



CONFERENCE OF INGOs  
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

## AUTUMN SESSION HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

CONF/HR(2008)SYN1

Strasbourg, 10 December 2008

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SYNOPSIS</b> <b>OF THE MEETING HELD ON</b> <b>THURSDAY 2 OCTOBER 2008</b></p>
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### FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

The Human Rights Committee of the Conference of INGOs, meeting in Strasbourg on 2 October 2008, with Jean-Marie Heydt, Vice-President of the Conference of INGOs, in the chair:

- **Adopted** the agenda unanimously
- **Appointed** Remy Berthier (IUEGS) as rapporteur

#### 1. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair

- **Elected its Chair and Vice-Chair**

##### - Election procedure

1 candidate for the position of Chair: Gabriel Nissim.

3 candidates for the position of Vice-Chair: Oleksander Dichek, Brigitte Kahn, Alain Koskas.

The candidates introduced themselves (3 minutes maximum for each candidate)

At 9.23 am. the registration of the voters was completed and the ballot commenced.

133 INGOs are represented on the Committee.

##### - Election of the Chair:

One participant suggested that the Chair be elected by acclamation.

However, as the candidate had requested a secret ballot, the normal procedure was followed.

Bertrand Schoentgen (International Confederation of Professional and Intellectual Workers),

Victor Kamyshanov (International Federation for Peace and Conciliation) and Jane Crozier

(Secretariat) were appointed to supervise the ballot.

The ballot closed at 9.29 am.

**Gabriel Nissim** was elected President with 62 votes out of the 64 cast.

##### - Election to the position of Vice-Chair

Anna Rurka (Eurocef), Helga Sourek (World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations) and

Jane Crozier (Secretariat) were appointed to supervise the ballot.

The ballot opened at 9.46 am.

Oleksander Dichek secured **16** votes out of the 73 votes cast.

Brigitte Kahn secured **39** votes.

Alain Koskas secured **13** votes.

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**Brigitte Kahn** was elected Vice-Chair of the Committee.

## **2.A few brief words by the newly-elected Chair**

- **Heard** a short statement by the newly-elected Chair

The Human Rights Committee covered not only civil and political rights but also the economic and social rights set out in the Social Charter and cultural rights. It was therefore important not to neglect any of these areas.

Many human rights issues were cross-sectoral, which meant that it was important to find effective methods of working with the other committees and cross-sectoral groups.

The Committee also had to co-operate with the other pillars of the Council of Europe. It did not therefore have full control of its agenda.

A working method therefore had to be found which would enable progress to be made on the various subjects. In particular, what should be the Committee's role in the Council of Europe's monitoring activities? What concrete activities should it undertake? The commitment of all members was precious and necessary to achieve these aims.

## **3. Discussion on priority subjects and representation in the different inter-governmental committees**

- **Discussed** the main subjects to be addressed in the future.

Conflict prevention and in particular the situation between Georgia and Russia was the first theme mentioned. The Committee of Ministers would be taking a vote on a report on the role of men and women in conflict prevention. The Committee should work more closely with the United Nations on the issue of conflict prevention. Perhaps they should choose two or three new areas of work and stick to those (for example the training of prison staff). The question of the right to conscientious objection was also mentioned.

The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue had been one of the main features of the INGOs' work. How could they continue to promote the White Paper? The universal aspect of human rights, which some believed were a product of Western Culture, was also raised, and the question of cultural rights.

Relations with the European Union: It was important that the European Union should be able to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights. For the time being, this was still not possible because the European Union did not yet have a constitutional treaty.

Social rights: how would the new Committee take account be this issue? Concern over certain situations in Eastern Europe, in particular with regard to the rights of minorities. The issue of migrants was closely related to human rights. Child prisoners. Violence exercised against migrant women. Dual discrimination (migrant women and the elderly).

- **Discussed** its working method:

The OSCE and the Council of Europe often dealt with similar subjects. Perhaps it would be a good idea to be work in close contact with the OSCE special representatives working in the human rights field.

When a subject was shared with several committees, it would be worthwhile for each member to deal with a specific aspect of the issue.

The Committee should discuss subjects in depth before sending representatives to such and such a body.

Contributing to the work of the Commissioner for Human Rights.

Monitoring: it was necessary to improve the way in which the Committee tried to ensure that legislation in the human rights field was effectively implemented; in order to be more efficient, a list should be drawn up of the human rights documents currently being discussed by other Council of Europe bodies.

- **Took note** of the proposal to change the name of the Committee and to use the terminology generally applied at the Council of Europe and in other international organisations, i.e. Human Rights Committee.
- **Follow up Conference to Durban**
- **Took note** of a draft recommendation

In response to major concerns about the way in which this conference had been used for purposes which were incompatible with the Council of Europe's aims, the Committee and the Conference of INGOs could issue a recommendation on this subject. The text would be discussed at the January meeting. The different INGOs were invited to put forward their comments and proposed amendments before the meeting.

Cc: President of the Conference of INGOs  
Members of the Standing Committee  
Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly  
Secretary General of the Congress  
Secretary to the Committee of Ministers  
Directors General  
Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe  
Director of External Relations  
Director of the Strategic planning  
Director of Communication  
Director of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights