



## ***ICC International participating at the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg***

24-27 January 2011

Jean Marie Heydt gave a report on the current discussions and activities of the Standing Committee of the Conference of INGOs. In the summary the proposed changes for the *Conference of INGOs* were summarized. A working group was given the task to propose adaptations of the Conference to the ongoing reform, on the basis of past experience and within the framework of the new allocated budget. The first analysis has shown seven priorities:

1. Reduction of running costs in reducing the number of sessions and commissions
2. A more efficient inner organization. The working group proposes that the present number of commissions and transversal groups be limited and centered on the fundamental principles of the Council of Europe (Human Rights, Rule of Law, Democracy)
3. A close link with the program 2011 of the Council of Europe (among others) Promoting intercultural dialogue: >Education to intercultural dialogue<
4. A follow up of current affairs
5. A wish of a better working connection with the General Secretariat
6. Restructuring the role of commissions  
Thematic groups may also be created within the commissions or in transversal groups
7. Ensuring a better visibility of the actions of the Council of Europe among the civil society and public actors

The background paper of the Standing Committee proposed the following changes:

The conference should change to be more a forum for debate and decisions. The members would no longer be in a position to speak only on their own behalves at committee meetings as they would have to discuss the issues with their own INGOs in advance and therefore would have a much more representative voice. All information would be passed on in advance during the entire period between formal committee meetings. Then, during committee meetings, the members would discuss issues face to face. This would be a proper debate.

As a result the number of meetings can be restricted to two annual sessions. In 2011 the new system will be set up and tested and so it will be put in place in June.

The number of committees should be restricted to three thematic committees.

-Rights Committee

-Living Together Committee

-Education Committee

covering: formal and non-formal education;  
culture; all subjects relating to action against  
violence; new technologies and their use



These three committees will meet formally twice a year. Their work will be used as a basis for the major themes to be discussed at the Great European Civil Debate.

**Conclusion and suggestion:**

I would recommend that the ICC is actively participating in the new “Education Committee” We can see the current restructuring process of the Conference of INGOs as a fortunate opportunity for us and the right moment to step in. Being actively present in Strasbourg increases the publicity of the ICC and allows us to launch points of exchange. The aim will be to highlight the representativeness of our activities. This will be a benefit for our members

Martin Beck / Jan 2011  
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