



**Strasbourg**

Winter Session

**1st quarter 2019**



## What's new for MIAMSI in the Council of Europe ?



The **Council of Europe** is celebrating its **70th anniversary** until June 2020 !

Some flashbacks on events in Strasbourg during the first weeks of 2020 :

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### **The INGO Conference**

Even if the INGO Conference did not meet in plenary session, its officials nevertheless met to work on reforming its structures.

Each INGO will have to decide on the project at the next session in April. MIAMSI will ensure that accredited INGOs can express their convictions in order to influence the course of exchanges as much as possible. Each person's dignity in all dimensions of their existence remains at the core of its concerns.

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### **Four-yearly report**

Each NGO must regularly draw up a report in order to be able to keep the benefits of accreditation to the Council of Europe. It was during this quarter that the report was sent to the relevant departments.

During the past four years, in addition to regular attendance at INGO Conference sessions, commissions and working groups, MIAMSI can boast of several major actions :

- Preventing and managing major risks for vulnerable people and migrants,
- Coordinating the Migration Watch Unit
- Preparing a migration round table: the duty or offence of solidarity
- Active participation in the high-level Committee of Ministers meeting on "The role and position of INGOs in the Council of Europe."

These commitments were and are taken based on choices and directions of the MIAMSI European Board Movements to which the Strasbourg team reports annually.

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### **Poverty working group / Preparing the World Day to Overcome Extreme Poverty**

On 6 February an important meeting was held in Strasbourg to prepare for the **World Day to Overcome Extreme Poverty** on 16 October 2020. The Council of Europe is very committed to this issue that is intrinsically linked to the European Social Charter.

MIAMSI has been involved in this action for a very long time and its commitment is ongoing.

The topic for the upcoming day: "**Access to relevant social services**, a springboard out of poverty and exclusion."

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### **The Catholic-inspired INGO Forum**

On 5-7 December last, MIAMSI attended the world meeting of the Catholic-inspired INGO Forum. This **exchange platform** enables Catholic INGOs to get to know each other better and offers a pool of thinking, resources and actions. MIAMSI brought its expertise on the topic of development.

In this dynamic of pooling knowledge the 110 attending INGOs have co-authored a resource document on how to "**participate in building a more inclusive society.**" It is a useful tool for designing advocacy actions for each INGO in many areas, both at the UN and the Council of Europe.

The INGO delegates (for MIAMSI: President Maryse Robert and UN delegate Paolo Navone) attended **Pope Francis's audience** and benefited from his talk.

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### **Symposium for the 50th anniversary of the Holy See in the Council of Europe: *Building Europe***

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The Catholic Church has been involved in European construction from the beginning. Three days were dedicated to the Holy See in the Council of Europe (7-9 January 2020) and thereby to the presence and commitment of Christians in the collective consciousness that brings together peoples and states on the continent. Geography, politics or economics alone do not a common history make. Faiths and beliefs also contribute to it.

The participation of [Mgr Paul Gallagher](#) (Secretary for State Relations at the State Secretariat), was particularly appreciated. He stressed that "human rights and dignity are one of the topics of greatest importance for the Holy See," as it is also "one of the main areas of activity for the Council of the Europe." "Human rights are an essential element for the majority of human communities and peoples."

Drawing on various speeches by Pope Francis, Mgr Gallagher put forward various lines and approaches of importance for the Holy See concerning human rights and dignity: **the educational approach, migration approach, interfaith approach, intercultural approach, ethical approach and political approach.** "To rebuild Europe together, we need unity," he said. A unity that is at the very foundation of human life... unity also "between the human person and ethics, between the human person and politics, between the human person and work, between the human person and any other activity under the sun that he/she performs."

The attendance and speech from the Council of Europe Secretary General expressed interest in this anniversary on the part of the Institution itself.

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### **Migration watch unit:**

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The Migration watch unit met during the January parliamentary session and decided to beef up its relations with the other pillars of the Council of Europe and in particular the new special delegate for migration and refugees from the Council of Europe Secretary General.

For the next session (April 2020), an INGO will have the opportunity to present its specific actions: SOS Mediterranean. This is in line with concerns of the MIAMSI European movements.

The watch unit also shared some statistical items.

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### **The Christian INGO Group :**

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The various Christian INGOs accredited to the Council of Europe met on 29 January to share their actions and projects. Mainly discussed were:

- The Pax Christi France/Germany initiative on updating the Treaty of Aix la Chapelle for a peace culture
- Combating sexual abuse by the Association of Former Catholic School Students.
- The Education and Culture Commission and its White Paper: a contribution to giving religions a positive, constructive place adapted to the current situation.
- The migration watch unit and again issues related to shipwrecks in the Mediterranean.

- The culture of encounters that Pope Francis is asking us to develop.

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**In the next few weeks or more**

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- ✓ The **INGO Conference** session on 20 - 24 April
- ✓ An international conference entitled: **Best practice in managing refugee reception and anti-hate speech measures.**
- ✓ In Rome on 14 May 2020, with Pope Francis : "Rebuilding the global educational pact." This global meeting will give new life to the commitment for and with the younger generations, renewing the passion for more open, inclusive education, capable of patient listening, constructive dialogue and mutual understanding. It is more necessary than ever to unite our efforts in a vast educational alliance to train mature people, capable of overcoming fragmentation and opposition, and stitching together again the fabric of relationships for a more fraternal human race.

We are also concerned by this meeting !

For members of the Strasbourg local team  
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