



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**WINTER SESSION
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE
CONF/HR(2009)SYN1**

Strasbourg, 16 March 2009

**S Y N O P S I S
OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2009**

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

The Human Rights Committee, meeting in Strasbourg on 26 January 2009, with Gabriel Nissim (SIGNIS) in the Chair:

1. Opening

- Noted that 2008 had been the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and that there was a growing interest in human rights issues and the role of NGOs, the backbone of civil society.

2. Adopted the agenda.

3. Adopted the synopsis of the meeting held on 2 October 2008 [[CONF/HR\(2008\)SYN1](#)]

4. Racism and discrimination: Durban Review Conference

- **Took note** of the background details presented by the Chair:

- o In 2001, the first Durban Conference against Racism and Discrimination had been held;

- o In 2009, from 20 to 24 April, a Review Conference would be held in Geneva to assess the results and the action to be taken. In preparation for the conference, an inter-session committee would meet in Geneva from 6 to 9 April. The preparatory committee would meet from 10 to 19 April. The Chair was pleased that several of the committee's INGOs were taking part in the work of the conference, which should enable exchanges to take place between INGOs from the United Nations system in Geneva and from the committee.

The ensuing debate showed, in particular, that the INGOs needed to make their voices heard at the Review Conference, that migration had increased substantially since the Durban Conference and that the continuing conflict in the Middle East was breeding anti-Semitism in Europe.

The Chair referred to the joint statement by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights and the Director of the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency and also urged INGOs to make proposals. In this connection, he mentioned the questionnaire on the INGO Conference website with which all the INGOs could indicate the action and initiatives they were taking to combat the various forms of racism and discrimination and the means they

were employing to make sure that the relevant texts were publicised and implemented.

- **Proposed** the following action:

- o **Presentation of the draft recommendation** drawn up by the committee for consideration by the INGO Conference on 28 January 2009, together with an appendix describing the situation which INGOs actually found on the ground and examples of best practice in combating discrimination;

- o **Submission of the recommendation**, following adoption by the INGO Conference, to the various official bodies and the chairs of the INGOs.

- o **Setting up of a working group on the subject of human rights and religions.** The group would submit proposals for the April session. The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue provided a basis for discussion here. The Chair asked the INGOs interested to register with the sitting rapporteur.

5. Organisation of the committee's work in 2009

- **Appointed** Maritchu Rall (AIC) committee rapporteur;

- **Noted** that, in 2009, the committee would meet three times for 3½ hours and once for 1½ hours;

- **Proposed** the appointment of the following representatives to Council of Europe steering committees for 2009:

- o Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH): Marc Leyenberger

- o Governmental Committee (ECSR): Marie-José Schmitt

- o Steering Committee on the Media and New Communication Services (CDMC): Gabriel Nissim

- o Committee of Experts on Issues relating to the Protection of National Minorities (DH-MIN): Jean-Claude Gonon

- o Working Group on the Reform of the European Court of Human Rights (GT-S-GDR): Giuseppe Guarneri

The Chair underlined that the representatives to the other Council of Europe bodies (Parliamentary Assembly, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, steering committees) needed to have relevant experience. In this connection, he wished specialist groups to be set up to support them.

The committee therefore:

- **Proposed** that working groups be set up to deal with the following:

- o **Children and human rights** (Brigitte Kahn):

As part of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to be held in Geneva on 4 June 2009 by the International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE), 180 children would be in attendance and would build a house which would be handed over to the UN. The topics addressed would be health, the family, solidarity and self-esteem. Various areas for discussion were put forward for the working group:

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child: what was the state of play?
- The protection of children's rights: how could children be taught to contribute to their own education?
- What was done for children who suffered abuse?

- In Ukraine, an event on promoting a world without violence was planned.

o Monitoring unit on economic and social rights (Marie-José Schmitt)

o The situation of children removed from their parents in Germany

Took note of the preparations for the Conference of Ministers responsible for Media and New Communication Services to be held in Reykjavik in May 2009 and of the proposals made to the Steering Committee on the Media and New Communication Services (CDMC).

6. (French) name of the committee ("*Commission des droits humains*" or "*Commission des droits de l'homme*")

Took note of a new proposal ("*Commission des droits de l'homme et de la Charte sociale européenne*" / "Human Rights and European Social Charter Committee"), underlining that the Social Charter was a binding legal instrument which had to be supported.

Voted as follows:

o Commission des droits de l'homme et de la Charte sociale européenne: 54 votes

o Commission des droits humains: 3 votes

o Commission des droits de l'homme: 22 votes

Agreed to propose "*Commission des droits de l'homme et de la charte sociale européenne*" / "Human Rights and European Social Charter Committee" to the INGO Conference on 28 January 2009.

7. Human rights education (in co-operation with the Culture, Science and Education Committee)

• Agreed to co-operate with the Culture, Science and Education Committee in connection with the preparation of the conference scheduled for 2010 on the issue of the universality of human rights.

Cc: Members of the Standing Committee
Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly
Secretary General of the Congress
Secretary to the Committee of Ministers
Directors General
Registrar of the European Court of Human Rights
Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe
Director of External Relations
Director of Strategic Planning
Director of Communication
Director a.i. of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights
