

Council of Europe
Activity Report (II 08)
Spring session 14-17th April 2008

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During the spring session ,one important issue was on the table.i.e **restructuration of the governing bodies** of the Conference of NGOs.It was felt that the whole Conference should meet to discuss the matter

Why a restructuration ?

The Council of Europe itself is reorganizing its own Committees and Divisions . The ten thematic groupings of the NGO Conference are closely working with these divisions.

Consequently to the former's reorganisation and due also to the participative status we have been granted in 2003,new demands are made on the NGOs, obliging them to revise their methods of work and to evidence more expertise.

The reorganisation aims at

- bringing more coherence ,
- increasing the political weight of the NGO Conference by streamlining and coordinating the political declarations made to the Parliamentary Assembly by the different groupings
- reaching a better coordination of activities of the thematic groupings and avoiding duplications.(Their number will be reduced .From ten ,the actual proposal is to reduce to six ,perhaps less and to change their status from informal groupings to the one of Committees as their counterparts in the COE.)

In summary the change shows as willingness "toward excellence"to assume responsibilities as a fourth pillar

The process of working on this reorganisation has been going on since two years, and the final decision will be made at the summer session in June 2008

Our affiliates can find all informations in the president's Annelise Oeschger paper (document of reference)and they are able to give also their comments on the COE discussion forum

Document title is

President :Annelise OESCHGER

Fundamental questions for restructuring the Conference of NGOs of the Council of Europe OING Conf(2008) INF1

Another important **event** of this spring session was the presentation of the draft for a **Chart of good conduct of the NGOs of the Council of Europe**.The working group led by Loic Tribot la Spiere has produced a document that was vehemently discussed.It will be finalized at a later session (UWE belongs to the drafting group)

Other happenings worth to be noted are:

-The grouping Droits de l'Homme discussed the future collaboration of the Council of Europe with the Social platform of the new **Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union** .Contacts have been made and a liaison group will be established to consider the mode of cooperation (. UWE will be part of his liaison working group)

-A very interesting afternoon was devoted to a meeting on the action of the INGO Conference in Armenia, Azerbaidjan, Georgia, Moldova, Federation of Russia , in Ukraine and Belarus with delegations from these countries.

-The event of the Conference of NGOs during the Slovakian presidency is a seminar in Slovakia Bratislava 24, 25 April with the Slovakian NGOs on the topic :**NGOs and Civil Society: Promoters of Democracy and active Citizenship**

The Parliamentary Commission on Equality between women and men presented a **report to the Parliamentary Assembly on Access to a safe and legal abortion.** It was adopted by the Assembly after a heated debate of 40 hours and with 70 amendments

The reporter insisted that it should never be considered as a substitute for family planning but for the protection of health of women who without these measures would resort to illegal and dangerous other means

A **campaign** had been launched by the Council of Europe to **Stop Violence against women, including domestic violence .**

The Committee on Equal opportunities for Women and men has produced a follow to Resolution 11582 (2007)“ *Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women*”

The Task Force presenting the result of the survey indicate the feasibility for a **Convention against domestic violence “prepared by the European Committee on Crime Problems(CPDC)**

COE is truly the house for Democracy and Human Rights including Women’s Rights.

The APCE had distinguished **guest speakers** during this session , Angela Merkel, the German Chancelor , Yioulia Timichenko, the lady prime minister of Ukraine and Bernard Kouchner , the French Minister for foreign Affairs, former founder of international humanitarian association, the “French Doctors”

The summer session for NGOs will be from the 23 to 26th june