



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

The Council of Europe Parliament winter session and the INGO Conference took place simultaneously from 23 to 27 January 2017 in Strasbourg

Below is a summary of the work carried out by the various commissions, working groups and other meetings organized during this week in Strasbourg:

1. Human Rights Commission:

After reviewing current activities and in particular those carried out by the Working Groups (see below), views were exchanged in connection with:

- Relations with the Human Rights Steering Committee on functioning and some topics such as "Social rights", "genital mutilation and forced marriages", "place of civil society vis-à-vis national institutions", "migration and Human Rights", "freedom of expression and Human Rights".
- The disabled.
- Child protection
- Protecting confidentiality.

Working groups that MIAMSI is part of :

- **Extreme Poverty and Human Rights group**: this year's specific theme focuses on **combating youth poverty** (15-30 year-olds) after that concerning children.

Two other aspects are mentioned:

- Publicizing and ratifying the Social Charter
- **Feedback on the declaration signed in 2012** by the four pillars of the Council of Europe on combating extreme poverty and in particular paragraph 13 of the Charter.

Organization of the 17 October day was also discussed.

- **Combating hate speech group**: it met pursuant to the official launch in France of the "no hatred, anti-hate speech movement" campaign

An opportunity to revisit the value of such a campaign and to present "Connections", a reference book with many ideas for action.

French :

<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Publications/CONNEXIONS.pdf>

English

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168065dac7>

- **Human Rights, Joint development and Migration Working Group** :

As a reminder: This group seeks to improve enforcement of social laws and human rights in European businesses on the continent and in countries outside Europe.

The main purpose of the meeting was to develop the next day's side event (see below) and review the draft recommendation.

- **Social Networks Group**:

This working group took time to learn about social networks and respect for human rights, including anonymity.

Side event : Human Rights and Business.

Apart from meetings, working groups and assemblies, a side event was held on the topic: "Regulating multinational business to improve compliance with Human Rights and local development"

Several points to note:

- The effective, active participation of ambassadors, Parliamentarians, INGOs and human rights experts ...
- Insistence on the need to legislate to ensure that Human Rights are complied with in European company subsidiaries, particularly in Southern hemisphere countries. It is also a way of protecting companies that already comply with the rules.
- Exchanges of views on UN recommendations on supervision to enforce social laws in offshore companies, subcontractors, multinationals. The same applies to the laws passed by the Council of Europe Ministers Committee.
- The importance of INGO support in this area was confirmed.

CoE Recommendation on this issue:

French

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805c1ad6

English :

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805c1ad4

2. Culture and Education Commission:

The topic of the meeting was "**Education for Democratic Citizenship and Social Inclusion**". Several talks and exchanges thereon:

- The skill framework for a **democratic culture**, approaching implementation, through publication of a specific booklet (see ad hoc working group below).
- Possible actions in school life.
- Testimony from the alderman of Molenbeek.
- The social charter: the publicizing, ratification and knowledge needed. Talk on this by the Council of Europe Secretary General (see Commission's report).
- Holocaust Commemoration: reflections and future projects (symposiums etc.)

- ***Living together in Europe group***: focused on intercultural education

Such education is aimed not only at the education system, but also municipalities, neighbourhoods as well as business and of course the media!

A presentation of a booklet introducing "Skills for a Democratic Culture" highlighted the work of certain INGOs and the work of "intercultural cities" (cf. Group's work in 2016).

It is useful and relevant to know and publicize a booklet entitled "Skills for a Democratic Culture", the source of "Living Together".

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806ccc08>

Italian :

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806ccf13>

Portuguese :

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806ccf15>

- **Teaching history group:** MIAMSI is not in this group, but Pax Romana, an INGO we are now working with for international relations, represents us there.

This working group aims to go beyond a nationalist vision of history, drawing a distinction between memory and history. It should:

- produce documentation
- propose a questionnaire to collect good teaching practices in the context of the "multi-perspectiveness" of history; the results will give rise to an ad hoc seminar.

Two side events are envisaged: violence and history / women in history

3. Democracy, social cohesion and global issues commission:

The commission dealt mainly with three major issues:

1. The issue of the **elderly**; It was a follow-up to last year's Side Event on this topic.
2. **Governance** in partnership with civil society: example of Partnership with an Open Government (PGO), in particular in Romania.
3. Echoes of the follow-up to COP 21 and 22.

- **Europe - Mediterranean Group :**

Three issues were dealt with during this meeting:

- Information on the Final Conference in Lisbon on 14 October 2016 "Migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees in the context of major risk prevention and management" (a report was sent previously).
- Situation on worsening migration and supply chains.
- Drawing up a roadmap for the INGO Conference.
- For information: the booklet from the Human Rights Commissioner on migration and Europe: "It is time for Europe to take its responsibilities".

Document appended to the Commission report and referenced below.

https://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/IP-MigrantIntegration_FRA.pdf

4. The INGO Conference

1. Apart from adopting the preparatory documents and other reports, this session meeting dealt with several important points:

- protecting **freedom of expression and association** in Turkey following the failed coup d'état on 15 July 2016;
- the situation of **NGOs in Council of Europe member states** at a time when civil society space is shrinking;
- **regulating multinational business** to improve compliance with human rights and local development;
- **supervision of lawyers**, the need for standards that protect client confidentiality;
- the **information society** - what are the progress and threats to public authorities and NGOs? "

2. **Adoption of several texts:**

- [CONF/PLE\(2017\)RES1](#)
Resolution: 'Protecting freedoms of association and expression in Turkey in the state of emergency context'
- [CONF/PLE\(2017\)REC1](#)
Recommendation: 'Supervision of lawyers: the need for standards guaranteeing confidentiality'
- [CONF/PLE\(2017\)DEC1](#)
Support for the Council of Europe Secretary General's letter on the draft law decriminalizing certain forms of domestic violence in the Russian Federation

- [CONF/PLE\(2017\)DEC2](#)
Declaration: 'The European Social Charter at the heart of the dialogue between the Council of Europe and the European Union (Turin Process)'
 - Roadmap on 2017-2018 migration [Feuille de route relative à la migration 2017-2018](#)
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5. The Christian INGO group (CINGO)

The central reflection of this meeting will have been the issue of Rights inflation which is undoubtedly the result of the excessive judicialization of daily life.

Other topics were discussed:

- The religious dimension of intercultural dialogue: it is felt that religions tend to be considered as convictions in the same way as philosophies, with their sacred dimension being obliterated.
- Pope Francis's text to the diplomatic corps which refers to his speech to Europe.
- The report on « reality of poverty and injustice » written and put forward by Caritas Europa. The contents include useful questionnaires on three points :
 - The family,
 - Decent work and wages,
 - Social security.

Link below :

French

http://www.caritas.eu/sites/default/files/esm_2016_fr.pdf

English

http://www.caritas.eu/sites/default/files/esm_2016.pdf

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