

Standing Committee

CONF/SC(2024)SYN5

Standing Committee Meeting

Report

22.08.2024

09:00-11:00h

Online meeting

Present: Gerhard Ermischer (GE); Piotr Sadowski (PS); GM (Goran Miletić); Christoph Spreng (CBS); Lotta Valtonen (LV); Christophe Speckbacher (CS); Irena Guidikova (IG); Urska Umek (UU); Ece Ciftci (EC); Ciaran King (CK); Genevieve Laloy (GL); Anna Sevortian (AS); Olga Sadovskaya (OS)

Apologies: Simon Matthijsen (SM); Iordannis Chorozioglou (IC); RA (Ruth Allen)

- **Opening of the meeting by GE, Chair of the SC**
 - Meeting is opened by GE.
- **Rapporteurs will now act according to the actual list**
 - SM not present, PS takes over the minutes for today.
- **Draft agenda - for adoption**
 - The agenda is adopted.
- **Minutes for adoption**
 - We will get the minutes from the previous meeting from GL by the end of August, to adopt during the next meeting on 5 September 2024.
- **Welcome to LV**
 - Seconded to the CoE by the Finnish Government, replacing Anu Juvonen.
 - LV welcomed and presented herself: senior adviser on democracy and good governance, with CSO background, development policy and development cooperation, but always linking to democracy, CSO participation and governance.
- **Communication on the future of the CINGO – status, financing, concrete steps to be taken**
 - Introductions and input from IG (Democratic Institutions and Freedoms Department) & UU (Democratic Institutions and Civil Society).
 - Participation and introduction to new colleagues, IG and UU.
 - Focus on the importance of the new colleagues' CoE unit to work closely with CINGO and Civil Society, as well as events such as the World Forum for Democracy, in joint up work together; additionally, now work on CDDM in the portfolios of IG and UU, which is important as intergovernmental standards on CSOs have found their home there, and it is important to follow this vital strand of work. One thing not having been discussed yet is a more institutional basis for CSO participation in the processes of the CoE.
 - CS: focus on work between CoE and CSOs for closer cooperation, interdepartmental meetings and preparation of a document to give guidance to all the different bodies

of the CoE on the basis of those discussions. With regard to CSOs, importance to better reach out in the regions to national NGOs where they are not so aware of how the CoE works and how they can engage, follow activities and agenda. Thinking of organising a series of events in the course of next year – coalition of NGOs, CURE Campaign, who also came up with a similar plan. Reykjavik Principles – parameters for the future, no date yet, meeting would be held at CoE meeting space, 50 participants max, working format, etc. Reference the link to the December 2023 CoE SG [Roadmap on the CoE's Engagement with Civil Society](#) (for quick read see table in annex of document)

- GE: update of strategy – specifically youth strategy, and on equality and gender equality.
- IG: need to work on erosion of civic space, needs to be more specific and action-oriented work, as it is still quite piecemeal, and not focused enough on practice and action. Combine with the Brussels connection will be important, also to explore joint funding programmes, etc.
- GE: speaks of similar work in the CINGO, e.g. the Social Rights Tracker, etc., we would need a new network of organisations especially dedicated to fact-checking, in relation to complaints, relating to violations of civil rights, civic space, etc.
- General conversation evolves on cooperation and connecting the dots within the CoE on all of this work, especially around rights (social, interreligious, etc.)
- LV: such initiative could complement the European Commission INTPA launched programme, which is geared more towards the global South. INTPA launched in June a program in 86 countries that aims at preventing shrinking of civic space by monitoring and acting: "The €50 million EU System for an Enabling Environment" aims to promote an enabling environment for civil society in 86 countries across the globe. Led by civil society, the innovative mechanism brings together national, regional and global networks to monitor laws and administrative practices as well as the digital and media environments which provide the context for civil society operations. In countries where participating monitors issue alerts on restrictive actions, the programme will aim to provide funds and solidarity networks to local organisations to mount campaigns or strengthen their internal systems to withstand threats to their operations". See [European Union and Civil Society sign landmark partnership to promote space for civil society globally](#)

- **Preparation of GA in October**

- CS: the dates for the April 2025 GA should be communicated. Preparation for the October 2024 GA, besides a rough draft agenda to be sent for the convocations, the Secretariat will need an idea of the side events and extra resources to be mobilised, to facilitate the provision of rooms, interpretation, socialising coffee breaks, etc.

- **Decision on two new members for the Expert Council on NGO Law**

- 6 applications for the 2 posts available, GE shared the applications and the ranking from Jeremy McBride; we will take the two top names, Eszter Hartay and Marike Lefevre, formally approved by the CINGO members unanimously.

- **Next steps on our strategies**

- General; GL, AS and CK will help RA, and there is also need to finalise the report of the last GA.
- Youth (Report on first webinar and ongoing work Ece): EC reports on the first webinar, next one is coming up on Monday 26 August; first meeting with the adviser on the council on youth. First webinar – participation and language barrier has been the two key takeaways. More preparation also for report for the autumn GA. It is about reaching out to young people who do not normally get contacted by European

institutions – look for example at the WFD. For details of the online roundtables, “By Youth for Youth”, please see [here](#). On 21-23 October 2024, CINGO will participate in the CoE Advisory Council on Youth.

- Communication: report on first steps with new social media accounts by EC.
- Representation in CoE bodies – dates on the various meetings, PACE (Dates of CoE PACE sessions available [here](#)).
- Cross check on EP sessions [here](#).

- **Any other business**

- CS: agenda for the next session, October, can we have a draft soon, even if it is a rough and undetailed, because it needs to be sent with the convocation letter. Also to let know what spaces will be needed for side meetings, with Committees (CINGO ones), etc. It would also be good if there was a synopsis of the meeting of the CINGO SC to go on the website – for GE to consider.
- GE: letter will be sent out to all the members next week (w/b 26 August 2024).
- GE: 7-11 April 2025 week for the GA in the Spring of 2025; regular SC meeting would fall on 3 April 2025, we might have an additional meeting in the beginning of March 2025, to prepare the GA.

- **Next meeting**

- Thursday, 5 September 2025, 9:00-11:00 on the usual [Zoom link](#).

- **Meeting closes**