

CINGO Committee Report for the General Assembly (short format)

Version 3: Spring 2026 – to be returned by Friday 10 April

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Committee name: [Committee for interreligious & interconvictional Dialogue](#)

Date of report: [10 April 2026](#)

Report author name and contact details:

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Date committee was approved by CINGO General Assembly: [10 April 2024](#)

*N.B. If this committee was approved in Spring 2024 it will come to the end of its mandate at the 2026 Spring Session of the General Assembly. Please be sure to complete section 5 to request a mandate for another year. Please keep answers short and focused on priorities and actions*

1. Committee Chair/Vice Chair name/s and contact emails

Chair: [Gabriela Frey \(EBU\)](#) [gabriela.frey@europeanbuddhistunion.org](mailto:gabriela.frey@europeanbuddhistunion.org)

Vice-Chair: [Lilia Bensedrine Thabet \(GERFEC\)](#) [lilia.bensedrine@wanadoo.fr](mailto:lilia.bensedrine@wanadoo.fr)

2. Which INGOs are represented on the committee?

- **ANDANTE** European Alliance of Catholic Women's Organisations – Sabine Slawik
- **AEDE (EAT)** European Association of Teachers – Jena-Claude Gonon
- **CEC**, Conference European Churches - Rev. Frank-Dieter Fischbach
- **CPCE** Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe – Sibylle Klumpp / Christian Albecker
- **EBU** European Buddhist Union - Gabriela Frey / Dr. Thea Mohr
- **EFECW**, Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women – Anne Marie Schott
- **EN/RE** European Network Church on the Move – Henk Baars, Hugo Castelli
- **GERFEC** European Group for research and training of teachers holding Christian and other convictions - Martine Hermann / Lilia Bensedrine-Thabet
- **HUMANISTS INTERNATIONAL**, Jonas Skorzak
- **ICBB B'NAI B'RITH** International - Stéphane Teicher / Jean-Luc Vallens
- **ICCS** Intereuropean Commission on Churches and School - Bianca Kappelhoff (?)
- **ICJW** International Council of Jewish Women– Liliane Seidmann / Nadine Iarchy
- **JUSTITIA PAX** Conference of European Justice & Peace Commissions, Alfonso Zardi
- **LGBTI+ European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups** - Wilie Elhorst + Kees Goedegebuur
- **MIAMSI** International Movement of Apostolate in middle and upper classes - Daniel Guery, Jean-Michel Strub
- **MIIC** Pax Romana (Int. Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs) - Begona OCIO / Alfreda Ferreira DA FONSECA
- **OIEC** (International Office for Catholic Education), Bernard Senelle / Michel Bertet
- **PCI** Pax Christi International, Alfonso Zardi

- **QCEA** Quaker Council for European Affairs, Andrew de Sousa
- **URIE** United Religions Initiative Europe, Jaume De Marcos
- **UIGSE** International Union of European Guides & Scouts, Alexandre Labarre de Stachelski
- **WSCF(FUACE)** World Student Christian Federation, Henriette Josephine GREULICH

**Active partners and experts of the committee:**

- **RfP** Religions for Peace Europe, Genti Kruja / Elisabet Naurath
- **MJLC** Muslim Jewish Leadership Council, Ethan Susser
- **GEF** Global Ethic Foundation, Lena Zoller
- **EULEMA** European Muslim Leaders' Majlis, Imam Yahya Pallavicini
- **IALRW** International Association of Liberal Religious Women, Esther R. Suter
- **IARF** International Association for Religious Freedom, Esther R. Suter
- **DECERE** (Democracy European Construction and Religion) – Bernard Senelle, J.-F. Bour
- **BK** Brahma Kumaris, Pierre Schott
- **ROTARY Michael Remmert**
- **AWR**, Academy of World Religions, Hamburg University, Dr. Carola Roloff

3. Which Council of Europe committees and other activities is this committee mainly involved in? *Please provide a list, a brief description of how your committee is involved.*

Our committee aims to contribute Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue at all levels:

- **PACE**: Countering discrimination based on religion and protecting freedom of religion or belief – Rapporteur: Francesco Verducci, <https://pace.coe.int/en/news/10229/#:-:text=By%20unanimously%20adopting%20a%20draft%20resolution%2C%20based%20on,in%20accordance%20with%20Article%209%20of%20the%20Convention%E2%80%9D>.
- Mrs Irene Kitsou-Milonas, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hatred and all forms of religious intolerance
- CDDEM Steering Committee on Democracy and its New Pact for Democracy
- Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
- Intercultural Cities

The co-chairs and members of our committee attended or contributed to

5 December 2024: Meeting with the President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Marc Cools, and the Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Mathieu Mori as well as with Maren Lambrecht, Secretary of the Social Affairs Committee.

13 March 2025: meeting with the office of Commissioner for Human Rights M O'Flaherty, Mr Ozgur DERMAN and Ms Patricia Ötvös.

13 September 2025: IARF-EME International Conference in Offenbach, The Limits of Religious Freedom and Tolerance. Address by Gabriela Frey: Interreligious and Interconvictional Dialogue at European Level.

24 November 2025 Meeting with Bjorn Berge, Deputy Secretary General of the CoE, followed by a discussion with Irene Kitsou-Milonas. Topic: State, civil society and the Church: the challenges faced by democracy today, with Ms Rita Famos, President of the CEPE, and Sibylle Klumpp

25 November 2025: European Parliament in Strasbourg – Round table organised by MEP Lukas Mandl. Address by Gabriela Frey: Interreligious and inter-conviction dialogue at the Council of Europe.

11 December 2025: Foundation for Strasbourg – Religions in the City: Challenges and Prospects Summary presentation by Lilia Bensedrine-Thabet.

**20 January 2026, UNESCO**, Paris, Conference-debate organised by the CCIC (International Catholic Centre for Cooperation with UNESCO). Alfonso Zardi on 'The Art of Peace' alongside Bertrand Badie.

21 January 2026: University of Strasbourg, Nostra Aetate, sixty years on. Presentation by Gabriela Frey and Lilia Bensedrine-Thabet: Interreligious dialogue at European level.

26 January 2026: Meeting with Senator Olivier Bitz of the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE

2-3 February 2026, participating in the Int. Conference, Shaping democratic renewal: civic space and the path to a New Democratic Pact for Europe

**10 February 2026: MJLC Event**, Strasbourg. Shared responsibilities; religious authorities and European policy in support of inclusive societies. Theme: **"From dialogue to local action: strengthening cooperation with cities"**. Presentation by Gabriela Frey: Introduction to the Committee for Interreligious and Interconvictional Dialogue of the CINGO of the Council of Europe

**09 mars 2026 : UNESCO, Paris, Conference**, Panel 1 : Barriers and Bridges, A story of women in interfaith dialogue. Intervention par Gabriela Frey : Towards a permanent platform for Interreligious and interconvictional Dialogue.

Members of our committee are **regularly invited by the EPP Group for Interreligious Dialogue**  
<https://www.eppgroup.eu/newsroom/20-years-of-interreligious-dialogue>

Presentations of the Committee for Interreligious and Interconvictional Dialogue of the CINGO on various media: Radio Orient, Radio France Internationale, France 2 TV (Chemins de la foi, Islam), and Tunisian National Radio by Lilia Bensedrine-Thabet.

Interview with Gabriela Frey on the work of our committee on France 2 (Sagesses Bouddhistes):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMsaFIO7wvQ>

Tolerance Award 2023 presented by the European Court of Human Rights at the Sacrées Journées in Strasbourg, directed by Lilia Bensedrine-Thabet. <https://sacreesjournées.eu/>

4. How has this committee linked with other CINGO committees in the last year?

We organise webinars on specific topics twice a year and have contacted the other CINGO committees involved. See the list of webinars here: <https://niric-dialogue.eu/webinars-conferences-workshops-trainings/>

5. If your committee is at the end of its two-year mandate at the 2026 Spring Session of the General Assembly, please answer the following questions:

- a. Does the committee wish to continue its mandate for another year? **YES**
- b. If 'yes', please describe your **OBJECTIVES** over the next 12 months up to Spring 2027 (no more than 250 words). If you have a workplan for the year please add it to the bottom of this form.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Our committee aims to contribute to the implementation of the Parliamentary Assembly's REC-2080 (2015) entitled "Religious freedom and coexistence in a democratic society" and supports in particular point 3 aimed at creating a permanent platform for dialogue between representatives of religions and philosophical and non-confessional organisations within the CoE
2. Adding the dimension of interreligious & interconvictional dialogue to the NEW PACT FOR DEMOCRACY.
3. Continuing the work of fostering a European network of stakeholders in the field of religions and beliefs at all levels on our online map of European civil society initiatives promoting interreligious and inter-convictional dialogue: <https://niric-dialogue.eu/>
4. Organisation of webinars with speakers from various religious backgrounds and compilation of booklets summarising the findings: <https://niric-dialogue.eu/webinars-conferences-workshops-trainings/>
5. Proposal to establish a sub-committee attached to the Committee for Interreligious and inter-convictional dialogue 'Education for dialogue, democratic values and living together'. Education is inseparable from interreligious dialogue. The aim is to educate citizens in knowledge of and respect for others, understanding of beliefs and cultural traditions, critical thinking and active citizenship.

c. Who is proposed as Chair for the extension of the committee's mandate?

Proposed Committee Vice Chair Name, INGO and email address (if relevant)

Chair: [Gabriela Frey, European Buddhist Union \(EBU\) \[gabriela.frey@europeanbuddhistunion.org\]\(mailto:gabriela.frey@europeanbuddhistunion.org\)](#)  
 Vice-Chair [Lilia Bensedrine, European Group for research and training of teachers holding Christian and other beliefs and other convictions \(GERFEC\) \[lilia.bensedrine@wanadoo.fr\]\(mailto:lilia.bensedrine@wanadoo.fr\)](#)

Extended Board:

- Alfonso Zardi (Pax Christi Int. / Justice and Peace Europe) [alfonso.zardi@neuf.fr](mailto:alfonso.zardi@neuf.fr)
- Sibylle Klumpp (CEPE) [sibylle.klumpp@uepal.fr](mailto:sibylle.klumpp@uepal.fr)
- Anne-Marie Schott (EFECW) [amzorschott@gmail.com](mailto:amzorschott@gmail.com)

6. Activity and Outcomes Report – please choose up to 6 main activities and outcomes.  
*Please add links to any online resources created and published in the last 12 months.*

Topic	Summary of activities/impact in last year.	Current key issues/concerns	Plans for next 6 – 12 months
<p>1. Towards the implementation of the PACE - REC-20280/2015 of a permanent platform for interreligious &amp; interconvictional dialogue at the CoE</p> <p>See documents under resources:  <a href="https://niric-dialogue.eu/council-of-europe/">https://niric-dialogue.eu/council-of-europe/</a></p>	<p>28 January 2025 Side Event with - Frank Schwabe (PACE)            - Gusty Gras (PACE)            - Marc Cools (Congress)            - Michael O’Flaherty (Commissaire Human Rights)            - Alexander Guessel</p> <p>25 October 2025:            Adoption of a recommendation by the CINGO  <a href="https://rm.coe.int/conf-ag-2025-rec5-draft-recommendation-for-a-permanent-platform-for-on/488028ba77">https://rm.coe.int/conf-ag-2025-rec5-draft-recommendation-for-a-permanent-platform-for-on/488028ba77</a></p>	<p>To advance the implementation of REC 2080 in order to establish a permanent platform for dialogue.</p> <p>The need to facilitate the reopening of discussions within the PACE regarding a permanent platform for interreligious and interfaith dialogue within the CoE</p>	<p>Establish contacts with relevant parties at the CoE and consolidate existing ones.</p> <p>Our committee has undertaken an in-depth review and drawn up a text with proposal on how this might be achieved. <i>To be adopted by the CINGO during the Spring Session 2026, see agenda point 11.2 :</i>  <a href="https://rm.coe.int/conf-ag-2026-oj-14-17-april-2026-eng-draft-agenda/48802aedfe">https://rm.coe.int/conf-ag-2026-oj-14-17-april-2026-eng-draft-agenda/48802aedfe</a></p>
<p>2. NEW DEMOCRATIC PACTE FOR EUROPE</p> <p>Engage Europe consulting governments, citizen organisations, and the public- to strengthen Europe’s democracies.  <a href="https://www.coe.int/en/web/new-democratic-pact-for-europe">https://www.coe.int/en/web/new-democratic-pact-for-europe</a></p>	<p>28 January 2025 Side Event: ‘Towards a permanent platform for inter-religious and inter-convictional dialogue at the Council of Europe’            Watch the video:  <a href="https://niric-dialogue.eu/webinars-conferences-workshops-trainings/">https://niric-dialogue.eu/webinars-conferences-workshops-trainings/</a></p>	<p>Seeking support within the CoE for the implementation of the dialogue platform and for more democratic participation in interfaith dialogue meetings</p>	<p>Follow-Up appointments to be made with members of the PACE and Congress</p>

<p>3. NEW DEMOCRATIC PACTE FOR EUROPE</p> <p>Turn dialogue into action delivering concrete reforms and fresh practices that will make democracy thrive.</p>	<p><u>Organised webinars:</u></p> <p>18 November 2024: Peace-making activities of faith based civil society actors</p> <p>15 April 2025: Youth for Peace Initiatives in Inter-religious &amp; Inter-convictional context</p> <p>27 October 2025: Democracy at risk: How religious pluralism strengthens its resilience?</p> <p>10 February 2026: Safer &amp; Stronger Communities in Europe (SASCE) <a href="http://www.sasce.eu">www.sasce.eu</a></p>	<p>Further development of a European network of stakeholders in the field of religions and beliefs at all levels</p> <p>Organisation of webinars featuring speakers from various religious backgrounds and compilation of booklets summarising the findings.</p> <p>View the presentations' booklets: <a href="https://niric-dialogue.eu/webinars-conferences-workshops-trainings/">https://niric-dialogue.eu/webinars-conferences-workshops-trainings/</a></p>	<p><u>Webinars to come:</u></p> <p><b>27 April 2026:</b> Religions and politics: The dangers of instrumentalization</p> <p><b>October 2026:</b> Engaging Religious actors to end Violence against women and girls.</p> <p>Spring 2027: Title and date will be determined soon</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>Continuing the work on fostering a European network of stakeholders in the field of Dialog between religions and beliefs at all levels</p>	<p>Development of our website featuring an online map of best European civil society initiatives promoting inter-religious and inter-convictional dialogue: <a href="https://niric-dialogue.eu/">https://niric-dialogue.eu/</a></p>	<p>Interfaith dialogue must come down from its intellectual ivory towers (only high-level meetings) become more inclusive and democratic and be made more inspiring and tangible for people.</p>	<p>Creation of a new section of Practical dialogue examples. It is currently being edited. Any input would be greatly appreciated: <a href="https://niric-dialogue.eu/practical-examples/">https://niric-dialogue.eu/practical-examples/</a></p> <p>Further compilation of resources <a href="https://niric-dialogue.eu/council-of-europe/">https://niric-dialogue.eu/council-of-europe/</a></p>
<p>5.</p> <p>Setting up a Subcommittee <i>'Education for dialogue, democratic values and living together'</i></p>	<p>The urgent need for training in dialogue was highlighted at the majority of the meetings. The focus must now shift to practical implementation. Education is inextricably linked to inter-religious and inter-convictional dialogue.</p>	<p>The aim is to educate citizens in mutual understanding, in understanding religious, beliefs and traditions, in critical thinking, and in active citizenship.</p>	<p>Organise webinars and meetings focused on education regarding interreligious and inter-convictional dialogue. Presentation of successful initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue within the NIRIC network</p>

7. Is there anything else you would like to share with CINGO members and/or the CINGO Standing Committee? (max 200 words)

We wish to strengthen ties and exchanges with other committees and the standing committee.