



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

The summer session of the Council of Europe Parliament was held in Strasbourg on 24 - 28 June 2019. It was of major importance in two ways :

1. **With Russia's reinstatement as a voting member**, it can fully regain its place in the Parliament. A change in the procedure rules has enabled the 140 million inhabitants of Russia to participate once again in Council of Europe activities through their representatives. Of course Ukraine and other countries supporting it did everything they could to oppose this reinstatement (see invasion of Crimea and breach of Ukrainians' rights in the region, the local war). The issue of Russia's not paying its dues and thereby undermining the future of the Council of Europe is thought to have had some importance for the vote!
2. **The election of a new Secretary General:** As Mr Jagland has finished his second five-year term, Mrs Marija Pejcinovic Buric, the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Croatian Republic was elected on Wednesday, 26 June 2019 with 159 votes (as opposed to 105 for Mr. Reynders, the Belgian candidate). Ms. Buric, 56, is a member of the Croatian Democratic Union.

Both these major events will have a strong impact on the life of the INGO Conference through the directions and management that will appear with the new Secretary General (who already met the INGO Conference during the spring session) and with Russia's return. More will be revealed in the next few months!

There were no special meetings of the INGO Conference or even the Christian INGOs. The next meetings will take place in October. Nevertheless, it may be interesting to report some exchanges in the **Parliament** (apart from changing the procedure rules and electing the new Secretary General), the **Migration Watch Unit** and the working breakfast at the **Holy See's Permanent Representation** in Strasbourg and the **MIAMSI - Europe local team** which oversees Council of Europe activities on behalf of the MIAMSI European Board.

1. The Council of Europe Parliament

Apart from voting on the procedure rules and electing the Secretary General, some important affairs have been worked on:

- ✓ On artificial intelligence: [measures to protect human rights](#) (10 measures).
- ✓ On the **protection of migrants: two recommendations**
End violence against [migrant children](#) and their exploitation
For Member States: [Take more responsibility](#) for saving migrants at sea and protecting their rights.
- ✓ On the links between the Environment and Human Rights – The first priority for the Georgian chairmanship of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers (November 2019 - May 2020)
See attached document.
- ✓ Ending violence against children: [a Council of Europe contribution to Sustainable Development Goals](#)

2. The Strasbourg Team :

The Strasbourg team members met to take stock at the time of the third Parliamentary session and especially to inform the MIAMSI European movements on the issues for which contributions are requested:

- **Migration** in general
- **Combating poverty**, especially in the context of the October 17 day, the theme this year being: Decent housing determines most rights. Decent housing for a family determines the future of all its members, especially the children. The day's headline:
"Decent housing: a collection of children's voices"
- **Lifelong education.**
Several aspects are emphasized:
 - ✓ Required **learning of the host country's language and culture** for migrants and refugees regardless of their status
 - ✓ **Education/training of people** who are retired, the **elderly**, those in retirement homes, **long-term care homes**, more widely people **in difficult situations**
 - ✓ People **retraining** for multiple reasons (transfers, redundancy, sick leave, ...)

In what forms ?

Personal testimonials, associative commitments (ACI or others), concerted actions with other movements or associations, talks, conferences, ...

This should feed the input of MIAMSI delegates in the commissions and working groups.

The possibility was brought up of providing testimonials on : Intercultural dialogue, combating hate speech, data protection and artificial intelligence issues (see attached doc), corruption, climate change

3. Migration watch unit :

The Migration watch unit returned to several issues:

- The **criminalization of solidarity** towards migrants, especially with Sea Watch, who testified at the last session.
- **Detention of children in refugee camps**: combating violence against them and finding alternatives to detention.
- **The Dublin III law** that penalizes the countries of first reception

It is planned to bring in an exhibition on the situation of migrant women.

4. The Catholic INGOs at a Working Breakfast at the Holy See's Permanent Representation

Two points were addressed:

- A document for reflecting on the gender issue published by the Congregation for Catholic Education:
["He created them man and woman: for a path to dialogue on the gender issue in education."](#)
- The academic conference for the 50th anniversary of the Holy See's Permanent Representation at the Council of Europe: Cross-curricular Days will be organized on 7-8 January 2020 at the Palais Universitaire de Strasbourg "Building Europe together, 50 years of the Holy See at the Council of Europe."

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