while the rest attend meetings in a consultative capacity. It is important to bear in mind that the latter are there to act as advisers who provide expertise which must be unbiased and therefore free of the responsibility linked to the decision-making process. By thus affording them a greater degree of freedom than that enjoyed by their colleagues, this arrangement, in my humble opinion, lends added weight to their activities.

We have also given more emphasis to gender equality by making the gender equality expert a vice-president.

Limiting the terms of office of the delegates elected makes for a more vibrant and, at the same time, more democratic organisation. That is the thrust of the changes which we have made to §5 on elections. Particular attention has been paid to the post of President, as he or she is the key figure in the Conference, the one responsible for its smooth running, and for ensuring that it remains sustainable and representative. It was felt appropriate that only individuals with some experience of the workings of the Conference works should be eligible for this post. We

therefore propose that applicants be required to demonstrate a degree of experience that only active membership of the Standing Committee can provide.

Lastly, we needed to make it clear that any new version of rules of procedure rendered the previous version null and void.

I would like to mention all the hard work which the Committee members, Jane Crozier, Jutta Gützkow and the President Anna Rurka have put into preparing the draft that you are asked to consider. We also received advice from top-ranking lawyers, which was most welcome as it helped to ensure that the draft was even more structurally sound.

Salomon Levy
President of the Verification and Dispute Committee