



REPORT
WINTER SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE INGOS
STRASBOURG, 26-29 JANUARY 2008

This Winter Session of the Council of Europe (CoE) INGOs (International Non Governmental Organisations enjoying participatory status with the Council of Europe) took place in Strasbourg (France) on 26-29 January 2009. This meeting of the Conference was focusing on the new rules of procedure regarding the work of the Conference.

The session started on Monday 26 June with a meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of the INGO and a meeting of the Liaison Committee¹. In the afternoon during the same day, the meeting of the new Human Rights Committee took place.

During the time of the Conference, several meetings of various Committees took place including the Social Cohesion and Eradication of Poverty Committee as well as the Culture, Science and Education Committee and Civil Society and Democracy Committee.

On Wednesday 28 January the Conference of INGOs was held. Mental Health Europe (MHE) was represented by Roselyne Bourgon, Human Rights Officer.

1 Background information

This session was the time for electing new representatives within the INGO Conference.

¹ The INGO Liaison Committee, set up in 1976, liaises with the Secretariat General, and encourages INGOs to co-operate with the Council of Europe.

For more information, visit:
http://www.coe.int/t/e/ngo/public/liaison_committee/Summary.asp#TopOfPage

After the revision process which took place in 2008, the first meetings of the new thematic groups took place. This was a busy time as many issues relating to the thematic group meetings were discussed.

2 Meeting of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, Wednesday 28 January

The meeting was chaired by Annelise Oeschger, President of the Conference first and by Jean Marie Heydt after the elections.

Opening of the meeting

Oeschger welcomed the participants and announced that 13 new organisations were granted the participatory status in January 2009. About 417 organisations now have this status. Annelise Oeschger issued a final report on her presidency underlining the work done during this time and the working areas that have to be expanded. She stressed the fact that the INGO Conference still has a lot of potential and possibilities although INGOs have to be more proactive when lobbying their national government to get involved in the work of the Council of Europe.

Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda of the meeting was presented and adopted.

Annual activity report of the INGO Conference

This document was presented by Silvia Geise, vice president of the INGO Conference and afterwards, adopted by the Conference (1 abstention, zero against).

Report of the meeting held on 25 June 2008 and revision of the INGO Conference's Rules of Procedure

The report of the meeting has been presented and adopted. Regarding the revision of the rules of procedure within the Council of Europe, the document was concerning the thematic groups and their organisation as well as their involvement in the Conference organisation particularly for the transversal groups. The document including the amendments on the new rules, presented by Claude Laurent Genty, has been adopted by the Conference.

Election of the President, Vice President and Rapporteurs of the INGO Conference

These elections took place in the morning (President, Vice President) and in the afternoon (Rapporteurs). Jean Marie HEYDT (Association européenne des Centres de Formation au Travail socio-éducatif) has been elected as the new President of the Conference with three Vice Presidents, Mr Gérard Greneron (Conseil Européen des Syndicats de Police – CESP), Ms Iamsi Totvi (Confédération Internationale des Travailleurs Intellectuels – CITI-) and Mr Alain Mouchoux (Comité Syndical Européen de l'Éducation – CSEE). Ms Sophie Dimitroulias (Association of Women of Southern Europe – AFEM-), Mr Taras Poljanec (European Action of the Disabled – AEH), Mrs Maritchu Rall (International Association of Charities – AIC) and Ms Jenny Schuler (Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe – FAFCE) were elected Rapporteurs.

First report of the Expert Council on NGO law

Cyril Ritchie, President of the Expert Council on NGO law (instituted according to Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)14² of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the legal status of non-governmental organisations in Europe) , made a brief report on the work of the Expert Council during the last year regarding the good governance of INGO in Member States of the Council of Europe and particularly regarding the laws addressed to NGOs in the different countries and the implementation of these laws. Cyril Ritchie presented the recommendation drafted by the Expert Council on the results of this study (the focus was put on six illustrative countries). The document includes some recommendations to be put forward regarding the NGO law. It addresses authorities which deal with NGO. These authorities can be various depending on the country. The recommendation has been adopted by the Conference.

Other information on texts adopted during the Conference and ongoing activities

During the INGO Conference, important issues were raised like the question of the INGO Conference position towards the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Conference will work on a resolution to be adopted during the next INGO Conference. The Conference voted a recommendation with regards to the Durban Conference process related to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance which review conference will take place in Geneva in April 2009. The text was already subject to approval during the Human Rights Committee meeting and calls upon the Council of Europe, the UN Conference organisers and officials to be vigilant in the field of non discrimination and to ensure the universality, the inviolability and the individuality of human rights.

Update on INGO-Service

Michel Muller from INGO-Service, issued a report on the situation of financial contributions from INGO Conference organisations. He stated that 209 organisations made payments representing the total amount of 26000 euros. Mr Muller encouraged INGO to contribute to achieve more goals for the next years.

For more information: contact person, Roselyne Bourgon, MHE Human Rights Officer, Email roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org, Tel +32 2 280 04 68.

Roselyne Bourgon, February 2009

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[https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec\(2007\)14&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec(2007)14&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75)

³ http://www.coe.int/t/e/ngo/public/Draft_Recommendation_expert_council_en.asp#TopOfPage

