

Council of Europe  
Spring Session of the INGO Conference  
Strasbourg 26 -28 April 2009  
by Renée Gérard

Here are some flashes:

**I did attend :**

- **Committee on Civil Society and Democracy**
- **Committee on Human Rights**
- **Committee on Sustainable territorial development where I had been asked to report on the events “ “ that took place at the UNCSW New York in march on Gendering negotiations on Climate Change**
- **two meetings of the Parliamentary Commission on Equality between women and men**
- **the working group on Human rights( each Commission is supposed to have subgroups and I belong to this one as well as to a subgroup on higher education (that did not meet)**

We both attended the general co-assembly of NGOs ( with the new structure there is a general INGO assembly at each session(before it was only once a year in January

**Synopsis of the session :**

**Participative democracy:**

The draft of **the Code of good practices for Civil society participation in the decision making** was approved by the general assembly. It will be submitted to the Council of Ministers and to the PACE .This Code aims to establish rules regarding the cooperation between Civil Society and governments institution.

**Human Rights:**

The Committee on Human Rights had an excellent presentation by François Becker on the different facets of Human Rights. To enlist full participation of the NGOs 4 working groups are constituted but more can be envisaged. I enlisted in two subgroups: Women and human rights and Human rights and secularism.

**Expert Council on the NGO Law**

The group of experts gave its 1<sup>st</sup> report and recommendation 2007 to the Council of Ministers

**Medias , a new notion of media .**

The president of the Human Rights committee G. Nissim indicated that a ministerial Conference on the subject is held in Reykjavik (Iceland) 28 and 29 May .The Conference of INGOs is invited to participate. To prepare the Conference ,a seminar is will be held in Paris on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

**The FORUM on The FUTURE of DEMOCRACY** will be held in Kiev ( Federation of Russia) 21-23 October on the Electoral system. The governments invited the Conference of INGOs to participate and calls for participation are sent (applications before 15<sup>th</sup> of June. The Code of Good practices for Civil society participation in decision making will be presented at the Forum.

### **Sustainable territorial development Committee**

A debate on “Citizen participation in sustainable development “was organized with a panel of four high level specialists presenting different angles of democratic participation, in the CoE, in the Committee of the Regions, in an exemplary municipal experience in the participation of civil society in European and rural environment (Luxembourg) and in an innovative experience of a regional advisory board on environment.

The sustainable development committee will function with the other committees on cross cutting issues especially (education and SD, Health and SD, Human Rights and SD, Women and SD (on this last point I was asked to speak on events at the CSW New York (March) on **gendering negotiations on Climate Change.**

**The next session of the Conference of INGO is on 22-25 June 2009**