

Association OING-Service

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Elections for the Board, 9 April 2025

Candidates (alphabetical order)

Henk BAARS / European Network Church on the Move EN-RE

I have become increasingly involved in the work of the INGO Conference, which is the only body that represents civil society through NGOs within the Council of Europe. The possibilities for facilitating this properly need to be optimised. Travelling to gather information in the places themselves, for example, is irreplaceable. To be completely honest, I am not a brilliant financial expert. I am a theologian by origin and am involved in numerous volunteer initiatives concerning refugees, food banks and the fight against poverty, and especially the peace movement, which is becoming increasingly important in these times. I consider it very important that we pay attention to networking in order to obtain funds for certain goals. The latter is what I love and where I will be able to focus my efforts.

Wielie ELHORST / European Forum of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Christian Groups EFLGBT CG

As we all know the pressure on civil society in Europe is building. Populist, autocratic and antidemocratic developments all over our continent make especially human rights /NGO's less heard or even threatened as voicing their interests is ignored, less welcomed or even opposed. Many of the members of the groups that are part of the European Forum of LGBTI Christian Groups experience the hardship that is the consequence of these developments, both as members of their groups and in their personal lives. It is therefore even more relevant and worthwhile that the OING Service provides with solidarity between the INGO's that have participatory status at the Council of Europe, expressed financially. Although a member of an INGO that itself is always struggling to maintain sufficient capacity to do its work and to make representation in the work of the CINGO possible, I am willing and happy to be a candidate for the Board of the INGO Service, modestly contributing to this part of CINGO.

Joyce HERRENT / The European Young Bar Association EYBA

I was elected for my first term of office with OING-Service in December 2021. I am currently secretary to the Bureau of OING-Service and would like to continue in this role in the next Bureau. The INGO with participatory status at the INGO Conference and to which I belong is EYBA, an association of European lawyers. At the time, as President of EYBA, I was able to play an active role in EYBA's participation in the Conference. Since 2006, I have been practising as a lawyer in Belgium at the Bars of Mons and Brussels.

Thea MOHR / European Buddhist Union EBU

The position of member of the Board of OING-Service aroused my greatest interest because of the diversity of requirements and activities. For three years now, I have been working on the Committee for Interreligious and Interfaith Dialogue of the INGO Conference, on behalf of

the European Buddhist Union, in collaboration with the co-chair. As moderator of this committee's webinars, I have already been in contact with OING-Service on several occasions and have been very impressed by the competent support provided for the webinars. My interest in the Council of Europe, and in the CINGOs in particular, stems from the fact that I consider it essential for civil society to be represented as a fully-fledged body in an organisation as important as the Council of Europe. In the future, the CINGO must make itself even better known in the member states and influence them, by taking over the work with its 'best practices' on the spot - in the respective member countries.

OING-Service should be able to provide greater financial support to the CINGO on the way to strengthening its status within the Council of Europe, for example to cover the costs of interpreting and the necessary travel to meet civil society and the authorities on the ground. To achieve this, it would be essential for OING-Service to obtain the status of a charitable organisation. Donations could then be tax-deductible. The collection of donations and the associated press work could be very useful for the Council of Europe's forward-looking area of support. As a member of the Board of OING-Service, I could devote myself to this promising task and put my knowledge and experience to good use.

As far as I'm concerned, I have a degree in business management and a doctorate in religious studies, specialising in Buddhism. For over 20 years, I worked at Diakonie in Frankfurt am Main as director. Not only was I responsible to the Board of Directors for the annual budget, I was also in charge of personnel for over 2,000 employees.

International and intercultural exchange with partner organisations abroad, especially in the European field, has always been a personal interest of mine. I was able to pursue this interest thanks to my own training in intercultural communication. I also contributed on a number of occasions to the design of the various organisations' websites in order to focus the digital presentation and make it comprehensible.

After my retirement, these latter activities will continue and complement each other very well with the tasks taken over from the Committee for Interreligious and Interconfessional Dialogue.

My medium- and long-term objectives within the CINGO are above all to draw public attention to this work of guidance and to increase, through convincing work, the reliability and 'best practices' that have existed up to now, in order to contribute in this way to the work of guidance for peace in European civil societies. I see the work of OING-Service as a further step in this direction.

Harry ROGGE / European Association of Geographers EUROGEO

As a longstanding member of the INGO Conference (since 2009) I am happy to voluntarily support the purpose of the OING-Service. This is to promote the functioning and activities of the Conference by collecting and making available the necessary means! If I am able to enforce these activities by being a member of the Board I put myself forward as a candidate. I have seen the dedication of the current president to bring the work of OING-Service to all our attention. This is done with excellence. As a geographer and member of the international NGO EUROGEO I myself have promoted the work of the INGO Conference by recently presenting the flyer "Why Europe is a Must!". In being an elected member of the OING-Service Board I will put new energy in its activities.