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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

## *Democracy, Social Cohesion and Global Challenges Committee*

### Working group: Gender perspectives in Political and Democratic Processes

14TH FEBRUARY 2018

DEAR MEMBERS.

The Working Group **Gender Perspectives in Political and Democratic Processes** thanks its existence to the timely submission of an Action plan to the Standing Committee in October 2017.

The WG was mentioned specifically in the 2018-2020 Roadmap of the Committee on Democracy, Social Cohesion, Global Challenges.

On the basis of the decisions taken by the Working Group's official meeting in June 2017 the present Action plan was written by Heleen Jansen and Anje Wiersinga, at the moment they were informed that this was necessary for the WG to be officially recognised. Anje Wiersinga submitted this Action plan to the Standing Committee in October 2017.

In June 2017, in view of the Standing Committee's decision that all working groups should start anew, the then existing Working Group discussed the future of the working group and decided which subjects, which priorities should be included in its work.

The minutes of the June 2017 WG meeting state, that the working group decides to stay as one group, with perhaps thematic groups within the larger group. **Gender mainstreaming** was named as one of the main priorities, with a gender rapporteur in each INGO Conference Committee and working group. This way it could be ensured that the work of each committee has a gender perspective.

The WG also decided to continue working on UN C Res. 1325 as a follow up on INGO Conference Resolutions and Recommendations, including the organisation of the side event, for which preparatory work already started in March/April 2017.

On 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017 Anne Nègre and Thierry Mathieu met with Anje and informed her that after a long discussion the Standing Committee had agreed to the establishment of the Working Group "**Gender perspectives in Democratic Processes**" and also to its action plan, including the Working Group's proposed side event. Anne Nègre confirmed this in an e-mail dated 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and proposed Heleen Jansen as Coordinator and Anje Wiersinga as Deputy Coordinator. They both agreed to chair the WG.

The 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017 minutes of the Standing Committee mentions the decision to hold the proposed side event (albeit with a wrong title) and that it was decided "to apply the '**Gender mainstreaming**' approach to three cross-sectoral lines of action: gender equality, youth and migration . That meant that the Conference should take account of this dimension in all of its activities and all of the issues it addressed."

In the new INGO Conference Strategy adopted in January 2018, the Working Group has been placed within the "Participation in Political Decision-making" group under the INGO Democracy, Social Cohesion, Global Challenges Committee

In view of those decisions one of the objectives of the Action Plan of the Working Group Gender Perspectives in Political and Democratic Processes will remain "Gender Mainstreaming in all policies and measures a.o. in

INGO Conference work”; this is consistent with the expected results : “Inclusion of gender perspectives in the work of the CoE, the four pillars, reports, resolutions, recommendations”

### **The Freely Constituted Equality Group**

The status of this group, that has lead to discussion and questions. Bettina raised this again in here email from 2 February.

In fact this ‘Freely Constituted Equality Group has existed for some time next to the -Working Group Gender Perspectives in Political and democratic Processes. It had the task “to ensure that equality is included in all the INGO Conference work” , as was agreed on in 2011 by the INGO Conference on the proposal of the Standing Committee. In short it meant **to ensure Gender mainstreaming**. The group has never been placed under one of the INGO Committees and this has lead to a lot of misunderstanding. It cooperated with the official WG **Gender Perspectives in Political and Democratic Processes**, which was an official WG under the INGO Co of Democracy, Social Cohesion, Global Challenges. In June 2017 it was decided by the WG that in the new structure of the INGO Conference they should continue as one WG **Gender Perspectives in Political and democratic Processes** under the committee of Thierry Mathieu and includes **Gender mainstreaming** in the Action plan . The FCEG does not exist anymore. Its objective – Gender mainstreaming – has been included into the work of the new WG **Gender Perspectives in Political and Democratic Processes**.

### **THE TASKFORCE**

This taskforce was brought up by Anne Nègre in the meeting of the INGO Working group Genderperspectives in Political and Democratic Processes on 25th January 2018 as follows.

1. Anne Nègre suggested a special field taskforce, separate from the Working group Genderperspectives in Political and Democratic Processes as part of the board.
2. A taskforce alert on a specific issue which needs a clear statement.
3. Anne Nègre said “we should define the difference more precisely”

Undersigned have often expressed their concern that due to the biannual meetings of the INGO Conference it was difficult to react formally to urgent situations in between those meetings.

Undersigned agree that taskforce as proposed could fulfil such a need for immediate reactions on acute situations. Therefore clear guidelines are needed: such as on behalf of whom statements are issued, keeping in mind that 350 International ORGANISTIONS are represented in the Conference.

We will place this subject on the next agenda. In the meantime reactions are welcome.

Anje Wiersinga

Heleen Jansen