



Terms of reference of a Committee - proposal form

Mis à jour 19-3-2021

INGOs wishing to propose the creation of a committee to the Conference of INGOs are invited to transmit the following information, together with the requested documents, no later than 21 March to NGO-Unit@coe.int

1. Proposed Title

Committee for the interreligious & interconvictional dialogue

2. Background and links with the priorities of the Conference of INGOs and the Council of Europe (please indicate also the specific documents / legal / institutional instruments you wish to refer to) (500 words max)

Interfaith dialogue in the CoE:

- **Committee of Ministers:** *Whitepaper on Intercultural dialogue*; CM(2008)30
https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper_final_revised_en.pdf
- **Committee of Ministers:** 2008 – 2017 Council of Europe Exchanges on the Religious dimension of intercultural dialogue www.coe.int/en/web/cm/exchanges
- **Parliamentary Assembly:** *Freedom of religion and living together in a democratic society*; REC 2080(2015); "...3.1: set up a stable and officially recognised **platform** for dialogue with religions <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/22200>

Conference of INGO, religions, interfaith

- **Plenary Session:** Recommendation adopted on 27 June 2013 CONF/PLE(2013)REC4 *Human Rights and Religions*
<https://rm.coe.int/09000016802f0434>
Appeal adopted by the Conference of INGOs on 30 January 2014 CONF/PLE(2014)APP1 *Human Rights and Religions*
<https://rm.coe.int/09000016802f043c>
- **Side event 21st June 2016:** Are religions a place of emancipation for women? Progress & setbacks www.buddhistwomen.eu/EN/index.php/Texts/StrasbourgCouncil2016
- **Compilation of texts:** *Human Rights and Religion. Recommendation, Invitation and Appeal.* <https://rm.coe.int/16806f546c>
- **Education and Culture Standing Committee:** *The Religious Dimension of Intercultural Dialogue*; 2015
<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168030654c>
- **Education and Culture Standing Committee:** CONF/EDUC(2015)SYN2; *Organisation and presentations of a transversal training of the Conference: For an Inclusive Europe. Learning to live together with our different convictions*; 2015
<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168058f500>
- **Education and Culture Committee:** *Educating on intercultural dialogue – living together in Europe*; June 2017
<https://rm.coe.int/intercultural-dialogue-wg-report/168076c3e1>

- **Mandate and role of the Special Representative on Antisemitic, Anti-Muslim and other forms of religious intolerance and hate crimes**
“... raise awareness and visibility by actively communicating the Organisation’s work and the Secretary General’s priorities to governments, relevant international organisations, religious organisations in the member states, political leaders, influencers and the general public, and enhance the Council of Europe’s regular dialogue with the above-mentioned stakeholders by working closely with all relevant structures within the Organisation...”
<https://rm.coe.int/07102020-mandate-srsg-on-antisemitic-and-anti-muslim-hatred-and-hate-c/16809fdc58>

Others:

EU-Treaty of Lisbon:

- 2007 Treaty of Lisbon, “enshrines in primary law (Art. 17 TFEU) a structural dialogue between the EU and its religions, churches and non-confessional organisations”.

The Intercultural cities programme (ICC)

- Supports cities in reviewing their policies through an intercultural lens
- Developing comprehensive intercultural strategies to help cities manage diversity positively and realise the diversity advantage, 143 Cities are participating active or are registered: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/list-of-participating-cities>
- Thematic initiatives: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/thematic-initiatives>
- Good practices: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/good-practice>
- Example: Work based on the ICC-Network report: “Tackling Prejudice and Engaging with Religious Minorities, How Cities Can Make a Difference with an Intercultural Approach – <https://rm.coe.int/16806c84db>
- Valuing religious Communities as key actors of social cohesion. Handbook for Local Authorities: www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/the-cities-of-reggio-emilia-and-novellara-italy-release-a-handbook-addressed-to-public-administrations-on-interreligious-dialogue-actions

Competences for a democratic culture

- Project of the Education department with an accent on intercultural dialog
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/about-the-project-competences-for-democratic-culture-and-intercultural-dialogue>

ICC- International Network

- The ICC programme enables network exchanges between **cities**, fosters the testing of new methodologies and stimulates policy innovation.
- Inspired by the ICC Programme of the CoE, the Intercultural **Regions Network** aims to provide a platform for regions to share knowledge, resources and experiences to promote intercultural integration at regional level: <https://aer.eu/interculturalregions/>

Another proposal for action: European Charter for Interconvictionality

- **A European Charter on Interconvictionality** could be both a theoretical and operational support for this concept. Once such a Charter has been drafted and ratified, each institution concerned should be invited to implement it.
- **Elaborated by G3I** (Groupe international, intercultural et interconvictionnel) (François Becker, Michel Aguilar and others...)
- Website: <http://joomla.g3i.eu/2016-05-23-16-27-06/actualites/47-charte-europeenne-de-l-interconvictionnalite>

3. Committee’s purpose(s) - Big frame work

Actively developed since 2008, within the Council of Europe, the official intercultural dialogue and in particular its religious dimension seems less significant since 2017 despite the REC 2080 and European legislation (Lisbon Treaty).

Yet discrimination, hate crimes, anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim and all forms of intolerance based on religion or belief and conspirational theories are unfortunately on the rise.

The Committee intends to study the causes and seek preventive measures and ways of making them accessible to citizens. To this end, a platform for interfaith dialogue should be established, useful methods should be collected (e.g. toolkit), co-operation with ICCs should be explored and extended, and co-ordination between INGOs based on religious or philosophic inspiration should be established.

1. Interreligious and interconvictional dialogue against hatred, for a better knowledge of the religion or belief of the other to lead to mutual understanding and to foster social cohesion.
2. For the promotion of living together ...
3. Diversity is a chance and not a potential conflict source.
4. Living together without fear as equals in diversity.
5. **Mutual understanding through education on religions & beliefs**
Teaching about religions and schools of thought in schools and universities, and through formal and non-formal education (trainings by INGOs), stressing the importance of inter-religious and/or dialogical education to promote tolerance, understanding and esteem for the religious and/or convictional "other(s)". Education has to promote reflection and critical thinking among learners to ensure a sufficient level of scientific literacy to act as a concerned and responsible citizen, to fight lies and conspiracy theories in the society.
6. Gender issues in the inter religious and interconvictional dialogue / discriminations within the interreligious/interconvictional context
7. Promote social cohesion, while working transversally within the CoE.
8. Religions and faith groups or INGOs must oppose the amalgamation of politics and religion.

4. Its specific objective(s) What you really want to achieve:

1. To contribute to the **development of a platform of interreligious, interconvictional and philosophical dialogue in the CoE**, in the light of the PACE REC 2080 (2015) Freedom of Religion and living together in a democratic society.
2. Building on the contact already established with the project manager of the ICC, the committee wishes to develop good practices and a toolkit on Inter religious and interconvictional dialogue for local authorities and Intercultural Cities, such as:
 - "Valuing religious communities as key actors of social cohesion" (Handbook of local authorities, <http://www.congress-intercultural.eu/en/>)
 - The European Charter for Interconvictional Dialogue from G3i
 - Research on other value charters developed by European cities, with analysis of the materials (Common ground, diversity)
 - Gathering valuable practices in interreligious Dialogue, analysis of possibilities and limitations of religion-related dialogue – what can religions contribute for social cohesion and world peace.
3. The **European Charter of Interconvictionality** – check how this charter could be integrated in the work of the ICC and in the European context.
4. Developing work tools against hate crime in link with religions, faith based and philosophical inspired groups to be addressed in line with the work of ECRI and the Special Representative on Antisemitic and Anti-Muslim Hatred and Hate Crimes of the CoE.
5. Focus on socially engaged religions, faith based and philosophical inspired INGOs. What are their strengths, in which areas do they need support. How and in which areas can cooperation among them be encouraged and how can they interact with intercultural cities?
6. Setting up training courses such as "Learning to live better together with our different convictions" (carried out between 2015 and 2018 by GERFEC & G3i). Take the Wergeland centre as an example, or "Wertebildung of the City of Hamburg" (Living together - advocating basic rights - designing society), and others and possibly offer them to the cultural cities Academy.
7. Research on the causes of Gender-based discriminations, anxiety and violence in religions faith based and philosophical inspired INGOs as well as of good practices to their prevention also based on the Istanbul Convention.

5. Planned activities, working methods and timetable

Creating 2 sub-working groups concerning:

1. **Dialogue platform** between religions, faith based or philosophical inspired groups for developing tools to enable communities and political authorities to heal wounds of the past and to prevent all other forms of religious intolerance and hate crime which are for example antisemitic or anti-Muslim.
 - See joined planning.
2. **Developing dialogue tools for local & regional authorities, Intercultural cities and other institutions:** develop good practices of interreligious and interconvictional dialogue. Develop a toolkit to be offered to local and regional authorities to promote its implementation, more particularly in ICC. This work will be carried out in conjunction with the manual
 - See joined planning.

6. Expected outputs and their indicators

- **Toolkit(s) for inter religious and interconvictional dialogue**
- **Platform of inter religious and interconvictional dialogue**
- **Setting up training courses for inter religious and interconvictional dialogue**
- **Establishment of observation and research programs in neighborhood centers and schools on the implications of religions and beliefs, both in behavior and in educational activities and the content taught**

7. Names, contact details, expertise and experiences of the Heads of the INGO delegations supporting the creation of the Committee (at least 5)

1. CEC-KEK - Sören Lenz
2. EBU – Gabriela Frey
3. EN-RE – Hugo Castelli
4. ICCS – James Barnett
5. IRSE – Sabine Rohmann
6. MIAMSI – Daniel Guery
7. Justice & Paix Europe - Jean-Bernard MARIE
8. OIEC - Bernard Senelle

8. Names, contact details, expertise and experiences of the delegates who will take part in the Committee (at least 7)

1. Sören Lenz - CEC
2. Gabriela Frey – EBU
3. Dr. Carola Roloff – EBU
4. James Barnett - ICCS
5. Hugo Castelli - EN-RE
6. Lilia Bensedrine - IRSE
7. Jean-Michel Strub – MIAMSI
8. Jean-François Bour – Justice & Paix Europe
9. Salomon Levy - ICBB
10. Pierre Dussere – OIEC
11. Hiba LATRECHE - FEMYSO

9. Chairperson of the Committee proposed for election by the Conference of INGOs

Double-Leadership: Sören Lenz (CEC) / Gabriela Frey (EBU)

Rapporteur: James Barnett / Lilia Bensedrine / Jean-François Bourg

10. As an attachment, you are requested to present the expertise and experience of the candidate for the position of Chairperson of this committee, in relation to the subject matter of the committee, as well as the expertise and experience of the Heads of the delegations supporting the creation of this committee

Extract from the [Rules of Procedure of the Conference of INGOs](#))

Rules that apply for the creation and functioning of a Committee, the validation of its mandate and of reporting and the election of the Chairperson of the Committee by the Conference of INGOs

«61. Committees shall be established by the General Assembly on a proposal from the Standing Committee or from 5 Heads of Delegation to: (a) provide a focus for discussion and research on a particular issue relevant to the work of Council of Europe bodies; and (b) prepare reports on their findings together with, where appropriate, draft declarations, recommendations and resolutions for its consideration.

62. In deciding to establish a Committee, the General Assembly shall have regard to:
(a) the relevance of the proposed issue to be examined for the threeyear Strategic Plan adopted by the General Assembly and for work being undertaken, or that ought to be undertaken, by Council of Europe bodies;
(b) the availability of sufficient expertise, whether amongst Delegates or that can otherwise be called upon;
(c) the need to avoid overlap with an issue that is being addressed by an existing Committee;
(d) the willingness of at least 7 Delegates to participate in it; and
(e) the possibility of accommodating meetings of the proposed Committee in the schedules of forthcoming Sessions of the Conference.

63. The General Assembly when establishing a Committee shall specify its terms of reference and the duration of its operation. It shall then invite applications/proposals for the Chair, who shall be elected on a show of voting cards where the Session is held in Strasbourg and/or through use of voting passwords for each Session held through videoconferencing. Only Articles 100, 120 and 122 shall apply to the election of Chairs of Committees.

64. The duration of a Committee shall normally be limited to two years but, where a real need has been demonstrated, may be extended by the General Assembly for a third year.

65. Committee meetings shall be open to all Delegates and to persons invited by the Chair or the Standing Committee to take part in them. Those attending shall provide the Rapporteur with their email address for distribution of notes of meetings and draft reports.

66. Each Committee shall choose its Rapporteur at its first meeting

67. In the event of a Chair not being able to continue in this role, a replacement shall be appointed by the Standing Committee. In the event of a Rapporteur not being able to continue in this role, a replacement shall be appointed by the Committee at the first opportunity to do so.

68. The Chair of a Committee shall be responsible for:
(a) chairing its meetings;
(b) preparing its agenda in consultation with the Rapporteur and ensuring that this is sent to INGOs in accordance with Article 6;

- (c) circulating notes of meetings and draft reports;*
- (d) inviting persons other than Delegates to participate in its meetings;*
- (e) liaising with any Delegate appointed by the Standing Committee to represent the Conference on a Steering Committee or other body within the Council of Europe whose remit is relevant to the issue being examined;*
- (f) presenting its reports submitted to the General Assembly;*
- (g) submitting a request for any extension of the Committee duration; and*
- (h) submitting interim and final reports for consideration by the General Assembly.*

69. *The Rapporteur shall be responsible for:*

- (a) suggesting points to be included in the agenda;*
- (b) preparing briefings for discussion at meetings;*
- (c) preparing notes of meetings;*
- (d) preparing interim and final reports; and*
- (e) deputising for the Chair in his or her absence*

70. *Outside of Conference Sessions, meetings of Committees may be held in Strasbourg or elsewhere and also through videoconferencing arrangements determined by the Standing Committee.*

71. *Each Committee shall submit: (a) an interim report on its activities for consideration at the General Assembly occurring a year after its creation; and (b) a final report on its findings, together with any draft recommendation or resolution considered appropriate, for consideration at the General Assembly held prior to the end of its mandate."»*