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Gender Equality-Committee “NGOs as advocates for gender equality and women’s rights” of the CoE INGO-Conference

Concept note for a roundtable of the Gender Equality-Committee “NGOs as advocates for gender equality and women’s rights” at the Conference of INGOs’ Autumn Session, October 2023

Title: *“Gender equality is a Human Rights issue. How can we join forces to promote and protect it today?”*

Organizer: Gender Equality-Committee of the INGO-Conference of the Council of Europe

Date and place: October 9, 2023, from 10:00-12:30, Agora building, GO3. Simultaneous translation English and French.

Format: Keynote speakers will outline the relevance of human rights and gender equality to the work of the Council of Europe. In the subsequent panel discussion different Committees of the INGO-Conference are invited to speak about the gender aspects in their work followed by a discussion how gender equality should be observed ideally.

Reasoning:

Gender equality is a human right that, unfortunately, is still far from being achieved in most countries. It is a transversal matter, touching all spheres of life. Gender equality is central to the protection of women’s rights and an important policy goal of the Council of Europe.

The planned roundtable seeks to highlight the relevance of gender equality and women’s rights as a transversal topic affecting all INGO Committees in the outcome of their work. With the 2021-2024 term and mandate coming to an end in Spring 2024, it is time to take stock and to evaluate how gender equality is being observed in the work of the Conference of INGOs. After 2 ½ years in function the INGO Committees will have gained experience how the cross cutting topic of gender equality should be approached. The roundtable as an inward looking session will be a meaningful way to exchange experiences and lessons learned from the past and to get ideas and suggestions for the future. Based on the information and results of the roundtable discussion a strategy will have to be developed how to best implement gender equality as a cross cutting task in the work of the Conference of INGOs. The goal is to further strengthen the Conference as a relevant and significant part in the Council of Europe.

Respect and full compliance with human rights will only be a reality if men and women have the same rights and the same opportunities. Therefore, the defense of gender equality must be a joint task of all and everyone. Every working group and committee at the Council of Europe is requested to include gender equality aspects in its deliberations and outputs.

The Conference of INGOs' common objective is to make the INGO Committees cooperate with each other on cross cutting topics. For the Gender Equality-Committee, this means contributing to gender mainstreaming and to support other INGO Committees to observe the gender perspective.

The roundtable should convey the message: Even if working in different INGO Committees there is a common link, namely gender equality as a human right, binding us together in the outcome of our Committees.

31 August 2023