



CONFERENCE OF INGOs  
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

### ***Migration Committee on the Rights of Migrants***

Access to fundamental rights for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

*Access for NGOs and INGOs to migrant populations*

## **BOARD JOURNAL – GREECE MISSION**

### **21<sup>ST</sup>-23<sup>RD</sup> NOVEMBER - DAY 1**



- **10:00** → Welcoming by the NGO The Smile of the Smile
  - Words of welcoming
  - Mutual introductions
  - Preliminary exchanges on the objectives and issues of the field visit
- **12:30** → lunch (UNCHR – IOM)
- **14:30** → First working meetings on the **access of INGOs to migrants** and the **right to security of migrants**
- **16:30** → end of meetings



## PRESENTATION OF THE MISSION

A delegation from the Migration Committee of the Conference of International NGOs of the Council of Europe is visiting Greece on a fact-finding mission regarding the access of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers to their basic rights and related services, as well as the access of civil society organizations to these refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers.

The Committee delegation wishes to engage in an active and informative dialogue with organizations working in Greece on these diverse and complex aspects of the migration and refugee issue.

After a brief introduction on the work done so far by the Committee during its first year of mandate (2021-2022), the intention is to make maximum use of the time available for an open discussion in which participants can share their analyses, concerns, experiences, and ideas for the future.

## THE DELEGATION



**Mr. Daniel Guéry**

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**Mr. Marc van den Reeck**

*Responsible of the axis 2 – Migration  
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*The smile of the child*



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## COMMUNIQUÉ

The November 21 meeting focused on issues related to the **safety and security of migrants and refugees**.

A three-day working visit to Greece of the Migration Committee of the Conference of International NGOs, one of the basic institutions of the Council of Europe, was kicked off today with a welcome of Committee chairman **Daniel Guéry** and a delegation at the premises of the hosting Greek civil society organisation 'The Smile of the Child'. The organisation's President **Costas Yannopoulos** and staff members welcomed the delegation, presented the various fields of action it undertakes since 27 years in child care and child protection, stressed the link of it all to the complex issues of the migration phenomenon facing Greece and Europe as a whole. In response, the Committee's chairman underscored the importance of this working visit as a significant contribution to enhance the connection between policy making at the Council of Europe and concerns and field experience of non-governmental organisations at work in Greece.

To this purpose an exchange took place on this first working day with UNHCR and the IOM, followed by a round table discussion involving **17** migration related NGOs, which responded to the invitation of the Committee and its host, 'The Smile of the Child'. In this dialogue, special attention went to issues of access of civil society organisations to refugees and migrants and matters of their safety and physical integrity.

More particularly:

- The issue of pushbacks and border violence.
- Violence of all kinds faced by migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, especially in camps of deprivation of freedom and for vulnerable persons (women, LGBTQ+ community, children...).
- The situation of unaccompanied minors, and especially the turning point of the passage to majority, automatically restricting the rights of the children concerned.
- The non-respect of their obligations by the authorities and the misuse of the decisions of the ECHR.
- The difficulty of access to the camps: due to the remoteness of the camps and the restrictive Greek policies (obligation for the NGOs to be registered on a national register).
- The importance of considering the issues of integration of migrants in society at a more meaningful level than at present and drawing on existing examples of good practice.

In the morning of Tuesday November 22<sup>nd</sup>, a second round-table discussion with NGOs is scheduled to focus on education and health care for refugees and migrants. The remaining time of the three days stay of the Committee delegation will be dedicated to visits of Helios integration projects in Athens and Thessaloniki, on suggestion of respectively the Danish Refugee Council and Caritas, as well as a successful integration project of 'The Smile of the Child' in Kavala for younger migrant and refugee children.

## MEETINGS OF THE DAY



**UNHCR** : Mrs. Maria Clara Martin

**OIM** : Mr. Gianluca Rocco

Many Greek NGOs met in the afternoon to discuss the issues of respect for the dignity of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, as well as the access of NGOs to these populations. The following participated in the discussion: Attica Mental Health PsychoSocial Support Technical Group; Boat Refugee Foundation; Caritas; Community House Damaris; DRC; HIAS; IRC; INTERSOS; MSF; Network for Children's Rights; Refugee Legal Support (RLS); Refugees Support AEGEAN (RSA); Safe Passage; Solidarity Now; Solidarité Populaire de Grèce (ESAN) ; The Home Project; The Smile of the Child.

#### PICTURES OF THE DAY

