

For debate in the Standing Committee — see Rule 15 of the Rules of Procedure

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## **Co-operation between the Assembly and the Conference of INGOs**

Report  
Political Affairs Committee  
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### *Summary*

During the last few years, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), have gained importance by achieving visibility around the world. Networks between INGOs have been created in and between countries aiming to promote a large and more transnational defense of public interests affecting world problems

The Council of Europe has been a pioneer in developing constantly civil society representation as an expression of democratic pluralism of a Europe close to its citizens. INGOs have developed their role within the Council of Europe to the point where they are now recognised as being one of the four principal pillars, alongside the Committee of Minister, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of local and regional authorities. Therefore, they have an important role to play in the activities of the Council of Europe as well as in its development of democracy.

Although INGOs often work in the same sphere as elected politicians, their ability to influence political change is limited, being faced by politicians who question their legitimacy and representativeness and who regard some of their interventions as a competition for parliamentary representation.

As a common view, civil society participation does not substitute democratic institutions but contributes to the vitality of democracy insofar as INGO's raise awareness of points of common interests.

## A. Draft Resolution

1. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls its long-standing support for civil society organisations as key players in the new international context. These civil society organisations, and particularly international non-governmental organisations (hereafter INGOs), are becoming increasingly significant in policy and decision-making processes in pluralist democracies.
2. Since 1949, the Assembly has co-operated closely with NGOs engaged in promoting European integration, in defending and developing human rights and fundamental freedoms, in promoting and assisting democratic transition and good governance as well as in the Assembly's other fields of action.
3. The Assembly notes with satisfaction that co-operation with a number of INGOs has brought undeniable added value to the work of the Assembly and its committees.
4. The Assembly has always taken a keen interest in establishing fair principles and efficient rules governing the relations with INGOs and was instrumental in the granting and implementation of a new participatory INGOs status with the Council of Europe.
5. The Assembly welcomes the fact that the Third Council of Europe Summit (Warsaw, 16 and 17 May 2005) in its Action Plan decided to "*enhance the participation of NGOs in COE activities as an essential element of civil society's contribution to the transparency and accountability of democratic government*".
6. The Assembly takes pride in the pioneering role of the Council of Europe in constantly developing civil society representation through a "Quadrilogue", as an expression of democratic pluralism of a Europe close to its people.
7. The Assembly welcomes the active support of the Conference of INGOs in strengthening INGOs and civil society in Council of Europe member states aimed at promoting Council of Europe core principles and values.
8. The Assembly recognises and underscores the role played by INGOs as key partners in raising awareness and contributing to the signature, ratification and implementation of certain Council of Europe Conventions, as well as to the development of new standard-setting instruments.
9. The Assembly notes with satisfaction that the work programme of the Conference of INGOs contains several major themes which are closely related to the priorities of the Assembly. On this basis, it is convinced that additional steps should be taken with a view to an enhanced co-operation aimed at further developing citizen participation and dialogue with civil society.
10. The Assembly intends therefore to intensify its co-operation with representative and proactive INGOs and in particular, with the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe.
11. Consequently, the Assembly:
  - 11.1. invites the Bureau of the Assembly to:
    - 11.1.1. consider the setting-up of a platform with INGOs for exchanging information, experiences and know-how on the development of certain issues, policies and co-operation with a view to fostering dialogue between parliamentarians and INGOs;
    - 11.1.2. consider holding an exchange of views, on an annual basis, with the President of the Conference of INGOs and the presidents of the different thematic groups of the Conference;
    - 11.1.3. consider the possibility of inviting the President of the Conference of INGOs to address Assembly or the Standing Committee in the framework of relevant debates;
  - 11.2. encourages its committees to organise, in the framework of the above-mentioned platform, multidisciplinary hearings bringing together parliamentarians and INGOs on topical questions on the work programmes;
  - 11.3. decides to explore further co-operation with specialised INGOs during election observation missions, with a view of promoting an enhanced exchange and co-ordination of information;

11.4. underlines the need to enhance the information flow between the Conference of INGOs and the Assembly and asks the Bureau to lay down guidelines to this effect.

12. The Assembly invites the Conference of INGOs, with the support of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), to establish a code of good practices for civil participation including internal democratic accountability.

13. The Assembly invites the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to further enhance its co-operation with the Conference of INGOs.

**B. Draft Recommendation**

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its Resolution... (2007) on Co-operation between the Assembly and the Conference of INGOs.
2. The Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to:
  - 2.1. encourage those member states, which have not yet done so, to ratify the European Convention on the recognition of the legal personality of international non-governmental organisation (ETS N.124), opened for signature in 1986.
  - 2.2. adopt the draft recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the legal status of non-governmental organisations in Europe.
  - 2.3. promote the harmonisation of the "*Fundamental principles on the status of non-governmental organisations in Europe*", approved in July 2002 by a Council of Europe group of experts, which constitute a vital complement to Convention N° 124, and to consider transforming this text into a legal instrument of the Council of Europe.
3. The Assembly invites member states holding the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to encourage active participation of key national NGOs at meetings of the Standing Committee they host in their countries.

## C. Explanatory memorandum, by Mr Biberaj, rapporteur

### I. Introduction

1. As a common approach "civil society organisations" (CSOs), have come to be key words in the new international context. During the last few years, CSOs, and more specifically international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), have gained importance by achieving visibility and diversification around the world. The presence of these societies has increased in correlation with the weakening of the authority of states that are under the effect of globalisation and the ever more powerful transnational enterprises. Networks between CSOs have been created in and between countries aiming to promote a large and more transnational defence of public interests affecting world problems. In addition, the growing public will to participate in policies and processes which directly concern them and the more and more demanding requirement of transparency gives more importance to the work of CSOs.

2. The Council of Europe is the only international organisation to have granted **participatory status** to INGOs; approximately 400 organisations that previously held consultative status<sup>1</sup>. By decision of the Committee of Ministers<sup>2</sup>, and following consultation between the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Plenary Conference of INGOs, the new status took effect as from November 2003.

3. Since then, INGOs have participated in some of PACE hearings, conferences and committee meetings. However, democratising policy involves more than participation in meetings. It requires, on one hand, a real lobby policy from INGOs in order to exploit their interests. On the other hand, although INGOs are representatives of "public conscience", they do not currently have, in practice, the desired support. The support of political and governmental authorities becomes therefore an essential factor in their participation and impact.

4. Co-operation between parliamentary democracy and civil society organisations must be approached within the context of complementarity. To what extent does this co-operation between PACE and INGOs represent a challenge to existing practices of policy-making? Furthermore, to what extent does this co-operation allow INGOs to influence or define the PACE agenda? Finally, to what extent are INGOs instrumental in the spreading and implementation of Council of Europe values?

### II. Citizen participation in Parliamentary democracy

#### *i Parliamentary sovereignty vs. citizen participation*

5. The organisations of civil society, especially those that focus on issues that most concern citizens, are becoming of increasing significance to policy making. Governments and parliaments can have a significant role in creating opportunities for engaging and encouraging participation.

6. The Council of Europe has always been involved in encouraging participation of civil society insofar as its activities have explored the opportunities for stimulating political participation. The Council of Europe has sought to involve the organisation of civil society more directly in its activities, by defining a legal status for INGOs<sup>3</sup> and later by developing participatory<sup>4</sup> and partnership<sup>5</sup> status for a range of INGOs. These INGOs have developed their role within the Council of Europe to the point where they are now recognised as being one of the four principal pillars of the Council of Europe, alongside the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of local and regional authorities. These CSO, therefore, have an important role to play in the activities of the Council of Europe as well as in its development of democracy.

7. Regardless of the participation of citizens through elections, the participation of citizens in democratic life has increased over recent years. In this respect, the Council of Europe has participated by introducing a number of instruments that seek to promote this direct participation of citizens through

<sup>1</sup> Which was introduced in 1952.

<sup>2</sup> Committee of Ministers Resolution (2003) 8 Participatory status for international non-governmental organisations with the Council of Europe.

<sup>3</sup> European Convention on the Recognition of the Legal personality of INGOs, ETS 124 (1986).

<sup>4</sup> Vid supra 2.

<sup>5</sup> Committee of Ministers Resolution (2003) 9 Status of partnership between the Council of Europe and national non-governmental organisations.

Assembly resolutions aimed, for example, at how member states can enhance participation opportunities through consultations and engagement exercises<sup>6</sup>.

8. The problem active CSOs are currently faced with is the balance between a direct *versus* representative models of democracy. This dilemma requires a balance between citizen participation, on one side, and the exercise of traditional parliamentary democracy, on the other.

9. The Council of Europe advocates the formal structure of democracy that consists of a separation of powers. National Parliaments are the proper location for sovereign power and they act as centres for political debate and deliberation. However, their relationship with other ways of involving citizens in the policy-making process, beyond voting in periodic elections, needs to be more developed.

10. In this respect, the Council of Europe is trying to find new ways of engaging groups around particular policy areas. For example, the Committee of Ministers has promoted the involvement of citizens in the decision-making process affecting health care<sup>7</sup>. Other instruments have encouraged special measures to enhance the participation of the elderly and young people<sup>8</sup>. These initiatives not only seek to promote new ways of political participation, but they also seek to enhance the political efficacy of particular groups that are marginalised from conventional politics or from influence in relation to particular policy areas. In doing so, these initiatives are seeking to enhance the political power of particular groups. In a certain way because of these initiatives the expression of participatory democracy and citizen participation needs to be redefined.

11. As a common view, civil society participation does not substitute democratic institutions but contributes to the general atmosphere, democratic political culture and the vitality of democracy insofar as INGO's raise awareness of points of common interests.

*ii. INGOs as agent of change: a threat?*

12. The Council of Europe was set up to defend Human Rights, democracy and the rule of law. The right of citizens to form associations to pursue a common purpose is a fundamental freedom in a democracy. Belonging to an association provides an opportunity for citizens to participate actively in new ways other than political parties. INGOs are increasingly being recognised as a significant component of civil society and provide support for a democratic system of government. Governments and international organisations involve INGOs in the policy and decision-making process.

13. Some INGOs have an ability to reach the poorest and most disadvantaged and to provide a voice for those not sufficiently heard through other channels. INGOs can provide expert input for European policy-making. In particular, they can provide feedback on the follow-up and outcome of specific policies.

14. INGOs often work in the same sphere as elected politicians and often to very good effect. However, INGOs' ability to influence political change is limited, being faced by politicians who have questioned their legitimacy and representativeness and who regard some of their interventions as a competition for parliamentary representation. So, are INGOs effective in changing policy? This is where we see the difference between the political process and consultation with civil society. Civil society can and does influence the political process but it can only do so when political parties are themselves convinced by the arguments put forward by civil society. That is to say that civil society, or INGOs themselves, have no direct part in the political process, but rather act as an intermediary of information between citizens and authorities.

15. Instead of being seen as a threat, INGOs have to be seen as carriers of social dialogue complementary to political dialogue. CSOs are working to build such a dialogue, but they can only succeed with the support of State institutions, for which change is sometimes difficult to accommodate. A structured civil dialogue would clearly guarantee a role for civil society within a system of participatory democracy and would help to reinvigorate the political system.

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<sup>6</sup> Assembly Resolution 980 (1992) on citizen's participation in politics; Assembly Resolution 1121 (1997) on instruments of citizen participation in representative democracy.

<sup>7</sup> Recommendation R (2000) 5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the development of structures for citizen and patient participation in the decision-making process affecting health care.

<sup>8</sup> Assembly Recommendations 1428 (1999) on the future of senior citizens: protection, participation and promotion.

### III. Democratic synergy: Conference of INGOs and PACE

#### i. Conference of INGOs

16. For the last 50 years, the involvement of INGOs in the political landscape has changed tremendously. The role of the representation of civil society has developed from purely local and national action into an influential role in international decision-making.

17. The Council of Europe has been a pioneer in constantly developing civil society representation through a *Quadrilogue*<sup>9</sup>, as an expression of democratic pluralism of a Europe close to its citizens. At the Warsaw Summit<sup>10</sup> the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe member States decided to “*enhance the participation of NGOs in COE activities as an essential element of civil society’s contribution to the transparency and accountability of democratic government*”<sup>11</sup>. The INGOs had created their own Liaison Committee, 10 thematic groupings and, since January 2005, are represented at the Council of Europe by the Conference of INGOs. Over the years, INGOs enjoying participatory status and the connected structures have been actively participating in intergovernmental work and parliamentary hearings. This active participation enshrined in a Committee of Ministers Resolution<sup>12</sup> which enables the Conference of INGOs to take part in meetings of governmental committees and subordinate bodies as a “participant”, enjoying the same status as representatives of the Assembly, Congress and the Commissioner for Human Rights.

18. Since INGOs have been enjoying participatory status to the Council of Europe, the involvement of INGOs in intergovernmental and parliamentary activities has progressively increased. Their participation in some Council of Europe’s spheres is quite substantial, such as: social affairs, education, youth, immigration, gender equality, etc. These are fields where INGOs have nowadays become progressively more recognised and dominant. The Council of Europe is aware that decision-makers are taking notice of INGOs by involving them in policy and decision-making. But, is this true when speaking more specifically about PACE?

19. The Rules of procedure of the Assembly<sup>13</sup> establish that “each committee **may develop** relations with NGO which carry out activities within the committee’s terms of reference”. This is completed by Appendix A of Resolution 1425 (2005)<sup>14</sup> where “committees (...) **are responsible for developing working relations** with the European and INGOs which carry out activities within these committees’ specific terms of reference (...)”.

20. These quotations indicate the willingness of PACE to co-operate with NGOs but no explicit reference is given to the Conference of INGOs, the thematic groupings within the Conference of INGOs or to those NGOs enjoying participatory status with the Council of Europe.

21. In this respect, and in order to give a coherent view of the whole system within the Council of Europe, it would be more desirable if the rules of procedure of the Assembly were more explicit and pointed out the possibility of committees developing privileged working relations with INGOs that enjoy participatory status with the Council of Europe as well as with the Conference of INGOs.

#### iii Current PACE’s work with INGOs

22. Although practically all Assembly committees have an open policy of constructive co-operation with INGOs on matters of joint interest, it should be noted that out of the 393 INGOs having participatory status with the Council of Europe only a few of them are really active in PACE’s work. Very careful consideration should, therefore, be given to the necessity of having such a large number of INGOs if their participation is limited to just a simple “physical presence” in a few activities. Indeed, some Assembly committees co-operate with NGOs without participatory status at the Council of Europe, because their input and contribution to the committee’s work is much more fluent, dynamic and enriching. This fact calls for a more elaborated study on the extent to which INGOs with participatory status contribute to PACE work.

23. The list of INGOs enjoying participatory status with the Council of Europe and having regular contacts with Assembly committees is reproduced in the Appendix.

<sup>9</sup> Four sided dialogue and co-operation between the INGOs, the Committee of Ministers and its subsidiary bodies, as well as PACE and the Congress.

<sup>10</sup> 15-16 May 2005.

<sup>11</sup> CM (2005)80 final.

<sup>12</sup> CM Resolution (2005) 47 on committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

<sup>13</sup> Art. 44.5 of the Rules of procedure.

<sup>14</sup> Assembly Resolution 1425 (2005), Revision of the terms of reference of Assembly committees.

24. Regardless of the fact that some committees could continue developing their relations with national/local NGOs, and given that these relations are necessary for the specific aspect that the committee is dealing with, the question to be considered is the possibility of creating a specific status based upon appropriate criteria for NGOs with the Parliamentary Assembly in order to enhance direct contact and co-operation with them<sup>15</sup>.

25. However, it should be recalled that the Committee of Ministers' Resolution<sup>16</sup> highlights that the Council of Europe may establish working relations, by concluding partnership agreements, with national NGOs who meet certain conditions, such as:

- being representative in the field(s) of their competence;
- being able, through their work, to support the achievement of closer unity mentioned in Article 1 of the Statute of the Council of Europe;
- being able to make known the work of the Council of Europe in their country.

26. This being so, in the afore-mentioned case, the role of the Conference of INGOs could instead be enhanced by promoting partnership status with the Council of Europe to all national NGOs with whom the Parliamentary Assembly works, provided that these support and share PACE goals.

27. It is important to stress that parliamentarians play an active role in defending Council of Europe values and principles. They have sought the support of civil society to reach this goal. As an example, the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly has launched the project "*Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women*", which is the parliamentary dimension of the Council of Europe's campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence (2006-2008)<sup>17</sup>. This Campaign aims at denouncing domestic violence as an assault on human dignity and a violation of human rights. It calls on governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and the civil society to take action. The PACE Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men included from the very beginning networks of INGOs active in the field of domestic violence against women to collect their input for the preparation and the implementation of the parliamentary dimension of the Campaign and encourage them to work with parliamentarians at national level. The Assembly also proposed Ms Hilary Fisher, a Campaign Director of a prominent Human Rights INGO, to sit on the Council of Europe Task Force to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence (EG-TFV), considering her experience in campaigning and raising awareness among the public. The Assembly also encourage parliamentarians to work closely with domestic and international NGO when addressing the issue of domestic violence in their national parliament.<sup>18</sup>

28. Another clear example of current co-operation between PACE and INGOs is the invitation of some INGOs to PACE sessions<sup>19</sup>. Insofar as national parliaments involve national and local NGOs in parliamentary discussions of new laws and regulations, it would also be appropriate for PACE to take full advantage of INGOs expertise and experience at European policies.

29. Sometimes, the needs of underrepresented or discriminated groups are not always taken into account and, in order to avoid that situation, INGOs actively participate in the elaboration of norms of interest to them. Faced with possible abuses of governmental power, INGOs serve as watch-dogs of governments with the aim of trying to change or improve certain policies. However, the role of INGOs consists not only of giving a voice to citizens or minorities but also in giving solutions through concrete actions and inputs to problems citizens face.

30. It should be mentioned that following PACE President René van der Linden's initiative, the Assembly has decided to establish an annual award for "outstanding civil society action in the defence of human rights", selected by independent personalities with internationally-recognised expertise in the field<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Explanatory Memorandum by Mr Elo Doc.9909, 15/09/2003 Relations between the Council of Europe and non-governmental organisations.

<sup>16</sup> Vid supra 5.

<sup>17</sup> [www.coe.int/stopviolence](http://www.coe.int/stopviolence)

<sup>18</sup> Handbook for parliamentarians "*Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women*", Secretariat of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, PACE, 2006

<sup>19</sup> Ms Irene Khan (Secretary General of Amnesty International) and Mr. Kennet Roth (Executive Director of Human Rights Watch) have been invited to pronounce a statement at the second part of PACE session on 18 April 2007. Both INGOs enjoy participatory status with the Council of Europe.

<sup>20</sup> PACE Press release dated from 18.04.07, *PACE calls for 'zero tolerance' of human rights violations in Europe*;



31. This voice given to citizens can normally be heard at hearings, which are generally welcomed by NGOs, but are nevertheless considered insufficient measures of interaction with PACE. The Assembly questions the impact of hearings and cautions that hearings are useless if NGOs do not actively participate in them.

*iii. Enhancing the role of the Conference of INGOs*

32. INGOs have a vital role in strengthening a democratic and open society in all member States. In addition, they contribute to the implementation of the Council of Europe's work programme. The Council of Europe has developed a large number of co-operation and assistance activities with a view to promoting the implementation of Council of Europe norms and standards in member states. A considerable number of these activities are conducted with national civil society partners, as well as with the contribution from the Conference of INGOs in some cases

33. The following examples give a positive opinion on the role played by the Conference of INGOs:

- a) INGO Conference Recommendation on Russian legislation on NGOs and the implementation<sup>21</sup>: on 6 October 2006, the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe convened a meeting in Strasbourg on NGO legislation and its implementation in the Russian Federation. As a result, recommendations for action in support of NGOs in the Russian Federation were adopted.
- b) INGOs contribution to the implementation of the Plan of Assistance Activities for Belarus: of particular interest is the resolution<sup>22</sup> adopted by the Conference of INGOs for action in support of civil society and democratic process in Belarus;

#### **IV. Prospects for improved co-operation**

*i. Current co-operation*

34. To date, there are some facilities provided for NGOs by the Assembly<sup>23</sup>:

- they may address memoranda to the Secretary General for submission to committees of PACE;
- they may be invited to provide expert advice on Council of Europe policies, programmes and actions;
- they receive the agenda and public documents of in order to facilitate their attendance at public sittings of PACE;
- they are invited to attend seminar, conferences, colloquies of interest to their work.

*ii. Ways for future co-operation*

35. Working relations between PACE and NGOs could be intensified. Holding conferences jointly with Assembly committees is not enough. INGOs role, as one of the fourth pillar, should be enhanced and recognised at a political level so that the Conference of INGOs can fulfil the role that has been conferred upon it. In line with this, I propose considering the following ways for improving future co-operation:

*a. Annual stock-taking by the PACE Bureau of relations with the Conference of INGOs and INGOs in general*

36. In order to have a fruitful dialogue for future and common co-operation with the 4<sup>th</sup> pillar of the Council of Europe, an annual exchange of views of the Bureau and the development of relations with the Conference of INGOs and INGOs in general could be appropriate. The President of the INGO Conference should be invited to a meeting, of the Bureau. In addition, this meeting would be an opportunity to discuss the programme of priorities of both parties for the following year, with the aim of specifying how common actions could be agreed.

37. Common proposals for co-operations will help to clarify the role of PACE as a privileged partner of civil society.

<sup>21</sup> Recommendation of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe on the Russian NGO legislation and its implementation, adopted on 6 October 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Resolution of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe on the situation of civil society in Belarus, adopted on 30 January 2007

<sup>23</sup> *vid. supra* 2.

38. This annual stock-taking could take place during PACE sessions so as to reduce costs.

*b. Civil society hearing*

39. Such hearings, some of which could be multidisciplinary, could be organised by Assembly committees and/or by ad-hoc committees appointed by the Bureau of the Assembly. These hearings would deal with a subject relevant to (and requested by) one or more Assembly committees or by the Bureau.

40. Depending on the character of an envisaged hearing, its organisation could be entrusted to a full Assembly committee (or a permanent/ad-hoc sub-committee appointed by it) or, in cases of multidisciplinary subjects to a joint ad-hoc sub-committee of the Assembly committees concerned. Furthermore, the Bureau of the Assembly should also have the possibility of setting up an ad-hoc Committee of the Bureau to deal with a multidisciplinary subject.

41. These hearings, with a balanced presence of parliamentarians and NGOs involved in the subject concerned, would aim at raising parliamentarians' awareness on some specific issues. In this particular case, NGOs would act as pools of expertise for the parliamentarians insofar as they work at grass roots level.

42. The organisation of these hearings will rely on the corresponding Grouping of the Conference of INGOs during PACE sessions. Further guidelines on how these hearings could be conducted should be developed.

*c. Platform between Parliamentarians and INGOs*

43. Outside current PACE structures, a specific platform could be foreseen to foster parliamentarian's dialogue with INGOs. PACE, as a privileged partner of civil society, could make use of such platforms for exchanging information and experiences on the development of certain issues, policies and co-operation. On the other hand, INGOs would share with the Assembly their knowledge and expertise on specific issues through their tools, programmes and know-how.

*d. Increasing the role of INGOs at Standing Committee meetings*

44. Every 6 months the Standing Committee has a meeting in the country holding the presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. In connection with this meeting, it could be envisaged that INGOs be invited and welcomed by the President of PACE and by the host-country. It may help to highlight the role of the Conference of INGOs in strengthening civil society in all member States and perhaps to contribute to the visibility of Standing Committee meetings abroad.

45. These invitations could also be extended to domestic NGOs playing an important role in that country, which could be an added value.

*e. President of INGOs addressing the Plenary Session or Standing Committee*

46. In the framework of a report where NGOs have contributed significantly through their experience, findings, etc it would be desirable if the Bureau of the Assembly invited the President of INGOs to address PACE or the Standing committee.

*f. Co-operation with INGOs in Election observation missions*

47. INGOs contribution is essential for exploratory visits which take place prior to the elections scheduled in a country. They contribute in these missions by giving a complete "picture" of the country's situation in regards the following issues: legal framework, media and minority situation, political context, etc. The input of INGOs specialised in election observation missions is then an added value to PACE during these election observation missions.

48. Although parliamentarians have a sound knowledge of what an election should be, they are not however in a position to ensure the whole electoral procedure and a long-term presence on the spot. It is at this point when the presence of civil society comes into play. Therefore, election observation becomes a co-operative exercise involving all players who mutually reinforce one another. Some of these INGOs specialised in election observation missions are privileged partner insofar as they have national offices in the countries whose elections are being observed alongside a domestic network, which provide them with useful information and the expertise needed for these electoral missions. The contribution of these specialised

INGOs may be of interest for PACE election observation missions. There could easily be a complementarity between the political and technical observation.

49. This co-operation between PACE delegations and INGOs specialised in election observation missions should be intensified and strength on an ad-hoc basis through the exchange and a co-ordination of information.

*g. Consolidation of decisions for an improved participatory status of INGOs*

50. In order to implement CM Resolution (2003) 8 and PACE Resolution 1425 (2005) in a more effective way, a certain number of adjustments to the texts are required, defining the mandates of their Assembly and experts' committees. This will also ensure that correspondence and invitations are exchanged in a systematic and regular way, so that NGOs feel that they are generally part of Council of Europe activities. Furthermore, changes to the Rules of Procedure could be envisaged if necessary. It goes without saying that this attitude of transparency with respect to flow of information should be mutual.

*h. Framework of good practices and Guidelines for the participation of INGOs in the development of political dialogue at PACE*

51. Adopt a framework of principles and practices for consultation and participation of INGOs in political dialogue. The aim will be to involve INGOs in particular in the formulation of PACE's work and priorities. The guidelines will help INGOs to better understand how they may participate in PACE work.

*i. Considering the future possibility of creating a specific status based on appropriate criteria for NGOs with the Parliamentary Assembly in order to enhance direct contact and co-operation*

52. The modalities for improving the co-operation between PACE and the Conference of INGOs proposed above should not exclude possibilities for taking further steps. It should be recalled that "the Assembly should examine its relations with NGOs and consider in the future the possible creation of a specific status based on appropriate criteria for NGOs with the Parliamentary Assembly in order to enhance the direct contact with those major NGOs with whom it does or wishes to co-operate"<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> vid.supra 15

**Appendix:**  
**INGOs<sup>25</sup> having regular contacts with Assembly committees**

**Committee on Legal affairs and Human Rights**

- ACP – association for the prevention of torture\*
- Amnesty International\*
- Human Rights Watch\*
- International Commission of Jurists\*
- International Helsinki Federation (and its national committees) \*
- Memorial (Russian Federation) \*
- Quaker Council for European Affairs\*

**Committee on Economic Affairs and Development:**

- European Trade Union Confederation \*
- European Energy Forum
- European Centre for Regional Development/
- Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens

**Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee**

- Senlis Council
- Age Concern
- Fondation Mederic Alzheimer
- ATD Quart Monde \*
- European Older People's Platform
- ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation) \*
- Red Cross
- European Social Network
- European Social Charter and Social Policies Grouping of INGOs \*<sup>26</sup>
- KEK \*: Commission Eglise et Société
- European Social Network (ESN) \*
- Association to Help Elderly People (APA)
- Union Nationale de l'Aide, des Soins et des Services aux Domiciles (UNA)
- Association of Schools of Public Health in The European Region (ASPHER) \*
- European Association of Senior Hospital Physicians (AEMH) \*
- European Federation of Older Persons (EURAG) \*
- International Federation of Associations for Elderly People (FIAPA) \*
- European Federation of Nurses Association (EFN) \*
- European Hospitals and Health Care Federation (HOPE) \*
- Family, Education Trust

**Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population**

- Amnesty International (AI) \*
- Association for the Study of the World Refugee Problem (AWR) \*
- International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) \*
- European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) \*
- Centre for the Study of International Migration (CIEMI)
- Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) \*
- Conference of European Churches (CEC) \*
- International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) \*
- International Planned Parenthood Federation – European Network (IPPF EN) \*
- Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
- European Civic Forum
- European Migrants Forum (EMF) \*
- Human Rights Watch \*
- Médecins sans frontières
- Médecins du Monde\*

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<sup>25</sup> Only INGOs with a star mark (\*) enjoy participatory status with the Council of Europe.

<sup>26</sup> It is not an INGOs.

- Memorial \*
- Society for International Development (SID) \*

#### **Committee on Culture, Science and Education**

- Consultative Committee of the Finno-Ugrian Peoples
- Europa Nostra \*
- European Association of Archaeologists \*
- European Committee for Catholic Teaching
- European Cultural Foundation
- European Media Institute
- European Museum Forum
- European Science Foundation
- European Trade Union Committee of Education \*
- European Youth Forum
- Europeans throughout the World
- Society for the Enhancement of National Minorities in Europe

#### **Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and local and regional affairs**

- Assembly of European Regions\*
- Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies
- Foundation for the Economy and sustainable Development of the Regions of Europe\*
- International Federation of Agricultural Producers\*
- World Organisation for Animal Health
- World Wildlife Fund
- Greenpeace
- International Secretariat for Water
- Solidarity Water Europe
- Euromontana
- Rurality – Environment – Development (R.E.D)
- Eurogroup for Animal Welfare\*
- Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe\*
- International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth \*

#### **Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men**

- International Alliance of Women \*
- Amnesty International \*
- Association of Women of Southern Europe \*
- Gender Equality Grouping <sup>\*27</sup>
- Human Rights Watch\*
- International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network \*
- European women's lobby\*

#### **Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities**

- European Federation of Centres of Research and information on Sectarianism (FECRIS) \*
- Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN)\*

#### **Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee)**

- Human Rights Watch\*
- Amnesty International \*
- International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights \*

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<sup>27</sup> Vid supra 25.

*Reporting Committee:* Political Affairs Committee.

*Reference to Committee:* Reference No. 3228 of 29.05.06

*Draft resolution and draft recommendation* unanimously adopted by the Committee on 13.09.2007

Members of the Committee : Mr Abdülkadir **Ateş** (Chairman), Mr Konstantion Kosachev (Vice-Chairman) (alternate: Mr Victor **Kolesnikov**), Mr Zsolt Németh (Vice-Chairman), Mr Giorgi Bokeria (Vice-Chairman), Mr Miloš **Aligrudić**, Mr Claudio **Azzolini**, Mr Radu Mircea **Berceanu**, Mr Andris Bērziņš, Mr Alexandër Biberaj, Mrs Gudfinna **Bjarnadottir**, Ms Raisa Bohatyryova, Mr Pedrag Boškovic, Mr Luc **Van den Brande**, Mr Lorenzo Cesa, M. Muro Chiaruzzi, Ms Elvira Cortajarena, Ms Anna **Čurdová**, Mr Noel **Davern**, Mr Dumitru Diacov, Mr Michel Dreyfus-Schmidt, Ms Josette **Durrieu**, Mr Joan Albert Farré Santuré, Mr Pietro Fassino, Mr Per-Kristian **Foss**, Ms Doris Frommelt, Mr Jean-Charles **Gardetto**, Mr Charles Goerens, Mr Andreas **Gross**, Mr Jean-Pol Henry, Mr Serhiy Holovaty, Mr Joachim **Hörster**, Mrs Sinikka **Hurskainen**, Mr Tadeusz **Iwiński**, Mr Bakir Izetbegović, Mrs Corien W.A. Jonker (alternate: Mr Dirk **Dees**), Ms Darja Lavtižar-Bebler, Mr Göran **Lindblad**, Mr Younal **Loutfi**, Mr Mikhail Margelov, Mr Tomasz **Markowski**, Mr Dick Marty, Mr Frano Matušić, Mr Murat **Mercan**, Mr Mircea Mereuță, Mr Dragoljub **Mićunović**, Mr Jean-Claude Mignon, Ms Nadezhda Mikhailova, Mr Aydın Mirzazada, Mr João Bosco **Mota Amaral**, Ms Natalia Narochitskaya, Mrs Miroslava **Nemcova**, Mr Grygoriy Nemyrya, Mr Fritz Neugebauer, Mrs Kristina **Ojuland**, Mr Theodoros Pangalos, Ms Elsa Papadimitriou, Mr Christos Pourgourides, Mr Gordon Prentice (alternate: Mr John **Austin**), Mr Gabino Puche, Mr Lluís Maria **de Puig**, Mr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, Mr Andrea Rigoni, Lord **Russell-Johnston**, Mr Oliver Sambevski (alternate: Blagoj **Zasov**), Mr Ingo Schmitt, Ms Hanne **Severinsen**, Mr Samad Seyidov (alternate: Mrs Gultakin **Hajiyeva**), Mr Leonid **Slutsky**, Mr Rainer Steenblock, Mr Zoltán **Szabó**, Baroness Taylor of Bolton (Lord **Tomlinson**), Mr Mehmet **Tekelioğlu**, Mr Tigran Torosyan, Mr Mihai Tudose, Mr José Vera Jardim, Ms Biruté Vesaitė, Mr Björn Von Sydow (alternate: Ms Kerstin **Lundgren**), Mr Harm Evert Waalkens, Mr David **Wilshire**, Mr Wolfgang Wodarg, Ms Gisela Wurm, Mr Boris Zala, Mr Krzysztof Zaremba (alternate: Karol **Karski**).

*Ex-officio:* MM. Mátyás Eörsi, Tiny Kox

N.B. : The names of the members who took part in the meeting are printed in **bold**

*Head of the Secretariat :* Mr Perin

*Secretaries to the Committee:* Mrs Nachilo, Mr Chevtchenko, Mrs Sirtori-Milner, Mr Pfaadt.