

EVALUATION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S CONFERENCE OF INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Management response &
Action plan



Name of Evaluation Report:	Evaluation of the Council of Europe's Conference of INGOs		
Date of Evaluation Report:	12 April 2021	Date of the Action Plan:	11 June 2021

Overall management response to the evaluation:

The Conference of INGOs ("the Conference") of the Council of Europe is composed of around 300 INGOs with participatory status. It has undergone an important reform in 2020 with the adoption of its new Rules of Procedure on 16 December 2020. With these rules, the Conference is operating under a new more flexible structure and is governed by a new Standing Committee elected in April 2021.

The interaction of the Council of Europe with civil society is not limited to the Conference. The existing framework was presented in the Secretary General's proposals as a follow-up to the Helsinki decisions on civil society ([SG/Inf \(2020\)8](#)) and [the subsequent decision](#) of the Ministers' Deputies of 8 July 2020, the implementation of which is currently underway (GR-DEM, 9 September). [Subsequent decisions](#) adopted at the 131st session of the Committee of Ministers in Hamburg (21 May 2021) will further guide this process.

The present evaluation is therefore appreciated against this background and the managerial response has been prepared accordingly.

The Secretariat recognises the utility of the recommendations issued as a result of this evaluation with a view to further enhancing the Organisation's activities not only in relation to the Conference but to our work with civil society as a whole. They have all been accepted and the actions envisaged for their implementation are set out in the Action Plan below.

ACTION PLAN

Management Decision ¹	Planned Actions ² (determined by Entity)	Target Date for Action	Person Responsible for Action
Recommendation 1: The Organisation considers setting out a mission statement for the Conference in order to clarify its objectives vis-à-vis Council of Europe entities, INGOs and national NGOs across Europe. (High³)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	<p>Consideration to the setting out of a mission statement will be given in light of the results of the follow up work to the Helsinki and Hamburg decisions on civil society in which the newly elected President of the Conference has already been involved, co-operating with the Chair of the GR-DEM the first informal exchange of views with civil society representatives on 13 April 2021, as well as of the results of the implementation of the reform of the Conference with the adoption of its new Rules of Procedure, adopted in 2020.</p> <p>The advisability and content of this mission statement need to be assessed against the above mentioned results with a view to securing that the Conference remains a reliable partner in the Helsinki process; provides tangible input with appropriate synergies, tangible results and aligning with the Organisation's priorities. The Conference will be closely associated to this reflection.</p>	31/12/2022	Director of Private Office
Recommendation 2: Taking into account the mission statement and objectives established, adequate resources are allocated by the Organisation in order to achieve them. (High)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	<p>The response to Recommendation No. 1 will determine the action in response to Recommendation No. 2, any resource allocation will have to take into account that budgetary resources are finite; additional resources would require cuts of other activities.</p>	31/12/2023	Director of Programme and Budget

¹ The Management decision concerns the Recommendation (Accepted, Rejected, Under consideration).

² For implementing accepted recommendations.

³ Recommendations have been classified as either "high" or "medium" in terms of the assessment of their importance following the evaluation.

Management Decision ¹	Planned Actions ² (determined by Entity)	Target Date for Action	Person Responsible for Action
Recommendation 3: Based on the agreed mission statement, the DG2 and the Conference, as well as other relevant stakeholders, engage in a collaborative process to improve the alignment between the Conference's action plan and the Council of Europe's Programme and Budget by agreeing on a results framework for its implementation, as well as a monitoring and evaluation framework. (High)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	<p>The response to Recommendation No. 1 will determine the action in response to Recommendation No. 3.</p> <p>At present and in light of the recent reform undertaken by the Conference, DG2 is supporting the Conference Standing Committee to adapt its three-year Action Plan (for adoption by the Plenary Conference) in line with the Council of Europe Programme and Budget and the Secretary General/Council of Europe strategic priorities. The new President has stated at the 131st Session of the Committee of Ministers (21 May 2021, Hamburg) and subsequently at the GR-DEM on 1 June (see the speech of the President in GR-DEM on 1 June 2021) that the Conference supports the Secretary General's thematic priorities and the Organisation's strategic framework.</p> <p>The implementation of the Conference's action plan will be a determining factor for any future response to this recommendation that will be considered in close consultation of all stakeholders concerned.</p>	31/12/2023	Director of Private Office, Director of Programme and Budget, Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance with the Conference
Recommendation 4: The DG2 Secretariat, together with the Conference, explores opportunities for strengthening online co-operation during and between sessions so as to involve less active INGOs or those who cannot easily travel to Strasbourg. (Medium)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	<p>The online communication developed during the health crisis will be further explored, (as also noted in the speech of the Conference's President in GR-DEM on 1 June 2021). It will be necessary to strike the appropriate balance between online and physical meetings, keeping in mind current budgetary restrictions.</p>	31/12/2022	Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance with the Conference

Management Decision ¹	Planned Actions ² (determined by Entity)	Target Date for Action	Person Responsible for Action
Recommendation 5: Eligibility criteria for granting participatory status by including geographical and thematic priorities is revised so as to ensure greater diversity of the Conference's membership. (High)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	This recommendation will be considered in the light of the response to Recommendation No. 1 as well as the implementation of the Rules of Procedure as adopted by the Conference on 16 December 2021 and the subsequent reforms undertaken related to the creation of thematic committees aligned to the Council of Europe priorities (see also under Recommendation No. 3 above).	31/12/2023	Director of Private Office
Recommendation 6: The Conference pursues and strengthens collaboration with national NGOs through country visits and other ad hoc collaborations. (Medium)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	To link up with local, regional and national civil society organisations is important to the Conference. This is done through its own members, where they are big membership organisations or consist themselves of local and regional associations. Country visits (upon resumption) constitute an additional means. As noted under Recommendation No. 4, the online communication developed during the health crisis is an additional tool which will be further explored in order to involve national organisations in the work of the Conference (see the speech of the President in GR-DEM on 1 June 2021), keeping in mind budgetary restrictions.	31/12/2022	Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance with the Conference

Management Decision ¹	Planned Actions ² (determined by Entity)	Target Date for Action	Person Responsible for Action
Recommendation 7: The Conference develops its communication strategy to improve their visibility among the INGOs and NGOs, as well as to highlight its contribution to the work of the Council of Europe, in terms of results achieved and outcomes reached. This should be envisaged once the mission statement and the results-based framework of the Conference are revised and adopted by the Council of Europe. (Medium)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	Subject to the follow-up to Recommendation No. 1, the Conference's communication strategy will be developed, as appropriate, in consultation with the Director of Communications and in alignment with the relevant follow up to the Secretary General's proposals on the Helsinki decisions regarding the development of a civil society portal, taking into account budgetary restrictions.	31/12/2023	Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance with the Conference
Recommendation 8: The Conference takes on a more active role in PACE and its Committees, as a complementary channel for civil society consultations. (Medium)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	The new Standing Committee of the Conference is currently focusing on restructuring its interaction with the intergovernmental committees, partial agreements as well as PACE. As regards the latter, dialogue with the PACE Secretariat is foreseen. Furthermore, it is expected that the alignment of the Conference's priorities with the Council of Europe will contribute to enhanced synergies.	31/12/2022	Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance with the Conference

Abbreviation	
DG2	Directorate General for Democracy
GR-DEM	Rapporteur Group on Democracy
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
Private Office	Private Office of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General
The Conference	Conference of INGOs