

COLLOQUY ON THE ROLE OF THE NGO'S, COUNCIL OF EUROPE, FEBR. 1983

As our members know, our Society is a "non-governemental organisation" of the Council of Europe, a NGO in shorthand. That means that the Council has to consult a NGO on matters appertaining to its field of work. There are about 200 NGO's; our Society must be one of the smallest. As there is a certain unrest or questioning among the NGO's about their specific role or status, the Council has organised a colloquy of the NGO's. This has taken place at Strasbourg on February 23 and 24 1983. 113 NGO's were present, among them our Society which was represented by Roger Dirrig who therefore deserves our thankfulness. Prof. Dirrig took part in two of the four sessions.

Our representative reports to the Board that the main problem is the juridical recognition of the NGO's. Their present position, not only with regard to the Council of Europe, but also vis-à-vis their own governments, is rather vague. It could be bettered by a statute or convention. There exists a project for such a convention, but there are still major difficulties on the road to realisation: the definition of a NGO, the objectives of the NGO's, and the compatibility of the structures of the NGO's with those of the Council and the UNO. A final declaration has been drafted and accepted giving information on the specific problems of the NGO's as mentioned, and calling the attention of the different official bodies of the Council of Europe to their requirements.

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