

Dr Ruth Allen: Candidate statement for election to the conference of INGO Standing Committee

I have been the representative for the International Federation of Social Workers - Europe (IFSW) within the Council of Europe INGO for 18 months. I have been actively involved in international affairs relating to social work across Europe, and indeed across the globe, since I became Chief Executive of the British Association of Social Workers in 2016. But my commitment to internationalism in social work and to the importance of civil society organisations has shaped my 27-year career in health, care and social justice work.

I want to devote more time and energy to help the INGO develop and, in these most urgent times in terms of a global health and social crisis and the rise of anti-democratic forces in many parts of Europe, I want to support and develop influence within Council of Europe and create more tangible, impactful outputs from INGO.

Civil society organisations are crucial creative forces for good across all our nations and they represent much of what it means to be human, in all our diversity. Through being on the committee and supporting the leadership and good governance of the standing conference of the INGO, I want to ensure the full potential of all participants can be realised. I see this developing through increasingly inclusive approaches, different ways of facilitating discussions and breaking down inequalities and barriers to participation.

I represent IFSW in the debates and voting of INGO and it has been a pleasure to have recently participated in vital constitutional decisions to modernise and improve the governance of INGO, to promote greater collaboration and joint working across the participant members to develop more effective committee structures.

I have already had the pleasure of presenting and speaking from the podium in the conference, particularly in respect civil society and charitable sector freedoms/restrictions issues in the UK and across Europe. I am an experienced public speaker and panel discussant and I approach this in a collaborative and inclusive way. I regularly work with governments and other senior powers and influencers across the UK and in my work with IFSW Europe and global.

I have a lot of experience in chairing and participating in committees and high-level working groups. I am very familiar with committee governance and how to ensure such bodies are effective and inclusive in their work – and operate in an accountable way.

I am standing for election to the Standing Committee to be part of the leadership of INGO in a spirit of collaboration and to support the development, effectiveness and better inclusivity of all participant members in the conference.