

## **Motivational letter for the candidature of Gabriela Frey, European Buddhist Union (EBU) for the Standing Committee of the Conference of INGOs**

For as long as I can remember, I have been inspired by the idea of a united, peaceful and harmonious Europe, especially as my family and friends had suffered greatly during the 2nd World War.

In 1988, I started working as an assistant to several MEPs in the European Parliament, mainly in public relations, looking after journalists and organising visitor groups. During this work and through the conversations with people, I became aware of the importance and necessity of providing sound and clear information about Europe and its many institutions so that their usefulness to European citizens is better understood.

Consequently, I have spent over 30 years explaining to people not only how the EU but also the Council of Europe works. I believe it is vital for people to understand the reasons for which the united Europe came into being and that only together are we best equipped to face today's challenges. The preservation of human rights, the rule of law and a transparent democracy must be constantly worked for, and this challenge is best won together.

The unique value of the Conference of INGOs is that it gives organisations of committed citizens the opportunity to participate in political decision-making, which in turn affects those same citizens. In order to effectively bundle the engagement of delegates and to be beneficial to the Council of Europe, the Conference needs greater support and visibility.

As a long-term representative of the European Buddhist Union, I have gained a lot of insight in the functioning of the Conference of INGOs and the Council of Europe and would like to share this experience with all through the Standing Committee; here my suggestions:

1. Encourage all INGOs to realise the benefits of the new Rules of Procedure and to use the opportunities they offer.
2. Improving the working conditions of INGOs within the Conference and the CoE, finding ways to increase our annual budget in order to collectively meet all the expectations placed on us.
3. To increase the visibility of INGOs within the CoE and develop cooperation with the CM, PACE and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities as well as with intergovernmental committees.
4. Strengthening cohesion and networking among INGOS, with an improved database and a fortified team spirit
5. Promoting the external image and visibility of the Conference. This entails, e.g., its inclusion in the Council of Europe's self-promotion videos.
6. Reinforcing cooperation with other European institutions (FRA, European Parliament, European Commission, etc.) and involving more INGOs
7. My personal focus will be directed towards gender equality and interfaith/interdenominational dialogue.

It would be a great honour for me to serve as a member of the Standing Committee and I commit myself wholeheartedly to our common goals. I trust that the new Standing Committee will be a place of trust, creativity and teamwork.

Sincerely, [Gabriela Frey](#)