

To: IEC, EEC, ERC, NGO-Relations, EDR
CC: CISV Germany, IJB

Report on the INGO meeting in the Council of Europe
25.04. – 27.04.2005

Following the ETG in Holland I went to the meeting of the INGOs in Strasbourg, where I met Alice who accompanied me during those days to learn about the structures of the CoE and the funding possibilities of the European Youth Foundation for JB and IYMs.

This report is written in the assumption that the readers have read already the report that Savita and I have submitted in January of this year. If you are unclear about the structure of the CoE or how things work there, I advice you to consult that report.

Monday 25th:

Starting at 18:30 the Working Group on Intercultural Dialogue (WG IC-D) met under my chairmanship. Present were Mr. Rigone (Lions Club), Mrs. Le Guis (...), Mr. Masiat (...), and Mr. Gall (...). We talked about the expectations the different individuals had towards the work and the outcome of the working group. The theme 'Intercultural Dialogue' is very vague, broad and intangible. We decided after some discussion that a meeting during the day, with interpretation service and a concrete topic would be needed to proceed with our work. A dialogue always circulates around a topic about what is talked, discussed, debated. We decided that this topic shall be 'human dignity'. Through discussing this issue with people from organisations with different backgrounds (religious in any aspect of it, political, medical, educational, etc.) we will try to examine the notion of Intercultural Dialogue.

I have decided that I will also present a discussion paper to that meeting in which I will present a provocative definition of culture to give an impulse to a lively discussion.

In the past I have sent questionnaires to the interested organisations on what they consider to be intercultural dialogue. A summary of those will also be presented to the meeting.

Mr. Rigone mentioned the NGO-Forum, organised by the North-South Dialogue Grouping, in Messina in November of this year. The Working Group IC-D might contribute to this conference. This will however need some more consideration and discussion in the future.

Tuesday 26th:

In the morning we went to the European Youth Centre (EYC) to meet with members of the educational staff, the European Youth Foundation and the Director for Youth and Sport. However, that day we weren't successful as most were out of the house. We had the chance to meet with Peter Lauritzen, who is the Director for Youth and responsible for the Youth Summit in Warsaw this May. CISV will have a participant at the Youth Summit (Aninia Schwanhäußer). I will be in Warsaw as well to participate in a conference of the INGOs (more on that later).

From there we went to the main building of the CoE to participate in the meeting of the North-South Dialogue Grouping. A focal topic of the meeting was the NGO-Forum on Mediterranean Cooperation in Messina in November (11. – 13.) of this year. I offered them the support of the WG IC-D. I will, however, not be able to participate personally as it coincides with the national board meeting of CISV Germany. CISV can consider, when more information is released, to send a participant. It might be especially interesting for CISV in the Mediterranean region to get into contact with possible partners for Mosaic Projects or IPPs.

At the meeting of the North-South Dialogue Grouping I met the new president of the Advisory Council on Youth (to see what is, please consult the report of January). Apparently Lasse from CISV Norway, who was the president until then has resigned from that post. The new president is Giuseppe from Italy (Scouts). We talked among other things about the involvement of CISV in the Advisory Council in the future and my involvement in the Youth Summit. Both he and Anneliese Oeschger (President of the INGOs) are very interested in having me there as this would show that also youth organisations and young people are active in the Conference of INGOs, as they want to promote this also towards other youth organisations.

Wednesday 27th:

9:00 – 10:30 Thematic Grouping on Human Rights

During this meeting we mostly heard a report from the Commissioner on Human Rights of the CoE who gave an update of his work so far done since January. It was interesting but I don't see currently ways in which CISV could become active there.

10:45 – 12:15 Thematic Grouping on Education and Culture

The chair of the Grouping gave me some time to present the work of the WG IC-D, which I did in a way that was provocative for some and enjoyable for the rest. I spoke openly about the situation that we face (no dialogue in our meetings, poor intercultural representation, etc.) and my plans for the WG IC-D. Following the meeting I was complimented on it by the Anneliese Oeschger and others.

The chair of the Grouping suggested that another group should research all the papers that have been produced so far on intercultural dialogue and summarize it. This suggestion was well received by the group of elderly representatives who have been attending these meetings for the last 15/20 years. A small separate group will now do this work and provide me with the summary. I have also been asked to write a interim report on the work done so far.

It seems that we working group that I have taken over last year with no members in it and no concrete mandate or goal is getting a shape now and will become more concrete in the near future.

After the meeting we went again to the EYC and managed to meet with all those who we wanted to meet. Alice had an in depth conversation with the head of the European Youth Foundation to understand the procedures better and sort out possibilities for JB-Activities or Youth Meeting to be funded.

I met quickly with the person responsible for the organisation of the youth summit (Michael Ingledow) and he said that Giuseppe talked to him that he wanted me to be there and now he will sort out with the Polish authorities ways to get me a seat in the meeting. We also touched the topic of the Advisory Council and he confirmed that the call for nominations would be out in June. During the ETG I agreed with Helen Pringle that we would prepare as much as we can beforehand and then present our nomination as fast as possible. I also talked with the Director for Youth and Sports for some minutes. He gave me a contact name in the German ministry for youth, which I might follow up to deepen CISV Germany's involvement in those structures.

Following those meetings we went back to the main building and Alice had to leave to get her train back to Geneva. I participated in the preparatory meeting for the meeting in Warsaw. This will be an 'extraordinary meeting' of the Liaison Committee to which some other people will be invited to. I was invited to come and the Council of Europe will cover most of my expenses. I asked already in January if it was possible to get the rest then reimbursed by CISV, however, have not yet received an answer on this. Anneliese Oeschger asked me to assume some responsibility over the intercultural dialogue that will be present at that meeting, to facilitate and enhance it. However, she now asked me to do something more.

At this one day lasting meeting we will at some point break up into three sub-groups to discuss the same topic: 'specificities and modalities of the collective actions of the INGOs enjoying participatory status with the CoE'. One group will be in French, one in English and one in both languages. I was appointed rapporteur for the English-speaking group. This means that I will take the minutes of the discussions and that I will report to the big group later what we have discussed. Now, the Secretary General of the CoE has decided to come to the session when the groups will report back to the plenary what they have discussed. This means that he will sit there and listen to a CISV representative telling him how the INGOs envisage their involvement with the CoE in the future. There will also be great media coverage of this. I'm a bit nervous now, but I think that this is a great opportunity for CISV to raise our visibility.

I hope you enjoyed reading this report. I think that it was a productive and worth the effort meeting. If you have any questions, comments, thoughts, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Yours

Bastian Küntzel