

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE OF INGOs

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I – Opening of the session – Anna RURKA, President of the Conference of INGOs

How to work better in the Conference of INGO but especially with the other Council of Europe bodies and particularly with Committee of Ministers? In this context, it is absolutely necessary to increase the impact of the Conference actions within the Council of Europe and the member states while keeping the specificity and the independence.

II – Validation of the Action Plan June 2015-January 2018

1) To organise working methods: .

- To exchange strategic discussion between the Conference and the representatives of the other Council of Europe bodies and the intergovernmental bodies;
- Events in conjunction with the INGO members represented in the European Union and the UN;
- To urge the thematic committees to adopt resolutions and recommendations addressed to the INGOs, the other Council of Europe bodies and to member states to support the civil society and their actions in the member states;

2) To create communication inside the Conference (320 INGOs) and inside the committees;

- A Facebook page and a Twitter account are regularly supplied with information. The Conference has a new website on the Council of Europe portal: at the end of each session, short memorandums will be given on the website and on the social networks.
- The INGO members are invited to transmit relevant information on the areas and strategic objectives to the decision-making bodies of the Conference (Standing Committee and Bureau) and to Secretariat.

3) Priorities and strategic objectives

- Commitment to the indivisibility of human rights
- Combating radicalisation and the types of extremism that lead to terrorism
- Promoting gender equality
- Combating discrimination and violence against vulnerable persons and groups
- Active citizenship in an inclusive society
- Migration: challenges and consequences

Lastly Anna RURKA calls for strong mobilization in the plenary meetings on major issues such as the NGOs situations in the member states, particularly in the Federation of Russia.

III – Exchange of views with Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

“We go from indifference to rejection!!!” Dixit Pope Francis.

Turkey knew how to open its borders to more than 2 million people...it is the sharing!

The societies are more and more digitized and the major challenge is to combat the violence present on the web.

Post- development + digitized society + dignity = 3 challenges!!

The European Convention of Human Rights is attacked on 3 fronts:

- a) Non-execution of the Court sentences (ECHR)! The less the states execute, the less the legitimacy of the Convention is recognized
- b) Speeches and declarations contradicting the Court (ECHR) are worrying.
- c) The hope of EU adherence to the European Convention of Human Rights but the motives for concern remain.

3 questions to be considered:

1) What action to undertake better than an acknowledgement when the human rights are scorned in some states?

The Committee of Ministers' proposal:

- To create mechanisms of information (Human Rights Defenders) to undertake the preventive action against the organisations of the civil society;
- To create a platform to defend the human rights defenders inspired by the way the civil society is working with the Committee of Human Rights in Geneva: briefings for the diplomats, events, reports, auditions with witnesses, ...

2) To set up a process to restart the European Social Charter

How to give a leading part to the Social Charter in our mechanisms? Because the concern linked to the policies of austerity is great!

The Turin Process (2014) includes several levels of reflection:

- To implement the European Social Charter
- To work in synergy with the EU law and thus avoid the problems of implementing the Social and Economic Rights beside the Cultural and Political Rights guaranteed by the European Convention of Human Rights
- To avoid the citizen being confronted with two systems, with the effects on the quantitative and the qualifying ones.
- Only 15 states among the 47 have ratified the European Social Charter: how to convince the other ones?

The Parliamentary Assembly supports the Process in the heart of its role to help the ECHR in the enforcement of the sentences.

3) The Council of Europe budget is in surplus due to the Turkey payment: Mrs Battaini-Dragoni advices to the NGOs looking for finance to come with concrete proposals.

IV – Exchange of views with the Permanent Representatives of member States to the Council of Europe

on strengthening the role of NGOs at the Council of Europe

The Conference had an exchange of views with the Permanent Representatives of member States to the Council of Europe. The President Anna RURKA underlined an historical moment with the desired change of the INGO work with them.

Ambassador Astrid HELLE, Permanent Representative of Norway and Chairwoman of the Group of Rapporteurs on Democracy (GR-DEM) and Robert DRZAZGA, a.i., Deputy Permanent Representative of Poland, in reply to the Questionnaire sent to the NGOs on “How to intensify the dialogue and improve the actual interaction and the Council of Europe”.

Mrs Astrid HELLE declares that an interaction must be reinforced in several stages:

- To set a policy to be adopted with the NGOs, because their actions are concrete and they know how the policies are enforced
- An inventory on the improvement of the interaction with the NGOs and vice-versa
- Organising meetings and invitation of the NGOs to these meetings
- Organising the transfer of the information
- That the NGOs submit their recommendations while respecting the process

The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, during his statement at the Parliamentary Assembly, insisted on his will to work with the NGOs, the decline of the democracy leaves a space which is available to civil society. Mrs HELLE concluded with a call for volunteer contributions and on the NGOs’ opinion about the functioning and the granting of the supplies. “We need your reply on our mutual functioning.”

Mr. Robert DRZAZGA The interaction with the NGOs poses a problem, whereas they are very present at the UN. He gave a review of the NGO participation at the Council of Europe

- Part of the relationship is vague and not relevant
- The NGOs and the Council of Europe lack involvement with the Committee of Ministers, the two pillars have to listen to each other
- The Council of Europe has no connexion inside the NGOs, the 4th pillar of the organisation representing the civil society.

Criticisms on the compartmentalization the Council of Europe and the isolation of the INGO Conference while most of the member States are favourable to it.

Remarks of a German Parliamentary member: to think about the notion of a network of Strasbourg networks. To give the information to the networks and send it to the Parliamentary members who will work better.

V – Initiatives of the Gender Equality Expert – Anne Nègre

Anne NEGRE recalls her targets:

- To reinforce the actions aiming at the equality with the Council of Europe
- To benefit from equality training and create some courses; she mentioned the organisation “To succeed equality” which she is working with and which proposes training on the web
- To integrate in the agenda a half-day training course on equality for all and equality in the charters.

To promote internal and external communication:

- To validate the title “between women and men” and not “men and women”
- To increase the place of women in decision-making and on boards of directors
- To obtain the appellation and the translation of the lobbying of their feminization
- To insure the net and precise NGO subsidy with criteria of equality
- To obtain equal pay
- To implement the Istanbul Convention on respecting parity (to-day 22% are women) in the Parliamentary Assembly and the Delegations

- To combat sexism in the media
- To respect CEDAW

She also proposes not Equality between women and men but AGAINST.

VI – To step aside: Impact of Gender as an instrument of radicalisation and extremism – a student’s point of view: *Sophia Benazzouz and Magali Gomis*, Undergraduate Students of Spanish and French Law, University Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense

They assure that their point of view is objective and not feminist at all costs.

Analysis of the critical fields of Beijing 20, report:

- Advance of parity, but 800 women die everyday in the world, 50% have a paid job and their salary remains from 10% to 30% less than men’s salary.
- 143 out of 195 states guarantee equality between women and men. Nevertheless the discrimination against women persists in different areas. However the Lisbon and Amsterdam Treaties require the States to take account of Equality
- In France, in 2009, ‘un decret d’application (decree specifying how a law should be enforced) of the Law of 31st January 2007 on equality requests the NGOs to use this tool and to activate it with the States.
- They note a hate speech against gender
- They have assessed the discrimination in reading the violent messages against women on the social networks: in Spain, these messages are punished by justice.

Brigitte LE GOUIS – ECICW/CECIF Representative at the Council of Europe