



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



Conference of INGOs in the COUNCIL OF EUROPE
Winter Session 22-26 January 2018
Eufemia Ippolito
BPW International Representative in the Council of Europe
ippolito@aliceposta.it

Dear Presidents and Members,

From 22 to 26 January 2018 I have participated at the work of the Conference of INGOs (International Non-Governmental Organizations) in the Council of Europe in Strasbourg as BPW International Representative.

The areas of competence of the Council of Europe are:

- The Human Rights
- The rule of Law
- The Democracy

The role of Conference INGOs:

- Identify and denounce infringements of human rights, defend the rights contained in the *European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*.
- Safeguard the role of civil society in the State of Law.
- Promote *democratic governance* based on the recognition of INGOs and of the subsidiarity principle.

The participation of civil society in decision-making is one of the priorities of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and guidelines on civil society's effective and meaningful participation in the political decision-making process are being developed for possible adoption by the Committee of Ministers.

The Conference of INGOs, at its meeting on 24 January, re-elected Anna Rurka as its President for a 2nd three year term and elected the members of its Bureau: Vice-Presidents: Robert Bergougnan, Anne Kraus and Christoph Spreng.

During the political debate on the situation of NGOs in the Member States, a representative of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights It presented the report on the Challenges facing civil society working on human rights in the EU. It was discussed the issue of freedom of association and NGO participation in public policies in Estonia and Serbia. This debate it has been done with the participation of the Ambassadors of the countries concerned and representatives of national NGOs. The Expert Council on NGO Law they have presented two opinions: - on the freedom of association in Turkey - and on the draft amendment to the Law on Associations and Foundations in Romania. The Protection of Human Rights Defenders has been discussed at the Side Event on Human Rights Defenders in the Council of Europe area: "Current Challenges and New Responses" . A specific debate it was held on the rights of LGBTI persons (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual and Intersexed), with the participation of ILGA ((International Lesbian and Gay Association) Europe, the European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups, representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Secretariat of the Council of Europe.

Many initiatives and projects they have been presented during the "Market Place" interactive exchange focused on the Digital Society. There have been many opportunities for a direct and informal exchange with NGOs and Council of Europe bodies:

- Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls – The Council of Europe's contribution to the UN 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Equality between women and men – The Council of Europe and Gender Equality – Preventing and combating violence against women- Achieving the balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making – promoting gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures in the Council of Europe.
- Language support for adult refugees – The Council of Europe's project on Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants – The Council of Europe aims to create a common democratic and legal area throughout the continent where respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law are ensured.

I also participated in meetings of the Parliamentary Assembly. Human Rights – Legal Affairs – Migration and Refugees – Conflicts between Member States of the Council of Europe.

The Activity report 2017 of the Conference of INGOs of Council of Europe: The activity report presents an overview of the Conference of INGOs' activities in 2017. It is analytical and does not claim to be exhaustive. It takes account of the strategic priorities set out in the Action Plan adopted by the INGOs Conference in June 2015, across the three areas covered by the Council of Europe: Human Rights, democracy and rule of law. It highlights the Conference of INGOs' presence and contribution in certain Council of Europe member states, as well as interaction with other Council of Europe bodies and the development of the partnership with other international institutions.

Gender Equality expert: Resolution adopted by the Conference of INGOs the 24 January 2018:

Resolution relating to the use of the term "Droits humains" instead of "Droits de l'Homme"

Recommendation relating to the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, adopted by the Conference of INGOs the 24 January 2018

Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (which requires to have women participating in conflict resolution, in peace talks, has so far not been implemented).

Next meeting of the Conference of INGOs June 2018

I am at your disposal for any collaboration on the development of the themes treated in the Conference of INGOs in the winter session 2018, and for the dissemination of the Council of Europe activities to contribute to the affirmation of the political role of civil society in the Council of Europe, represented by 325 INGOs with participatory status.

Eufemia