



**Strasbourg**

Winter Session

**2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2020**



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



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

As a reminder, the Council of Europe has no authority in economic affairs but deals with human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

As such, it constantly reminds states of their obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter and many other more specialized charters or conventions they have signed. Reminders and remarks on this subject have been made to several states including Turkey and Hungary.

With regard to the activities of NGOs accredited to the Council of Europe during the Covid 19 pandemic, we can highlight several initiatives for which MIAMSI - Europe provided support or initiated (through the Migration Watch Unit).

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### **The INGO Conference**

The INGO Conference plenary session planned for 20 - 24 April 2020 did not meet, and neither did the other Council of Europe bodies.

Certain working topics were therefore tackled by videoconference and others were postponed for a few weeks or months as webinars.

The Standing Committee passed two important texts:

[Declaration on the responses to the pandemic by strengthening the fundamental rights and values on which the Council of Europe is build ,](#)

[The Appeal to the Hungarian Parliament to bring the legal recognition of gender into line with human rights standards.](#)

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

The work to prepare for the **World Day to Overcome Extreme Poverty** on 16 October 2020 is ongoing. MIAMSI remains involved. As a reminder, the topic of the upcoming day: "*Access to appropriate social services, a springboard from poverty and exclusion.*"

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### **Migration watch unit :**

The migration and refugee issue remains one of the priorities of the INGO Conference and the Council of Europe. During the months of lockdown, several initiatives may be noted :

- ✓ Support for the Expert Council on NGO Law which defined and published the **New Guidelines on the work proposal from NGOs supporting refugees and other migrants**:  
<https://www.coe.int/fr/web/ingo/-/new-guidelines-on-protecting-ngo-work-in-support-of-refugees-and-other-migrants>
- ✓ Writing a press release on the **prospects for refugees and migrants detained in camps** while lockdown is eased ?  
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/ingo/-/what-are-the-perspectives-for-refugees-and-migrants-locked-in-camps-in-the-deconfinement-period->
- ✓ Proposal for a half-day webinar :  

**Migrants and refugees faced with the pandemic - what lessons are there for the future ?**  
*During this pandemic, managing the migratory phenomenon has been revealing of the way in which people in migration are taken into account and protected, depending on the state and the context. The health emergency has created and magnified local, national and European tensions and the global situation is not in any way reducing such tensions.*  
*In this context, the INGO Conference will invite Mr Drahoslav Štefánek, the Council of Europe Secretary General's Special Representative for migration and refugees and specialized NGOs for a debate on two subjects: European solidarity so as to go beyond simple declarations of intent, and the protection of NGOs that support migrants and refugees.*

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

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The various Christian INGOs accredited to the Council of Europe have not met physically since January 2020 but have communicated regularly and shared each other's commitments. To note:

- On the initiative of Pax Christi France, supported by a dozen Christian INGOs including MIAMSI, a press release on **defending the European values of democracy and human rights**.  
<http://www.paxchristi.cef.fr/v2/temps-de-pandemie-defendons-valeurs-europeennesla-democratie-droits-de-lhomme/>
- The **visit** to the Council of Europe that **Cardinal Pietro Parolin**, the Holy See's Secretary of State, was to make in June has been postponed. He was to meet Catholic NGOs to encourage them in attending the Council of Europe and in the work they do in connection with the Holy See's Permanent Representation in Strasbourg.

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### **In upcoming weeks**

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- ✓ As the plenary session of the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organizations planned for 20 - 24 April 2020 was cancelled, two working days as a videoconference webinar have been scheduled for 22 - 23 June.  
 In addition to the migration and refugee issue (see above), three other topics have been chosen:
  - How to reduce inequalities and poverty throughout upcoming economic and ecological transitions ?
  - Covid 19 in the digital age - the effects on education issues
  - Future and role of the INGO Conference in new contexts.
- ✓ The MIAMSI - Europe representatives will share attendance at these virtual meetings as much as possible.

For members of the local Strasbourg team  
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