



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

3/2014

The 2014 summer session of the Council of Europe was held in Strasbourg from June 23 to 27. **All the authorities met during that working week:** the INGO Conference, the Christian INGOs and the local ACI-MIAMSI team. Moreover, the Parliament dealt with several important issues and renewed the Council of Europe General Secretary's term of office.

INGO Conference:

A good deal of time was devoted to the participatory status of the INGOs in the Council of Europe and in particular to the commitments they make to the institution.

Several texts were adopted unanimously or with one or two abstentions:

- ✓ A recommendation on **antisemitism** in Europe which seems to be on the rise again
- ✓ A recommendation on **gender-based violence as a political weapon** (e.g. rape, sexual humiliation, ...),
- ✓ A statement of principle in support of the work of **Human Rights advocates** in the 47 countries represented in the Council of Europe.
- ✓ A position in favour of including the “**respect for Human Rights**” dimension in the upcoming 2015 **climate** conference in Paris

*Furthermore, the INGO conference **elected** the commissions' chairmen and vice-chairmen. Consultation among Christian INGOs led to the election of individuals who share beliefs consistent with those of our movements and the Church's social thinking.*

One member of the Strasbourg ACI-MIAMSI team was elected to the Committee for verification and disputes

Human Rights Commission:

- ✓ The **anti-extreme poverty** group carried on with preparing the 17 October Day on “**No to extreme poverty**” in Turin.
MIAMSI-Europe will be represented there to take part in drawing up a speech.
This will be an opportunity to contact the Turin Rinascita Cristiana members.
- ✓ The **anti-hate speech** group reflected in depth on existing laws on the issue and used a questionnaire designed to elicit the view we have on this problem. ACI France responded widely to this questionnaire.

Culture and Education Commission:

- ✓ The working group on the topic “**Teaching in the 21st century: challenges and training**” presented its work to the commission: MIAMSI took an effective and decisive part in drawing up the report. It will be published as soon as it has been corrected.

Democracy, Social Cohesion and Global Challenges Commission:

- ✓ The major topic of this commission was devoted to **climate issues**. The concern is making the “Human Rights Voice” heard at the Paris Conference in 2015. The issue is not merely a technical or environmental one. The consequences for Human Rights must be foreseen and prevented.
- ✓ **Participatory democracy** was the second topic for reflection with the “European local democracy week” on the topic : **sharing, proposing, deciding**.

The **Christian INGO** group (CINGO) met to:

- ✓ Analyze the outcome of the European elections and see what impacts they had on the European project that the Council of Europe is drawing up.

- ✓ Plan the specific input they can put forward.
- ✓ Prepare the INGO Conference elections
- ✓ Stabilize its internal organization and plan relations to be established with INGOs present in Geneva, Paris, Brussels, and Rome.

Debates in the Parliament:

*** Electing the General Secretary:**

Mr. Thorbjorn JAGLAND, the General Secretary of the Council of Europe was re-elected for a 5-year term.

M. Jagland was prime minister in Norway. He has managed reform of the Council of Europe in recent years in particular with large budget cuts, including for the INGO Conference.

*** Mass arrival of mixed migrant flows on Italian shores:**

“Europe must deal with increasing mixed migrant arrivals and flows on its southern shores and the problems at the Italian border are not likely to recede.

Praiseworthy efforts have enabled the Italian authorities and their partners to respond to emergencies but many problems remain.

It is time for Europe to reach a turning-point and provide more structured and comprehensive solutions to these problems.”

*** Integrating immigrants into Europe: need for a voluntarist, ongoing and comprehensive policy:**

“Immigrants continue to be subject to social and economic injustice which leads to isolation and the rise in immigrant “ghettos”.

In order to ensure better integration, the Assembly recalls the need for comprehensive policies, facilitating job training and acceptance of qualifications and granting, if possible, long-stay residence permits.”

*** Violence in the media:**

The Ministers Committee is advised to start drawing up practical recommendations for parents, teachers and media goods and service providers, on the way to deal with the effects of media violence on individuals and society at large, and counter its potential impact.