

ASSOCIATION OING-SERVICE

Maison des Associations
1, place des Orphelins, F - 67000 STRASBOURG
Inscrite au registre des associations
Tribunal judiciaire de Strasbourg Vol 72, Fol 105

Moral report OING-Service 2021

adopted by the General Assembly of 5 April 2022

1) INTRODUCTION

As we prepare this paper, the geopolitical reality in Europe is changing in ways not seen since World War II. Two member states of the Council of Europe are at war, as a result of the unilateral and unprovoked aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which is devastating the lives of millions of citizens in an inexplicable and incomprehensible way.

The Russian Federation has just been excluded from the Council of Europe.

This is a sad moment for civil society in Europe, but one that shows that organisations like those that are part of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe play a unique role in alleviating the suffering of the millions of refugees currently fleeing Ukraine to neighboring countries and beyond; in providing support and hope to those fleeing war and misery; and in sheltering through acts of solidarity that make us proud to be committed, within our Association and within the Conference of INGOs, to building a better future, starting from the present.

The Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe was hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic and its derivative Omicron, as it had been the previous year. Despite these events, the Conference remained very active because it had learned how to work in times of pandemic.

These years were marked by the health crisis that affected all the states of Europe and beyond. Countries were able to compare their health policies and learn from the successes of their neighbors, and even support each other.

Thus, during the session of the Conference of INGOs on 6 October in Strasbourg, we attended live testimonies of Polish associations that were trying to help Syrian migrants in particular, stuck between the Belarusian and Polish borders.

These associations, members of the Migration Committee, to take this topical example, are the watchdog and voice of civil society.

They are committed associations like many others that work where there are fractures, lack of social protection, lawlessness, war.

Associations that defend the rights of human beings in general, children, the elderly, equality between men and women, the right to education, the promotion of culture, access to work and to a dignified life outside of poverty. But also associations that deal with more recent problems of climate, or the digital transition.

Many of these associations are represented at the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe. It is our job and our pride to collaborate with them because OING-Service is not a distributor, but one of the active arms of the Conference which gives more means to the associations which by their projects and commitments can benefit from it.

2) ORGANISATIONAL RENEWAL

Internally, the year 2021 was marked by the revision of the statutes of our Association, by the change of the ex-officio members of the Board and by the elections to the Board.

- The revision of the statutes

The main reason for this was the revision of the Regulations of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, which our Association exists and acts on behalf of. As a result of this reform of the Conference of INGOs, which allows it to be more dynamic and relevant in its activities, we decided to reduce the number of members of the Board, to introduce a reference to the Code of Conduct of the Conference of INGOs and to rule that our meetings and assemblies can be held by videoconference or in hybrid format even outside of crisis situations, which allows for a more diverse participation.

Furthermore, during the last years it was found that some points needed clarification, in particular the question of the link between an elected person and the INGO he/she represents. Now it is ruled that the limitation to two consecutive mandates is valid for both.

The Extraordinary General Assembly necessary for a revision of the statutes was held on 5 October, during the session of the Conference of INGOs. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the sanitary measures still in force in all European countries, it had to be held in a hybrid format, with the presence of some representatives in the Palais de l'Europe and the participation of the majority of INGOs through the KUDO videoconference system, kindly provided by the Council of Europe. The draft revised statutes were adopted by the required qualified majority.

- The elections

On 15 December, the Ordinary General Assembly took place, including the election of the members of the Board. This meeting was held by videoconference (KUDO). Immediately afterwards, the Board proceeded to the election of the Bureau.

The following were elected :

- Davide CAPECCHI, EFIL, President
- Marie-Claire GALIBERT, FIAPA, Vice-President
- Joyce HERRENT, EYBA
- Heleen JANSEN, IAW, Treasurer
- Annelise OESCHGER, ATD QM, Secretary

We thank Léon Dujardin who has decided not to run for a second term after having accompanied us for several years in an efficient and friendly manner.

The ex officio members are:

- Gerhard ERMISCHER, President of the Conference of INGOs
- Geneviève LALOY, Vice-President of the Conference of INGOs
- Simon MATTHIJSEN, member of the Standing Committee of the Conference of INGOs

3) MAIN ACTIVITIES

-Youth Delegate Program

In 2020 in line with its “Roadmap for youth participation”, the Conférence of INGOs has invited four young persons, representing their member INGOs to take an active part, as youth delegates, in its sessions in April and October and to develop projects supporting other young people. Young activists from different member organisations based in Armenia, Belgium, Greece and Hungary were selected from the tens of applications. They have competently connected the Conference to topics such as environment, law, European politics, sociology, or psychology.

In October 2021 the young delegates from Greece and Hungary attended in person the General Assembly of the Conference of INGOs. They participated in discussions about the situation of asylum seekers in Belarus and the functioning of the Conference and its new Committees. During this first in person meeting since the beginning of their participation to the work of the Conference, they also prepared their participation in the November 2021 World Forum for Democracy that took place in Strasbourg. The October session was also an opportunity to evaluate and take stock of the October 2020 online event organised and delivered by this group of young delegates on the topic of diversity in the Conference, and to disseminate the report of the March 2021 event on self and collective care of individuals working in civil society. The meeting served also as an opportunity to discuss and plan another event in 2022 on the topic of migration, which OING-Service will be pleased to support, as it will continue to support the entire “Roadmap for youth participation”.

- On 18 October, the Conference of INGOs organised an event on the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 Oct.) and the European Day against Trafficking in Human Beings (18 Oct.)

Under the title "Precariousness or slavery, it's not a job! Is decent and freely undertaken work for ALL possible? "a seminar took place (in Strasbourg and in parallel in the form of a webinar) which explored the issue of decent work from experiences across Europe, linked to the relevant articles of the revised European Social Charter in order to formulate recommendations to local, regional and European authorities. OING-Service contributed to the funding of this project.

- Representation of the Conference of INGOs

OING-Service reimbursed the travel expenses for a meeting of the Standing Committee in Strasbourg in October as well as the travel and subsistence expenses of the representatives of the Conference of INGOs to the various Steering Committees and subordinate groups, to the Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers Issues and to the training for the Gender Equality Rapporteurs.

With special permission, the President of the Conference of INGOs and, from April onwards, the newly elected President were able to visit the Council of Europe on several occasions, despite the health situation, for meetings with the members of the secretariat, with the Ministers' Deputies, as well as with the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress and their secretariats, which are essential to make the voice of civil society heard and to consolidate the position of the Conference of INGOs within the Council of Europe - the related expenses were also borne by OING-Service.

- Preparation of the elections and the communication tools of the Conference of INGOs

As the spring session of the Conference of INGOs where the elections for the Standing Committee took place had to be held by videoconference, the Standing Committee organised beforehand two videoconference sessions where the candidates for the different posts could introduce themselves to the INGO representatives. OING-Service covered the costs for the provision of the videoconference tool and the interpretation.

To ensure communication and cooperation (+ archiving) between the members of the Thematic Committees of the Conference of INGOs and within the Conference, the Standing Committee has chosen an IT tool, Jottacloud, which OING-Service provides. The same applies to the communication platform BlueJeans.

4) ACCOUNTS

The accounts show a surplus of almost 9'000 € for a budget of 30'000 € which is due to the health constraints mentioned.

The number of contributors has increased to 111 INGOs who have contributed a total of 17'690 € (2020: 104 INGOs - 15'610 €).

In view of the still uncertain health situation we have again opted for semi-annual grant contracts with the Council of Europe, with a total amount of 12'000 €.

The details of the resources and expenses are published in the report of the accountant.

5) PROJECTS

From a broader perspective, we have noted with concern that across Europe, the pandemic has only accelerated the process of shrinking civil society space and diminishing access to social rights. In this regard, the role of NGOs in Europe is essential in addressing this worrying trend. The relevance of our Association's work, in the service of the Conference of INGOs, has therefore increased, as have our efforts to give it visibility and means of impact.

On the operational level, the year 2021 saw the renewal of the Standing Committee of the Conference of INGOs, bringing in a new management team with new projects.

OING-Service funded the "Human Rights and Artificial Intelligence" Committee for interpretation services for a webinar organised on January 10, 2022.

OING-Service also supported the project of the Committee "Action for Social Rights" to create a 'Social Tracker Website', a sustainable and efficient platform for monitoring the situation of social and human rights in Europe. OING-Service also supported the organisation of the webinar of March 29, 2022 "The Revised European Social Charter: what use for what impact? Advancing the implementation of socio-economic rights by making better use of the monitoring procedures of the European Social Charter", by financing its interpretation.

OING-Service remains financially available to the Committees carrying dynamic projects validated by the Standing Committee.