



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

Living Together
Combining diversity and freedom in 21st -century Europe

Strasbourg, 13-14 November 2011

Preliminary draft programme

The Forum is being held by the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGO) with the support of the Council of Europe. It builds on the outcome of the NGO Forum on “New multicultural challenges: how can NGOs play their part” which the Conference of INGOs organised on 24-25 March in Istanbul.

Objectives

1. Give a civil society dimension to the implementation of the “White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue” adopted by the Committee of Ministers in May 2008 and the recommendations of the report of the Group of Eminent Persons on “Living together: Combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe” by identifying new approaches to inclusive multicultural societies in Europe.
2. Highlight the new multicultural challenges facing European societies and identify best practice in NGO work aiming at mastering diversity and making it a benefit for society.
3. Offer a framework for
 - a. Sharing experience among NGOs;
 - b. Dialogue between representatives of civil society and representatives of governments, parliaments and local and regional authorities.
4. Launch the tool kit for the practice of intercultural dialogue.
5. Pursue co-operation with civil society from the Southern rim of the Mediterranean.

Participants

The forum brings together European civil society representatives who are promoting the “Living together” through their work.

In the light of the push towards democracy taking place in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region, civil society representatives from these countries will be involved as well, both as participants and in widening the debate to encompass their aspirations and experiences in living together in multicultural societies.

In addition, representatives of governments, parliaments and local and regional authorities of different European countries will be invited for a political dialogue with participants.

Civil society representatives wishing to participate in the first day of the Forum which is open to some 50 invited participants only are selected through an open call for applications. The organisers will cover their travel and most of the subsistence expenses. Selection criteria include competence in the fields covered by the Forum, geographic diversity and gender balance.

Representatives of civil society, universities and authorities who wish to participate in the second day of the Forum are requested to register for the Forum. They have to cover their own expenses for travelling to and staying in Strasbourg; registration is free of charge.

Forum structure

The Forum themes will be dealt with from the angle of civil society's contribution to the work of the Council of Europe.

The workshops on the first day will focus on the NGOs' practical experience and they will use interactive participatory working methods.

The plenary sessions on the second day will place the Forum discussions in the context of the Council of Europe's achievements and activities, as well as topical developments in Europe as illustrated by the report of the Group of Eminent Persons. They will also provide an opportunity for a political dialogue between representatives of civil society and governments, parliaments and local and regional authorities. The workshop conclusions will structure this dialogue.

The thematic focus of the Civil Society Forum will be on diversity

- How intercultural and democratic education can empower people to master and to benefit from diversity;
- How social cohesion can be achieved in multicultural societies.

In order to identify the best practice of NGO action and the participation of NGOs in the political debate and decision making and implementation, these issues will be dealt with at two levels of the political process

- Making policy – the role of civil society in raising awareness on the issues at stake and putting them on the political agenda;
- Making policy work – the role of civil society in implementing concrete activities and holding government responsible.

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Sunday 13 November 2011 - Day 1 for invited NGOs only

09.00 - 09.15	Opening Jean-Marie HEYDT President of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe
09.15 - 09.45	Presentation of the tool kit for the practice of intercultural dialogue
09.45 - 10.00	Introduction to the thematic workshops by the moderators
10.00 - 10.30	Coffee break
10.30 - 12.30	First set of parallel thematic workshops on “Making Policy” Workshop 1 a Diversity and education Workshop 2 a Diversity and social cohesion
12.30 - 14.00	Lunch Break
14.00 – 16.00	Second set of parallel thematic workshops on “Making Policy Work” Workshop 1 b Diversity and education Workshop 2 b Diversity and social cohesion
16.00 – 16.30	Coffee Break
16.30 – 17.30	Plenary Reports by Rapporteurs and summing up of the first day

Monday 14 November 2011 – Day 2 open to the public and the media

09.30 - 10.00	Presentation of the Group of Eminent Persons' report "Living together: Combining diversity and freedom in 21 st -century Europe" (tbc)
10.00 - 10.30	Opening of the Civil Society Forum Thorbjørn JAGLAND (tbc) Secretary General of the Council of Europe Jean-Marie HEYDT President of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe
10.30 - 11.00	Coffee Break
11.00 - 12.30	Dialogue between representatives of civil society and representatives of governments, parliaments and local and regional authorities on "Diversity and Education"
12.30 - 14.00	Lunch break
14.00 - 16.00	Dialogue between representatives of civil society and representatives of governments, parliaments and local and regional authorities on "Diversity and Social Cohesion"
16.00 - 16.30	Coffee Break
16.30 - 17.00	Closing session Conclusions by the General Rapporteur