



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

The Council of Europe Parliament's winter session was held in Strasbourg from 25 to 29 January 2016, as were meetings of the INGO Conference and its commissions and working groups. If the attacks in Paris were still on everyone's mind, and radicalization was at the core of the debate, several issues were prioritized during the session:

- Migration in Europe,
- Living together in inclusive societies,
- Education and diversity.

For MIAMSI this session enabled it to reaffirm its place as the INGOs focused on the defence of human rights, respect for people's dignity in all their dimensions and combating poverty (cf. MIAMSI statutes). A speech in the plenary session presented the results of the Pozzallo symposium and joint work with the various Council of Europe bodies on migration in the Mediterranean.

Some flashbacks on the reflections in the various committees, working groups and other meetings in Strasbourg in January 2016:

Human Rights Commission:

1. An exchange of views took place on new issues concerning health and human rights:
 - ✓ **Bioethics and Human Rights** (biobanks and HR): monitoring is needed
 - ✓ **Nanotechnologies and HR/a window on realities** such as circulating information to insurers, for example
2. News from the **Human Rights Steering Committee:**
 - ✓ **HR and businesses, HR in culturally diverse societies, ...**

The working groups where MIAMSI is involved:

- ***Extreme Poverty and Human Rights Group:*** if the specific theme for this year focuses on combating child poverty, we are invited to support the ratification of the Revised Social Charter in each of our countries.

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168007cf94>

- ***Anti-hate speech Group:*** revival of work especially concerning hate speech on the internet. Exchange of views with an important witness from Rwanda who lived through the Great Lakes drama and has developed the importance of vocabulary and various interpretations in triggering fratricidal wars.

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

In this group, it is a matter of investigating how best to enforce labour laws and Human Rights in European companies on the mainland and in overseas countries. This is definitely a way to reduce migration!

Culture and Education Commission:

The topic of the meeting **focused on the "digital media"**, even though the topics of youth radicalization and migration were discussed.

- Learning in the social network age disrupts knowledge acquisition habits and the transmission process,
- Learning by "flow" and not by "stock" causes a revolution in the very act of learning
- One expression was given in conclusion: the major objective is to **"learn to teach learners how to learn to learn together online, in networks."**

- ***Living together in Europe Group***: focuses on intercultural education

Such education covers not only the education system but above all education at the city, district and business levels and of course the media!

Then "Intercultural Cities" are mentioned. Probably to be watched closely.

<http://www.coe.int/fr/web/interculturalcities>

Democracy Commission:

The commission dealt mainly with three major issues:

1. **COP 21** and work on including the social dimension of the climate crisis in the conclusions (cf. put in the preamble). The issue of human rights was not developed in the initial drafts.
2. **Migration** with 4 actions: Open Letter from the Chair - conclusion of Pozzallo with MIAMSI presentation in the plenary session- testimony from a specialized NGO (CIMADE) - testimony from an Iraqi refugee woman.
3. The challenges of **health care** in Europe: the right to health is far from assured in Europe, there are huge disparities. Updating European standards is important.

- ***Europe and the Mediterranean Group***: three topics discussed

* The open letter from the Chair of the INGO Conference on migrant reception conditions

* The conclusions of the Pozzallo symposium.

* The situation in North Africa, especially in Tunisia

The INGO Conference

1. Two **major exchanges of views** were held with:

- Members of the **Committee of Ministers**, representatives of member states:
 - Cooperation with civil society is becoming increasingly important, it is essential, especially in these times of complex governance,
 - Vigilance on the right of association, migration, promotion and defence of the social charter is highlighted and encouraged,
 - Mutual exchanges of views are always to be strengthened and developed. Publicizing the Council of Europe's work is important and INGOs can foster this.
- The **Council of Europe's General Secretary**
 - Breaches of rights are increasing and few of them are reported, unfortunately! Civil society has its place in monitoring and denouncing them.
 - Human Rights are under real threat from people, collectives or even institutions. Concern is mounting and everyone must act to defend what has been achieved so far in terms of Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law.
 - In the face of terrorism and especially radicalism, it is urgent to establish inclusive societies. For that INGOs have an essential role, particularly through education.

2. **Adoption of the activity report**

- The chair, Ms Anna Rurka, visited Moldova and Bulgaria with a delegation from the conference. The defence of human rights promoters was raised.
- The Pozzallo symposium is mentioned on page 14 of the report

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016805937a3>

3. The next **World Democracy Congress** in November 2016 with the topic:
"**Living together - Inclusive Societies ...**"

The Christian INGO group (CINGO)

The various Christian INGOs accredited to the Council of Europe came together to share news on the **Paris attacks, youth radicalization and COP 21**.

A presentation of **Pope Francis's speech** to ambassadors to the Holy See was made by Bishop Rudelli, the Holy See's permanent representative in Strasbourg, in particular regarding **migration** in Europe.

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