



Strasbourg
Winter Session
27-30 January 2014



What's new for MIAMSI at the Council of Europe?

The Council of Europe's winter session was held in Strasbourg from 27 to 30 January 2014. The INGO Conference met to close down some working groups and set up others. Moreover the CINGO (Christian International Non-government Organisations) met to carry on with its reflection on the place of religions in interfaith dialogue and the importance of taking an active part in European parliamentary elections (see attached document for national NGOs).

Human Rights Commission (monitored by J.P Mathern) :

1. The “**Religions and Human Rights**” working group finalized two recommendations: one for religious officials and another for INGO members. They were passed by a large majority vote. **MIAMSI** played an important part.
2. The “combating poverty” group is organizing next October 17 as a day on “**No to extreme poverty**” (in Turin). Mr. de Romémont, from **MIAMSI** is taking a very active part in it.
3. A new working group has been set up: “**combating hate speech**”. **MIAMSI** has enrolled in it and is going to take part in defining it (Daniel Guéry).

Culture and Education Commission (monitored by F Debrowolska) :

The working group on the topic “**Teaching in the 21st century: challenges and training**” reported on its survey returns and proposed a preliminary summary of the responses input through the Conference INGOs. **MIAMSI's** participation was essential both through François Debrowolska's work and the responses from teachers in the various countries of the European Board.

A conference is organized by the Commission on 24 and 25 April next in Strasbourg on the topic: Teachers' images and professional ethics.

The “**The religious dimension of intercultural dialogue**” working group turned in its results on the same lines as the conclusions of the Ministers Committee held in Erevan in the autumn of 2013.

A “**European Citizenship**” working group set up: one member of the Strasbourg team has enrolled in it (Roland Fenocchio).

Democracy, social cohesion and global challenges Commission (monitored by D. Guéry) :

A reflection was led on responsible, participatory democracy (in particular the 12 principles of good governance).

Council of Europe's INGO Conference:

1. All the INGOs accredited to the Council of Europe hosted Ukrainian Human Rights NGOs and debated the situation in that country. **A motion was passed to support Ukrainian civil society** and demand that it be included in democratic life especially in the current crisis situations.
2. Issues of considering the religious dimension in democratic life and **combating hate speech** gave rise to a **recommendation**.
3. Workshops on **intercultural dialogue** and available training tools were presented.
4. The **recommendations** made by the “**Religions and Human Rights**” working group (see above) were passed by a very large majority vote.

The Christian INGOs (CINGO)

1. The main reflection was on reciprocal Human Rights (in the fields of basic human, cultural, religious rights, ...) and hate speech.
The quality of a human being and of the Rights he/she has do not depend on his/her behaviour, they are not earned by merit. : « I acknowledge in the other person his/her resemblance to me as a *Human*, whatever he/she does or has done ».
2. Encouragement to **go and vote in European elections in May 2014** was made to country movements of each INGO member in this group (see attachment).

Miscellaneous:

1. The **Human Rights Director** was contacted to inform Rinascita Cristiana, the Italian MIAMSI movement, about the living and detention conditions in Italian prisons and migration issues.
2. MIAMSI was invited to the **consecration as bishop of Mgr A. Giordano**, formerly the Holy See's representative in Strasburg and currently the Papal Nuncio in Venezuela. It was a good opportunity to meet with other Catholic INGOs.