

To Section Chairs
From Petri Merenlahti, IEC
Date 10 March 2006

Subject Update on the IEC Review of AI's Europe-related work

Dear Friends,

This is to give you the promised update on the IEC review of AI's Europe-related work.

In our December meeting, the IEC had its first opportunity to consider the work done to date by the consultants, Roger Clark and Kirsty Hughes. As stated in the terms of reference for the review, the next step has been for the consultants to revise the draft to take account of the IEC comments. This process is still going on but we hope to move forward on this in the coming couple of weeks in time for the April IEC meeting. The report will then be sent to the movement for comment.

As asked for, the initial draft report addresses two broad areas: AI's human rights strategy on and from Europe and AI's Europe related organizational arrangements

The IEC welcomed the consultants' findings and their analysis of the current state of AI's Europe-related human rights work as undertaken by AI's EU Office, European and other sections and structures and the IS. We think this element of the draft report is more or less complete.

We are still discussing, however, the matter of options for organizational arrangements for the future. To give you a couple of concrete examples of the kind of questions that the IEC is focusing on:

- What do we need organizationally to ensure we can set and implement a movement-wide strategy for work in and from Europe that engages and commits all the relevant entities: section/structures, AI's EU Office and the IS?
- The EU Office has been funded by EU sections, with only a small portion coming from the international budget. How can we distribute the costs of AI's work on Europe among respective sections in such a way that this does not reduce the resources available for AI's work elsewhere?
- If we build a coherent and inclusive strategy, how do we match this with a coherent and inclusive *accountability mechanism* for AI's Europe-related work as a whole?

Questions like these are not easy to answer. The process has been further slowed by practical difficulties in coordinating the consultants' and the IEC's availability. However, the IEC's first priority is to ensure that we lead a constructive process towards a worthwhile outcome. There is much at stake, and the opportunities for enhancing the efficiency and impact of our human rights work are truly exciting. On the other hand, although it is not that unusual that reports are late, we understand that the delay may have caused worries. We would welcome you to bring those worries to our attention.

Please note that the delay does **not** mean that the time for planned consultation will be shortened. We will circulate the next draft of the report soon as possible and in good time before the EUA AGM in mid-June. The period for taking in comments will be extended even after that, as appropriate.

In the meantime – to meet your request for further information – let me just briefly summarise, first, the key findings of the draft report, and second, some of the IEC’s thinking on which we’d like to hear your comments. Please note that this second part is still tentative – we are checking our initial line of thinking against your response.

1. Summary of key findings to date

The strategic part of the draft report looks at external trends and concludes that AI needs to factor changing global and European strategic political developments into its work in a more continuous and strategic manner than it currently does. It also finds that AI is “punching below its weight”. Although AI has identified key themes or issues on which to work in Europe (viz., racism and discrimination; refugees; and security/counter-terrorism), adequate coordination and coherence are lacking in the implementation of AI’s work. Furthermore, AI does not have a common institutional view of the relative importance of the three key European entities: the EU, the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

The second part of the draft report examines the organizational set up of AI, and the role and responsibilities of the IS, the EU Office and relevant sections.

In relation to the IS, the report finds it lacks the needed capacity and competency on the EU, and its planning and approval processes are not always responsive to the needs of AI’s work on Europe. In relation to the sections, the report finds that there is no integrated research and campaigning. In relation to the EU Office, the report concludes that it is doing credible, serious and effective work, but has only nominal accountability which creates problems with regard to coordination on planning and implementation.

Overall, the report finds: a) compartmentalization and lack of adequate communications and coordination between the various entities; b) lack of integration of research and campaigning among sections, IS and the EU Office; and c) lack of effective integration of work on Europe with other aspects of AI’s work globally.

2. IEC’s thinking about strategy and organizational change

As I said above, the IEC is currently discussing with the consultants how best to provide the movement with various options for its organizational arrangements in the future. However, the IEC believes that the primary objective of any organizational change must be to enable the movement to deliver effective human rights work. We have come to the view that this requires us to:

- Establish movement-wide strategy, goals and priorities for AI’s human rights work on and from Europe, and on European institutions in particular, within the context of AI’s global human rights strategy

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- Develop with the movement, the tools, processes and structures needed to implement this strategy effectively and to enable coherent reporting on and evaluation of this implementation.

With this in mind, the IEC has arrived at a number of working assumptions that we would like to test with the various stakeholders in this review process. We are now assuming that:

- The current system – under which the sections, the EU Office and the IS have equal responsibility, working through consensus but accountable to their respective separate governance bodies – is not working well.
- The current system is heavy on governance – with Boards, EUA and the IEC each holding their respective operational arms accountable – but light on management where there is no clear compulsion or responsibility on any entity to deliver or any one entity to lead and be held accountable.
- The European Directors Steering Committee is an informal peer-based arrangement that has no authority to ensure delivery, and has been slow in reaching agreement.
- The EUA has not been an effective means for ensuring accountability of AI's EU work. The EU Office is a highly operational entity. The EUA, on the other hand, is a body of volunteers with diverse experience, and it has not been possible for them to exercise oversight or hold the EUO accountable. The EUA has no authority over sections or the IS for their delivery of AI's work on the EU, making it impossible to develop a comprehensive or united approach to European issues.
- As an operational entity, the EU Office's value lies in its effective and efficient lobbying of the EU – rather than any intrinsic democratic nature – and so arrangements for its oversight and accountability are best made by a management body, rather than a governance body like the EUA.

Our aspirations for AI's Europe work, the report's findings to date and the assumptions above lead the IEC to the following propositions on which it would also like to hear the views of the stakeholders.

- More effective cooperation, coordination and coherence is needed at the operational level between national (section); Europe (EUO) and global (IS) entities.
- More timely and effective delivery by sections, IS and the EU Office is required
- AI needs clearer and more effective accountability for its work on and from Europe.
- We should aim to finance the work on Europe without creating an additional charge on the international budget.
- Issues of delivery (planning; implementation, monitoring, evaluation) are critical management issues and thus our objective should be to strengthen management, and simplify governance.
- Good management requires clear lines of responsibility and accountability, and the allocation of roles and responsibilities according to competency, effectiveness and resources of the different parties. (E.g. the IS has global interests and expertise; the sections vary according to their size and national interests, for instance the UK, Finland and Hungary will have different interests, ability and

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resources to deliver work on Europe; the EU Office is strong as a lobbying entity based in Brussels but does not have competencies in research, campaigning and growth.)

- While equality is an important principle of democracy, it is more appropriate as a driver for governance rather than management purposes. Management mechanisms should recognise that ultimate responsibility cannot be based on consensus, but has to be allocated to one entity which is then held accountable for delivery of planning, prioritization, and effective coordination of implementation by all parties.

In other words, do we agree that:

- That there needs to be movement-wide strategy, goals and priorities set for AI's human rights work on and from Europe, and on European institutions in particular, within the context of AI's global human rights strategy
- That AI should set up a single planning and coordinating mechanism for IS and sections' work on the Council of Europe and the EU.
- That this mechanism should operate transparently so that section boards are kept fully aware of plans and priorities. Section Boards in turn should ensure that section directors are appropriately empowered to participate in this mechanism and contribute to the common movement-wide strategy and plan under the oversight of a singly entity.
- That within this coordinating mechanism, one entity should be given lead responsibility for delivery, and should report and be held accountable by the IEC.

The IEC very much welcomes your views on these important issues and looks forward to discussing these further with you.

With best wishes

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IEC

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