

Editorial

Reconciling working and family life : a factor of social cohesion

“The family is a fundamental factor of social cohesion in the private sphere; it can be described as the place where social cohesion is experienced and built” declares the Council of Europe Strategy for Social Cohesion. Following on from the recent Conference of European Ministers responsible for Family Affairs that took place on 21-22 June 2001 in Portorož (Slovenia), this issue of Social Cohesion Developments turns the spotlight on family questions.

The Conference of European Ministers responsible for Family Affairs is one of the longest running conferences of specialised ministers held under Council of Europe auspices. The Portorož Conference was the twenty-seventh in the series. It brought together Ministers from across the European continent to discuss a theme of immediate practical importance to all families: how to reconcile the demands of working life with the demands of family life.

In an economic system that depends on getting as many people as possible into economic activity, the time available for bringing up children and looking after other dependent family

members tends to be squeezed out. Governments can set a legal framework that helps people to reconcile their family and work responsibilities, but it is up to employers, trade unions and families themselves to make it work. It is necessary to rethink the way working time is organised, the way child care is provided and - perhaps most challenging of all - to rethink the way in which couples share out their joint responsibilities for looking after other members of the family. More details of the ideas put forward by the Ministers are contained in this issue.

The newly created Forum for Children and Families is committed to following up the agenda set by the Ministers at Portorož. The Forum will also be working on the following topics: child day-care; children, democracy and participation in society; and children in need of care.

The current issue of Social Cohesion Developments also features some of the Council of Europe co-operation projects under way in the Russian Federation. The work aims in the first place to contribute to the process of modernising federal legislation on social protection and improving access to health care. Given, however, that social services are delivered at the local level, we are also establishing cooperation with the regional authorities. Thus, we have been working on access to social protection in the Penza region, the functioning of the local labour market in Pskov, and a

round table on the situation of the Roma/Gypsies took place in St-Petersburg. Another co-operation programme has been launched on promoting access to social rights in the Caucasus region.

The Council of Europe is also keen to make a contribution to debates on social cohesion at the world level. Following on from last year's Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Social Development, the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, on behalf of Council of Europe Directorate General III Social Cohesion and the United Nations Division for Social Policy and Development, organised an expert reflection on Pathways to Social Development. This inter-regional consultation brought together leading social policy experts from across the world in order to share views on their varying approaches to social development. The rights-based European approach was compared with other regions' approaches, focussing often on strategies for eradicating poverty. Everyone agreed on the need to integrate social development policies more fully into economic development strategies. In this way the Council of Europe hopes to contribute to building consensus on matters, which often generate heated controversy in world fora.

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Labour Minister Vlado Dimovski, the Conference host, is championing social policies in his own country, as well as working hard to put Slovenia on the international map.

Trained as an economist in the US, his first stint in government found him with the economic affairs portfolio from 1995 to 1997. After a short spell teaching at University he rejoined the government at the end of 2000, taking over Labour, Family and Social Affairs.

As the conference met in Portorož, members of the Slovenian parliament were giving a second reading to the country's first parenthood and family benefits bill – one that has demanded a great deal of work from the Labour minister. Mr Dimovski explains.

Newsletter: Tell us a little about the bill going through parliament – what work have you needed to put in?

Although an economist, I have put a lot of energy into the issue of family affairs, particularly since I consider this one of the most important areas for building cohesion in Slovenian society. The legislation before parliament at present is a basic foundation for family policies, and work started in 1993 when the national strategy for the family was launched. During the last six months, we've done a lot of talking with the non governmental sector and this second parliamentary reading is crucial. We are now hoping that it will be adopted by the end of this year.

Newsletter: Starting in 1993 – that means that family affairs must have been a priority after independence?

That shows how important these issues are. In Slovenia everybody is talking about them: some of the demographic trends here are not so great and also the number of chil-

dren in families is decreasing. We are facing the same problems as countries from Western Europe. Our population is getting older – in fact, we have one of the worst ratios between working people and pensioners.

This means the theme of the conference is particularly important to us, and one of the reasons for my personal commitment.

Newsletter: Some speakers have pointed out that changes need to be looked at in the long term – that short termism will achieve nothing. What do you think?

You can't change demographic changes overnight, long-term vision is essential. And a multidisciplinary approach is needed. We have heard many different approaches here in the conference. The Norwegians, for instance, talked about five different ones, showing how important it is to draw the best from a number of policies. Demographic trends and economic activity are closely linked, and you cannot isolate any of these issues from family policy. But legislation provides the tools for change – the bones of the body. But to flesh it out you also need to create a climate where that legislation will be accepted – where it will blossom.

Newsletter: One of the biggest challenges is to crack the assumption that family work is women's work. How do you tackle that?

That's a difficult one. In Slovenia women have two careers...at work and at home. Our data shows that in terms of hours, our women are doing about 26 hours a week work in the home, compared to five for their husbands. That's a clear illustration of the imbalance and the message from this conference is clear – we have to change, but it can't happen overnight.

To create a fair society, you have to shift the balance between men and women. Parental leave is a first step. and the second step is a paternity leave. In our legislation there is a possibility of sharing a parental leave between mother and father but our new law introduces 90 days with 15 days full pay of paternity leave as an exclusive right of a father – and for Slovenian society this is a real change. It brings us in line with EU laws that we have to adopt to prepare us for membership. But it will also give men an incentive to take leave, and hopefully the idea will grow, with more men following. For instance, Tony Blair taking parental leaves when baby Leo was born provided a great lead for other men.

Newsletter: Slovenia has changed dramatically over the past few years. What challenges have you faced – and how far do you think you still have to go?

The term transitional economy is too narrow to describe what has happened. Our economic profile really changed from the late 80s, when over 50% of GDP was from manufacturing. Now it is 25% – making Slovenia a post-industrial society, with many technological and political changes. Basketball players have a saying – “in your face” – meaning nothing's going to stop them – and Slovenia is a bit like that. The more people see change, the more they want it.

We have a long way to go as yet. We are critical about ourselves, but we are also seeking the next challenge. We really want to be part of the EU, and are aiming for membership by 2004. This is a driving force, giving us an additional impetus to change faster than we would otherwise. The obvious thing is to change the economy, but even more important is the change in society itself. Family life is part of that change.

27TH CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR FAMILY AFFAIRS ON "RECONCILING WORKING AND FAMILY LIFE"

European ministers responsible for Family Affairs met – at the invitation of Mr Dimovski, the Slovenian Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs – for their 27th ministerial conference on 20-22 June 2001 in Portorož (Slovenia). The theme of the conference was "**Reconciling working and family life**" and provided a forum to discuss experiences, ideas and good practices in this matter and to take up the challenges facing European countries on this issue.

The main objectives were to assess the effectiveness of the existing international instruments, to highlight the various approaches to reconciling working and family life in different countries and to identify the new measures required.

It is recognised that working life is becoming more and more demanding, creating stress and is leaving less and less time for family, voluntary and community life. Therefore it is necessary to tackle the reconciliation of family life and working life as an essential aspect towards improving the quality of life as well as a factor for social cohesion.

The emergence of new attitudes and perceptions concerning the balance of responsibilities between men and women in family life should be encouraged. And any action envisaged should take into account that the child's interest must come first as it is at the heart of family life.

In order to give governments and social partners the impetus towards strengthening their policies already in place in this field, the ministers looked at three sub-themes:

- "Reconciling working and family life: Policy objectives and challenges", introduced by

Mr Dermot Ahern, the Irish Minister responsible for Social, Community and Family Affairs.

- "The role of the state and public authorities: measures and initiatives", introduced by Mr Reinhart Waneck, Austrian State Secretary for Health, Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations.
- "The fair sharing of responsibilities between mothers and fathers", introduced by Ms Marie-Josée Jacobs, Luxembourg Minister of Family, Social Solidarity and Youth.

The Conference recommended that governments of the Council of Europe member states should pursue their efforts to improve reconciliation of working and family life, in particular by:

- improving the framework for flexible working arrangements, taking into account that flexibility is intended to encourage fathers to become more involved in family life;
- encouraging social partners to introduce measures to balance work and life to the benefit of both businesses and employees;
- providing good, flexible and affordable services to assist in the care of children and other dependent persons;
- examining the possibility of granting fathers a period of leave after the birth of a child;
- encouraging coordination in the organisation of working time and services of importance to children and families so that they are more responsive to the needs of families;
- taking account of the needs of families in town planning and housing policies;
- challenging the traditional attitudes towards women and

men in view of equal sharing of family, social and professional responsibilities;

- taking account of the wishes and expectations of children;
- taking account, when designing reconciliation policies, of the varying needs and wishes of people at the different stages of their lives.

The ministers also recommended that the Council of Europe continue its work in this matter, namely through its Forum for Children and Families and its European Committee for Social Cohesion, and examines how to give effect to the suggestions made at the Conference (Portugal already offered to host the next ministerial conference).

The Organisation has been asked to identify ways in which reconciling work and family life can be a factor for social development, to highlight the benefits accruing to families and children, employers, employees and society as a whole from the implementation of the above-mentioned measures, to promote good practices and disseminate information about them in the member States and to promote more active relationships between parents, carers or teachers, and the responsible authorities.

The full text of the final communiqué of the Portorož Conference and further information on the results are available from the Council of Europe Secretariat.

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A technical assistance programme in the social field for the Russian Federation

The first technical assistance programme for the Russian Federation in the social and health field was launched in the year 2000, in co-operation with the Russian authorities. It was one of the Council of Europe's responses to a specific request from Mrs Valentina Matvienko, Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian government (responsible for social affairs), during her visit to the Council of Europe in January 1999. Exploratory missions have allowed the identification of the priorities for this co-operation programme.

The main factors of the programme and co-operation under way are:

- promoting a modern social welfare model based on an active labour market policy, a reformed pensions system and clearly focused social assistance programmes to combat poverty and protect vulnerable groups, particularly children, single parents, elderly, unemployed persons, migrants and national minorities.
- promoting human rights in the health field and easier access for vulnerable groups to health-care services, with particular attention given to tuberculosis patients.

There have already been a number of achievements, such as the joint studies on obstacles to social welfare and a conference on the same theme (Penza), the activities on access to employment (Pskov), a round table on the situation of the Roma/Gypsies (St Petersburg) and the analysis carried out by both Council of Europe and Russian experts on the compatibility of Russian legislation with the European Code of Social Security.

According to the Russian partners, this co-operation is greatly helping the country to move closer to European social welfare standards. It must be noted that the Russian Federation signed the European Social Charter in September 2000, and has expressed its commitment to progress towards signing the European Code of Social Security.

Improving access to social protection – Penza

The Seminar “Common problems and solutions”, held in Penza on 9-10 April 2001, was organised by the Council of Europe in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the Russian Federation and the Penza Regional Government, as part of the activity on improving access to social protection in the Russian Federation.

It gathered experts from various member States of the Council of Europe (Iceland, Ireland, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia and Sweden) as well as researchers of the Moscow State Social University and Austrian, Bulgarian and Norwegian Research Institutions, with a view to discuss possible solutions to obstacles in accessing social benefits and services in the Russian Federation and particularly in the Penza region.

The seminar revealed that the Russian society faces similar problems in granting effective access to social protection as many other European countries. However, the Russian Federation also faces problems due to ongoing developments of its social protection system and the lack of financial resources, which results in arrears in the payment of certain benefits.

The seminar showed that transferring and implementing good practices already in place in other Council of Europe member states could improve access to social protection in Russia. Future cooperation between the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation should follow this path. The seminar also showed that some regions of the Russian Federation had been more successful than others in solving existing problems and as a consequence cooperation and transfer of experiences between Russian regions should be encouraged.

Considering the excellent quality of the reports presented during the seminar, which provide with a unique insight into the Russian situation as well as with many creative suggestions and

Parliamentary Assembly to debate social policy for children and adolescents in towns and cities

In the week of 24 September 2001, the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly will be debating a report entitled *A proactive social policy for children and adolescents in towns and cities*, presented by Mrs Gatterer (Austria) on behalf of the Assembly's Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee. The report addresses the various problems facing young people in urban environments. These include: asocial behaviour, drug use, unemployment, and deteriorating living and health conditions. One of the purposes of the report is to emphasise the importance of community action in creating an environment that is conducive to giving children and adolescents opportunities to participate productively in the life of their communities.

The report addresses the problem of the responsibility of children for the crimes and violent actions that they commit, and whether their punishment should approach that given to adults. This reflects the debate provoked by the Bulger case in the United Kingdom, which has had a significant influence on policies towards young offenders throughout Europe, resulting in children no longer being considered simply victims of the circumstances that surround them. However, the report points out the disadvantages of harsh responses to juvenile crime, that do not adequately take into account the social conditions in which children live and are brought up. Factors such as poverty, unemployment and difficult family relationships all have an impact on a child's behaviour within society, and thus it is by addressing these issues that a decrease in juvenile anti-social behaviour and delinquency is more likely to be achieved. Strict sentencing policies are more likely to create a climate of fear and suspicion that is not conducive to a healthy community environment.

Ensuring a successful transition from school to employment is important in order to eliminate those conditions that encourage young people to act violently and antisocially. Unfortunately, many European countries have been unable to give the financial support necessary to allow children to participate and compete

solutions to current problems, these reports and the final conclusions of the seminar will be made available very soon on the Internet.

Summary of the conclusions of the Seminar:

- The Russian Federation has been to a great extent successful in improving the situation of elderly persons over the last decade. Further measures should aim at alleviating the situation of the poorest elderly persons and priority should be given to pensioners entitled only to a minimum pension.
- In Russia as well as in other States, single parents run a high risk of entering into poverty. Measures in this field should be implemented with a view to promoting equal opportunities and facilitating the parent's integration in the labour market and in society in a broader sense.
- The problem of vagrancy among children is to some extent a new problem in Russia (with the consequent lack of qualitative and quantitative research in this field). Fighting vagrancy among children should be made from a double perspective – problem prevention and problem alleviation – and should be based more extensively on research and data on vagrant children in Russia. Emphasis should be put on providing qualified personnel and on making use of alternative measures (e.g. foster families).
- In Russia, although social partnership structures are in place, participation is still very low. Suggestions were made along the following lines: supporting successful local initiatives and their organisational efforts, and making a more effective use of the experience of existing successful non-governmental organisations.
- Communicating information on social protection requires well thought-out communication strategies, active social partners, and co-ordination. One way of achieving this is by gathering the information in one place (e.g. local information centres or welfare offices addressing social protection in all its different aspects).

- In Russia as well as in other countries participating in the Penza seminar, better coordination (vertical and horizontal) between the different agencies providing social protection would result in a better distribution of available, and too often limited, social protection resources.

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Promoting access to employment opportunities – Pskov

This project is currently the largest Council of Europe assistance project on employment. It was developed in 1999 and the early part of 2000 in liaison with the Russian Ministry of Labour and Social Development.

The aim of the project is to improve the functioning of local labour markets in Russia and the professional capacity of the employment service in dealing with labour market issues. It will also contribute in a practical way to building up expertise in connection with future Russian ratification of the Revised European Social Charter (and in particular the 'right to work'). Three vulnerable groups in labour market terms on which the project should focus were identified: women, young people and ex-military personnel.

The Ministry of Labour identified the Pskov Region (North West Russia) to pilot the project. The Pskov Region has suffered industrial decline and high unemployment levels, particularly amongst women. Although the situation has improved, the three vulnerable groups identified still face particular difficulties finding employment.

Lead consultants for the project team were identified from the UK, Sweden and France. Additional support consultants for particular training workshops have or will come from Finland (local partnership), Belgium (staff development), Germany (programme

effectively in the labour market. Unemployment is often a normal part of the transition from education to work. In this context, community action aimed at creating and providing opportunities for young people to integrate successfully into society is very important (the Edinburgh Youth Social Inclusion Partnership is an example of a programme aimed at providing support for young people in all areas that affect them).

Involving children and adolescents in policies and processes that deal with their livelihood and well-being is important so as not to take decisions that do not reflect the reality of their existence. The creation of Youth Councils in France, in which young people can express their concerns and work together to find solutions, is an example of how children and adolescents can be encouraged to participate actively in their community, thereby alleviating feelings of isolation and social exclusion. The willingness of young people to participate in social and political life should not be underestimated.

Apart from the emphasis on a multi-agency approach that involves all community actors working together to provide a positive social, educational and working environment for young people, the report points to the need to address the problems that children face at an early age so as to ensure the best possible chance of success for community initiatives in the long term.

The Parliamentary Assembly will debate this report jointly with a report on *Security and crime prevention in cities: setting up a European observatory* presented by Mr Bockel (France) on behalf of the Committee on the Environment and Agriculture.

In the same week, the Assembly will debate another Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee report on *Building a 21st century society with and for children: follow-up to the European strategy for children* (Rapporteur: Mr Cox, United Kingdom). This will take account of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children taking place in New York on 19-21 September 2001.

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design and evaluation) so a wealth of international labour market experience is being brought to the project. In addition, Russian project team members were identified from the Regional Employment Service, the Education Services and the Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Following a fact-finding mission and a project meeting, a presentation seminar for over 50 local key players took place in February 2001, followed by 4 training workshops each for between 15 to 20 participants. These are the core activity under the project. The subjects on which the workshops have focused are: partnership (March 2001), staff development (June 2001), with one to follow on programme design and evaluation (late September) and local labour market statistics (November or early 2002). Two foreign consultants lead each workshop, which have a strongly participative style and practical orientation.

The key to the training and action programme has been to demonstrate the benefits of better management of the labour market. Thus the setting up of an actual partnership in the Pskov Region under the project, instigated by the Regional Employment Service, will be the 'glue' of the project bringing together all the key people involved in local labour market issues. They will be producing a booklet about the partnership. We are also planning to produce a training video about the project next year if funds are available.

A review meeting will be held shortly to discuss lessons learnt so far, to adapt the training, the action programme and the activities for the remainder of the project. In its next phase, it will be concentrating on dissemination more widely in Russia and possible linkages with other donor projects.

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Analysing the situation of the Roma/Gypsies - St Petersburg

As part of the Council of Europe's programmes of assistance to and co-operation with its member states, a round table on Roma/Gypsies in Russia was organised (25 and 26 June 2001 in St Petersburg) by the Migration and Roma/Gypsies Division (DG III – Social Cohesion, Council of Europe) in co-operation with the Ministry for Federation Affairs, Nationalities and Migration Policies of the Russian Federation and the Government of St Petersburg. It followed on from an initial round table held in Moscow in October 2000, at which the situation of Roma/Gypsies in the Russian Federation was raised for the first time at an international seminar.

Over 40 people attended the round table in St Petersburg: Roma representatives from various parts of the country, NGO representatives, Ministry for Federation Affairs officials, including representatives from ministry offices in regions such as Kaliningrad, Tulska, Penza, Samara and Volgograd, and representatives from the St Petersburg Government.

The discussions during the two-day round table were very lively. They mainly focused on the following themes: education, preservation of Roma culture, relations between Roma/Gypsy representatives and institutions, the role of the media in perpetuating negative stereotypes, the problems Roma face in the legal system and access to justice in general, difficulties in the economic and social field, shortcomings in terms of participation in society and, in particular, in politics, and the specific issue of compensation for the Roma victims of the Holocaust.

The Roma participants prepared and presented a series of recommendations, which will be circulated widely, in particular within central and regional government. All of the participants were also able to visit a village on the outskirts of St Petersburg that is home to a large Gypsy community.

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe: activities of the Committee on Social Cohesion

The Plenary Committee

Responsible citizenship and participation in local and regional public life

On 29 May 2001, during its eighth plenary session, the Congress adopted an opinion on the draft recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the participation of citizens in local public life. The text had been discussed beforehand by the Congress' Committee on Social Cohesion, which is responsible for this area and may be asked to carry out any follow-up on the matter.

Minorities, migration flows and social cohesion

Having heard at previous meetings about the sometimes difficult situation facing Roma/Gypsy communities, especially in certain central and east European countries, the committee has decided to organise a hearing of members of organisations representing Roma/Gypsies at its plenary meeting in Strasbourg on 9 October 2001.

On its own proposal, the committee has also been assigned terms of reference by the CLRAE Bureau on (lawful and unlawful) migration flows and social cohesion: the role of local and regional authorities. This will involve the preparation in 2002 of a report focusing on the return of refugees and displaced persons in south-eastern Europe, which could be followed by a conference on the subject in 2003. In this connection, the committee is seeking to identify exemplary practices and positive measures taken by local authorities in south-eastern Europe with a view to promoting the effective management of migration flows. Under these new terms of reference, the committee will also monitor the question of migration in the Mediterranean Basin.

Equality between men and women

In view of the comments made by Congress members during the last local elections in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", the committee

Two consultants, Ms Nicky Torode from the Minority Rights Group in London and Mr Alexandr Torokhov from the Association of Ekaterinburg Roma, were asked to draw up a report summarising the discussions at the round table and to make proposals for further co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation in this area. The report - MG-S-ROM (2001) 14, *Report of the round table on the situation of the Roma in Russia*, Saint Petersburg, 25-26 June 2001 - is available from the Secretariat in English and Russian.

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Promoting the European Code of Social Security in the Russian Federation

Promoting the European Code of Social Security in the Russian Federation is seen as one of the priorities of bilateral co-operation and a key element of the technical assistance programmes underway in the Russian Federation since 2000. Thanks to the signing the European Social Charter (revised) in September 2000, a fresh impetus was given to this activity. As is well known, Article 12, paragraph 2, of the revised charter provides that contracting parties are to "maintain the social security system at a satisfactory level at least equal to that necessary for the ratification of the European Code of Social Security".

On a practical level and since December 2000, the promotion of the Code is basically linked to a compatibility study of Russian legislation. This study should be finalised in 2003 when Russia will have prepared its trial "zero report" and when the experts involved in this process have presented their final report on compliance of Russian legislation with the Code.

Given Russia's size and the fact that social security issues fall within the remit of both the Federation and the federate entities (89 regions and republics), it was decided not to adopt the traditional working method.

Firstly, a number of training seminars on the code were planned, not only in Moscow but also in some of the federate entities of which the huge Federation is composed so as to have as wide an impact as possible. In 2001, two seminars of this type were planned: the first, on 10-11 May in Moscow, gathered experts from the Council of Europe and Russian specialists; the second should take place in December in St Petersburg. In 2002, it is planned to organise similar seminars in Pskov (Northwestern Federal Region), Irkutsk (Urals and Siberian Federal Regions) and maybe Krasnodar (Southern Federal Region, including the republics of the North Caucasus).

Secondly, joint teams of experts from the Council of Europe and Russia have been set up so that Russian laws and draft legislation can be examined in greater depth and the Russian specialists can be familiarised with the Code's standards and procedures. The help of Russian experts is particularly important to gain an understanding of all aspects of the radical pension system reform underway in Russia.

The contribution to these activities by the ILO experts should be emphasised. Under the co-operation agreement set-up between the ILO and the Council of Europe, the ILO participates in study visits and training seminars and will be drawing up their conclusions on the Russian Federation's trial "zero report", in accordance with the procedure for monitoring the Code. The ILO office in Moscow and DG III - Social Cohesion jointly organised a seminar on minimum social security standards in Moscow in May 2001.

Parallel co-operation with our colleagues from the European Social Charter is another important part of this work. During a seminar that was organised in Moscow last May by the Secretariat of the European Social Charter a presentation on promoting the European Code of Social Security in Russia was made.

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has proposed drafting a recommendation on women's individual voting rights: a democratic requirement. The aim here will be to stress that women's individual voting rights are a precondition for the exercise of civic rights in all European countries, while putting forwards solutions to restrict the practice of "family voting" at local, regional and national level.

The Committee of the Chamber of Local Authorities

The Chamber of Local Authorities Committee is organising a conference on local authorities and the prevention of cross-border crime, to be held in Enschede from 20 to 22 September 2001. This will round off the series of conferences on urban crime and insecurity held by the Congress over the last few years, which have led to the publication of a practical guide on the subject. The results of, and follow-up to, the Enschede conference will be discussed at the Chamber committee meeting in Strasbourg on 9 October 2001, at which attention will also focus on the role of local authorities in social service provision.

The Committee of the Chamber of Regions

The Chamber of Regions Committee prepared a draft recommendation and a draft resolution (which were both adopted at the Congress' plenary session in May 2001) on the impact of globalisation on regions, stressing regions' ability to limit the negative impact of globalisation by using active policies to make the most of available resources. The Chamber committee now wishes to identify the issues and problems of social cohesion in European regions through a survey of Europe's regions that will be prepared during 2002.

The Chamber committee will take part in the 2nd Forum of Cities and Regions of South-East Europe to be held in Istanbul on 2 and 3 November 2001, the aim of which will be to foster partnerships between European local and regional authorities.

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Promoting access to social rights in the South Caucasus

Since the fall of the Berlin wall, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia have begun a historic transition process towards market economies and democratic institutions. While much has been achieved, the process has turned out to be much more difficult than anticipated at the outset.

All three countries suffered a substantial output contraction at the start of the transition period followed by a sharp increase in unemployment, poverty and inequality. The emergence of mass poverty is a major social reversal affecting the well-being of a large part of the population in a profound way. Moreover, armed conflicts have further aggravated the situation, resulting in both human and material losses. They have also been accompanied by the creation of large numbers of refugees and displaced persons. At the same time, drastic budget reforms aiming to reduce public deficits have led to a deterioration of public services which has especially affected the poor.

It is within this context that, since 2000, the Council of Europe has been organising activities in the Caucasus within the framework of the technical assistance programme and in 2001 it has launched, with a voluntary contribution from the Japanese government, an important project on "Promoting access to social rights and anti-poverty strategies in the Caucasian Region".

The overall objective of this project is to contribute to a better understanding of the social problems in terms of access to basic social rights and to strengthen the analytical capacity of the policy makers at the national level in order to set appropriate goals and priorities for policy actions. In this way, the project will help Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to fulfil as soon as possible their commitments in the region which followed their membership to the Council of Europe and the signature and ratification by these countries of the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security at the end of the transition period.

National meetings took place in the three Caucasian countries – Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia – in May 2001. These meetings aimed at debating at the national level the problems of access to basic social rights. They included representatives of the ministries of labour and social affairs, economy and finance, housing, education, agriculture and environment, representatives of local authorities and representatives of the civil society and trade unions.

The principal outcome of these meetings was the identification by the countries themselves of priorities in the field of access to social rights and the setting up of a draft future programme of relevant activities that the Council of Europe could support in a complementary way with the already many activities supported by other international organisations related to poverty reduction.

A regional conference will be organised in Autumn 2001 to set up such a programme of activities. Emphasis will be put on supporting the capacity building of policy-makers and civil society in the formulation and implementation of relevant and effective social policy in the following fields:

- Active labour policy (with a particular emphasis on vulnerable groups such as women, youth, disabled, unemployed from rural areas and the specific problem of refugees).
- Institutions and practices of dialogue and participation between public authorities at national and local level, trade unions, NGOs and associations for promoting access to basic social rights. The project will focus in particular on the role of local partnerships for social and economic development and to support democratisation and civil society.
- Social protection (and in particular increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of social services at local level in the rural areas and those areas with a high concentration of refugees and internally displaced persons)

From a broader perspective, for 2002-2004 the Council of Europe has proposed to launch a joint Programme of co-operation with the European

European Social Charter: multilateral meeting on "Europeans' fundamental rights - Which rights? For which Europeans?"

This meeting for EU candidate countries was held in the Human Rights Building on 21 and 22 June 2001. It was the second in a series of three multilateral meetings organised under the "Promotion of the Charter" joint programme by the Council of Europe and the European Commission. The first meeting was held in Strasbourg in December 2000 and the third, which will deal with dialogue between management and labour, will be held in autumn 2001, probably in Brussels. The overall objective is to ensure effectiveness of fundamental social rights in Europe.

The purpose of the individual multilateral meetings is to deal with issues of common interest to all EU candidate countries so as to assist them with the effective implementation of the rights guaranteed under the European Social Charter or the revised European Social Charter, bearing in mind that the ratification and implementation of the Charter help to bring the legislation and practice of the candidate states into line with the *acquis communautaire* (body of EU law) in the fields covered by the Charter. In this connection, it should be noted that 12 of the 13 EU candidate states have ratified the Charter or the revised Charter and the 13th (Latvia) intends doing so by the end of the year.

The June meeting was attended by around 50 participants, including three from each candidate country: a government representative, a member of a national trade union and a member of Parliament or a member of an employers' association or a representative of a national NGO. Three topics were discussed:

The protection of fundamental rights throughout Europe

The purpose of this session was to introduce fundamental rights as guaranteed by the Council of Europe and the European Union and the place of the European Social Charter, as it exists today, within fundamental rights. It highlighted the developments that had taken place within the European Union up to the adoption of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in December 2000. The PowerPoint presentation of the Charter and its supervisory

DG III - SOCIAL COHESION : PROGRESS OF THE PROGRAMMES

Commission to promote and strengthen democratic stability and prevent conflict in the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia).

If accepted, it will be based on five pillars:

- Promotion of European standards in the protection of human rights;
- Legal reform and the development of local democracy;
- Achieving stability and development by promoting social cohesion;
- Improving education and support to cultural development;
- Development of state-society relations.

In the field of social cohesion, the expertise of the Council of Europe in standard setting and in the monitoring of the application of legal instruments as well as in the implementation of social

policies with a view to identifying best practices will be of essential value in facilitating the process of social stabilisation and development in the region. The creation of lasting peace, stability and prosperity in the South Caucasus will depend on the success of efforts to establish stronger social cohesion within the countries of the region. Stronger, more inclusive communities can contain the dangers of renewed armed conflicts, they allow investment to take place, orderly regional trade to develop and economies to flourish. Active policies promoting social cohesion are the key to achieving concrete, day-to-day stability and development in the South Caucasus.

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DG III - SOCIAL COHESION : STUDIES, ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH

A new network of social researchers

The first Council of Europe network of social researchers workshop took place on 14 -15 June 2001 in Strasbourg. Its main theme was "Towards innovative approaches to assess new social policy".

The objective was to mobilise a network of national research institutions in the social field to stimulate the debate on how to improve policy-making in the light of the understanding generated by the vast ongoing research programmes on poverty and social exclusion. The workshop aimed at both highlighting policy issues that need attention and giving useful insights into social diagnoses and policy.

The programme of the workshop was based on four work sessions according to the four main issues identified by the experts in their preparatory position paper:

- Social exclusion: A new analytical and operational framework for social policy?
- Targeting versus universalism: Assessing the new consensus on more individualised approaches for insertion.
- New partnerships in the fight against social exclusion: towards a new re- definition of roles between the State, the private sector, the civil society and the citizens.
- Main issues regarding monitoring and assessing social policy to fight exclusion.

Researchers from 14 different member states participated in the workshop. All the participants have acknowledged the added value given by the geographic diversity of the research institutions involved in the network. They also had the opportunity discuss various approaches and social policy frameworks and to stress the differences that exist between eastern and western Europe but also between Nordic countries and other members of the European Un-

ELSEWHERE AT THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

systems emphasised the wide range of rights it guaranteed (civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights).

Implementing the European Social Charter and preparing for the *acquis communautaire*

The second session showed the very great parallels between the *acquis communautaire* and the rights guaranteed under the Charter, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the two systems. Comparisons were also drawn between the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the revised European Social Charter, which served as the model for all of the social rights guaranteed in the EU Charter. The conclusion reached was that the relevant European Union instruments and the Council of Europe Social Charter were entirely complementary.

Whose rights? Equal treatment

As human rights should apply to all individuals, the third session asked whether this really was the case, in law and in practice, with regard to the European Convention on Human Rights and the Social Charter. As far as the Convention was concerned, it was noted that the restrictions imposed by the need to combine Article 14 with another article of the Convention had largely been removed by the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, while emphasis was also placed on the prospects opened up in social rights terms by Protocol No 12. In the case of the Charter, whose personal scope was based on the principle of comprehensive reciprocity, it was shown that member states went a lot further in practice than was provided for in the Charter, except as regards rights involving entitlement to benefits.

In conclusion, it was agreed that developments in terms of fundamental rights in Europe were very positive. Calls were made for even greater co-ordination between the European Union and the Council of Europe regarding social rights and new advances in the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and the European Committee of Social Rights with a view to taking greater account of social rights and increasing equality of treatment.

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ion. At the end, they all pointed out that the pan-European dimension of the Council of Europe gives a unique forum of exchange of experiences and ideas.

The main outcomes of the meeting are:

- A presentation of key social problems shaping the social policy debate in the different countries and the research programmes developed by the researchers' institution;
- The identification of the main characteristics of a social exclusion approach in social policy which would be relevant for both western and eastern Europe;
- The exchange of views on some innovative policies implemented in Europe.

The list of participants and a synthesis of the discussion will be available on the Internet site of the Social Cohesion Development Division: www.coe.int/t/e/DG3/Analysis_and_Research/

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A European seminar on “ageing migrants”

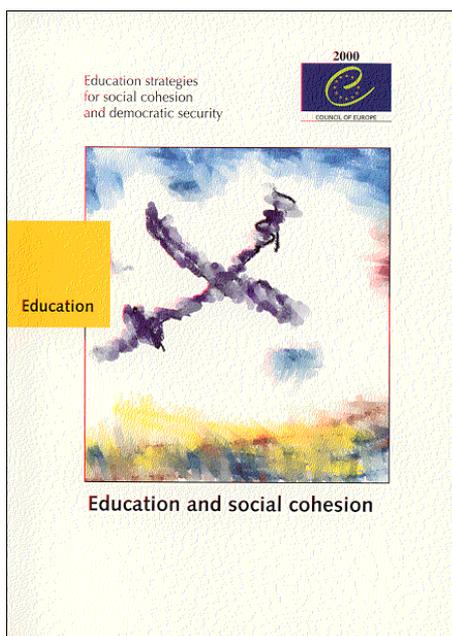
On 6 June 2001, the European Committee on Migration held its annual mini-seminar on the subject of ageing migrants – a term which refers to those migrants of 40 or more years of age who are legally residing in one of the member States of the Council of Europe. For the most part they are first-generation migrants coming from poor countries – including Eastern European regions – and living in hazardous social, financial and economic situations, without any perspectives for improvement.

In fact, until now, migrants in the above age group have often been overlooked in the development of community relations and integration

policies of the various member States of the Council of Europe. They have not been a priority group neither for the public authorities concerned, nor for non-governmental organisations. During the seminar, measures aiming at the promotion of such migrants' independence and self-esteem were examined and evaluated by the numerous participants.

Their situation might be characterized as precarious in view of:

- Lack of sufficient command of the language of the receiving country;
- Inadequate education, lack of skills, diplomas not recognized, lack of proper work experience;
- Dependence on social benefits for many years if not continuously which does not promote independence and self-esteem;
- Unemployment, or low paid and irregular jobs, without the possibility of building up enough – if any – pension rights;
- Social isolation and therefore little or no social participation in the receiving society, unless within their own families and some close relations in, for example, mosques, temples, or coffee houses;
- Intergenerational questions and problems: their children mostly follow the educational facilities of the receiving society, choose their own friends and adopt current and fashionable lifestyles and these often differ from the original culture, customs, values and norms of their parents;
- The social, financial and economic difficulties, which also may cause psychological stress in many cases result in health complaints and extra care needs;
- Dilemmas regarding return to their countries of origin or staying in the receiving society, which for the majority inevitably lead to the decision to stay definitively in the receiving country because of their children and grandchildren, the



Education and social cohesion

As part of its permanent activity “Education strategies for social cohesion and democratic security”, the Education Committee of the Council of Europe conducts a forum on topical issues each year.

The Forum on Education and Social Cohesion, held in Strasbourg on 23 March 2000, discussed some of the education problems facing European societies today: rising illiteracy rates, school dropouts and inadequately prepared school leavers, declining confidence in schools and other institutions, unequal access to education and even diehard pockets of gender inequality, to name but a few.

Some significant education measures directed towards countering this cycle were highlighted by the forum speakers: public-private partnerships, involving the business community and industry with schools; changing from the logic of economic growth to one of social development; curricula and the learning environment; and education systems providing moral and ethical education and lifelong learning.

The book “*Education and social cohesion*” reproduces the text of the communications of the experts that were present at the forum:

- Suzy Halimi (France) – *Education's contribution to social cohesion*

better social security systems, the living standards, safety and political stability; a minority of the ageing migrants who have some financial means and who are healthy enough, choose to "commute" on a temporary basis between their country of origin and the receiving country; in the end most of them stay in the receiving countries and some return only to be buried in the sacred soil of their parents and ancestors.

It would seem that there are no integrated and comprehensive policies designed to address the above-mentioned problems.

The seminar was introduced by Mr Emil Samuels, former Chairman of the European Committee on Migration, and currently responsible for devising an appropriate policy for ageing migrants in the Netherlands.

The ensuing debate was lively. It was noted that the percentage of elderly migrants (60+) of the total immigrant population is expected to reach 10% in some western European countries in 2020. Thus special attention should be paid to the pension rights of this group, particularly as very often migrant workers have had irregular and low-paid work and Furthermore, intercultural knowledge, practice, methods, abilities and attitudes are essential. Speakers also suggested creating more possibilities for exchange of experience and expertise between those working in these fields. It was noted that the wish amongst migrants to return to their home countries is widespread but that there were no standard models or practices to secure satisfactory return policies.

Government representatives also underlined that, in the context of the general age-discrimination in European societies, there should be more focus on real equity and equality on the basis of age as one of the components of diversity. Account should also be taken of the often bad health

conditions of ageing immigrants due to unhealthy working conditions and stress related to the situation of expatriation.

To conclude, the participants proposed further exchanges of knowledge and experience on the following issues:

- Adapted innovative policy measures for these target groups within the framework of general social policies, both on national and local levels.
- Intensive, specific and intercultural retraining and re-qualification schemes to improve the chances for (re) entry into the labour market for ageing migrants (40 plus); language (re) training courses.
- Tripartite consultations and commitments to improve (re) entry into the labour market; special attention for gender aspects.
- Promotion of intercultural knowledge, abilities, methods and attitudes, particularly with regard to personnel and management policies in the labour market at large and the public healthcare and social welfare sectors.
- Independent living, in dignity and safety for elderly migrants, including the development of group - housing facilities.
- Promoting actions against age- and race – discrimination, based on effective national laws and international treaties;
- Promoting social, educational, financial and mental assistance for migrants who wish to return to their home countries and lack the necessary means; preferably within bilateral frameworks of "co-development", with multilateral assistance.

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- Walo Hutmacher (Switzerland) – *Education systems and social integration*
- Ian Pearce (United Kingdom) – *Education and social cohesion: an employer's perspective*
- Madlen Serban (Romania) – *Education and social cohesion in the transition democracies of central and eastern Europe*
- François Vandamme (Belgium, and representative of the European Committee for Social Cohesion) – *Education and Social Cohesion : the Council of Europe.*

"Education and social cohesion" (Council of Europe Publishing, 2000, ISBN 92-871-4443-5) is available in French and English from Council of Europe Publishing, F - 67075 Strasbourg Cedex, Fax : + 33 (0)3 88 41 27 80, E-mail : publishing@coe.int

Please also note that...

The next Forum of the Education Committee will be dedicated to "*Equity and access to the right of Education*". It will take place on **2 October 2001** in presence of experts from Belgium, France, Hungary, Czech Republic, Sweden and Switzerland. The report of the forum will constitute a part of the contribution of the Education Committee to the work on access to social rights of the European Committee for Social Cohesion

Furthermore, in co-operation with the Congress of Local and regional Authorities of Europe, an expert meeting will be organised before the end of the year on preventing violence at school at local level.

A Seminar will take place on **20-21 September 2001** in order to set up a future project of the Education Committee on the Education for the Roma/Gypsies.

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A seminar on social development programmes

The seminar “**Pathways to Social Development**” took place on 28 - 30 May 2001 at the Convent of Arábida, (Portugal). It was the outcome of a co-operation between the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, the Council of Europe’s Directorate General III - Social Cohesion and the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe.

The idea of organising such a regional discussion (in the sense of world regions) emerged at the European Conference on Social Development in Dublin organised in January 2000 by the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) of the Council of Europe. The Dublin Conference recommended that “there should be a conference bringing together different world regions to examine the impact and advisability of different methods of protecting social rights”. This recommendation was strongly endorsed by the NGO Forum “Social Rights are Human Rights”, which was held at the same time as the conference, and by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Council of Europe member States in the political message which they addressed to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in Geneva (26 June - 1 July 2000).

The participants to the Portuguese seminar, invited in a personal capacity, were mainly academics and representatives of the voluntary sector. The debate was organised in two parts, one according to world regions and the other according to topical themes in the field of social rights.

Analysis of the situation in the major regions was conducted on the basis of papers prepared by the experts.

With regard to Asia, the focus was on the complexity of a continent in which rich countries, or those experiencing strong growth, co-exist with countries where there are major inequities. Economic growth has been embraced by authoritarian governments, such as the government of

China. This has resulted in increased inequities, but has also given rise, for the first time, to the outlining of an explicit social policy. In India, a democratic country with wide internal disparities, regions where women's rights are recognised (for example in Kerala) have been shown to have a better social balance, with no marked inequities.

The two presentations on Africa (French-speaking and English-speaking Africa) reflected concern about the continent’s increasing “marginalisation” due in particular to the growing number of HIV/AIDS cases, domestic conflicts and poverty.

The presentation on Latin America looked at progress made in combating the increased inequities resulting from globalisation. The example of Porto Alegre (Brazil) was given. Here, as in the rest of the continent, good practice always reflects a new and burgeoning dialogue at local level, aimed at achieving greater equity. The municipalities governed by Indians in Ecuador were mentioned.

Regarding North America, emphasis was placed on the poverty existing in the midst of great affluence. Social disparities affect minority groups, immigrants, etc. There are movements which have organised to fight poverty.

For Arab and Middle-Eastern countries, the emphasis was on the need to combine economic growth with Islamic ideals which transcend material concerns.

Concerning Europe, Professor Mary Daly (Northern Ireland) described a social policy founded on support for workers and democracy-building; additional remarks were made by Mr Carl Älfvag (Sweden, representing the EU presidency) and Mr Gerry Mangan (Ireland, representing the CDCS). The European Union is shown as the only group of countries working on the concept of a social model to accompany economic growth and reform.

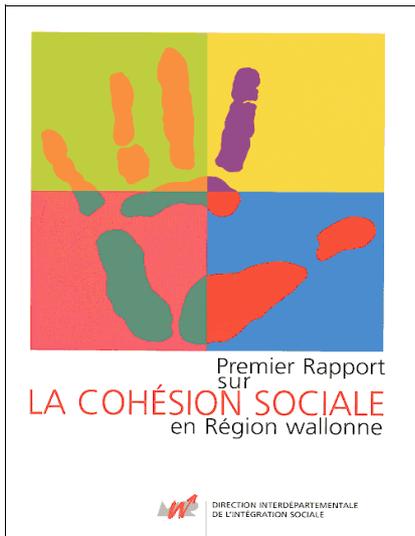
The second part of the debate reviewed progress on major social issues: women, human rights, issues relating to indigenous peoples, the governance of globalisation, and the

fight against racism. Below are two examples:

- a. The native or indigenous peoples of Latin America benefit from being present in institutions and express their values in terms of democracy, governance and participation. The presentation by Nina Pacari, an indigenous member of parliament in Ecuador, showed how indigenous people - who previously had no voice - are now putting forward proposals relating to rights and good governance and introducing participatory practices in local government. She stressed the importance of “territory” as a place of belonging and organisation, as opposed to “land”, which is an economic resource to be exploited.
- b. The adviser to the ILO Director General, Roberto Salvio, explained the ILO’s new strategy for responding to the challenges of globalisation. The idea the Director General wants to put across to member states is that a new approach is needed for the “governance of globalisation”. This new approach is rooted in the values acquired by states and society over the years through the implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights, the European code of Social Security code and other agreements signed by states for the purpose of defending social rights.

The seminar provided an opportunity for extremely rich and stimulating dialogue. It was also a concrete demonstration of the new working relationships, which the European Committee for Social Cohesion and Directorate General III – Social Cohesion have forged with the United Nations Secretariat, in line with the current policy of strengthening the Council of Europe’s role and visibility within the United Nations. The experience of active co-operation with the North-South Centre has shown the Centre’s capacity for adding a global dimension to our work, which is often too Eurocentric.

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First Report on Social Cohesion in the Walloon Region

Following the *Contract for a Future for Wallonia*, adopted by the Walloon government on 20 January 2001, and the *General Report on Poverty*, the Interdepartmental Directorate for Social Integration (*Direction interdépartementale de l'intégration sociale*, DIIS) of the Ministry of the Walloon Region was instructed to co-ordinate the drafting of the *First Report on Social Cohesion in the Walloon Region*.

Faced with a wide variety of concepts (exclusion, poverty, marginality, etc) and the implicit risk of stigmatisation that often goes with such situations, the authors of the report chose to make the notion of social cohesion the main theme running through their work. As the European Committee for Social Cohesion¹ points out, the aim is to build more cohesive societies in which the risks of social exclusion will be minimised. Thus, the purpose of social cohesion is not so much to introduce a minimum number of rights for excluded people as to enable everyone to enjoy the same rights. The aim is, therefore, not simply to safeguard against social risks, but to guarantee equal opportunities in every area of daily life (housing, health, culture, education, training, employment, etc). Accordingly, social cohesion is multidimensional.

This concern lies at the heart of the work of numerous international bodies.

The International Labour Organisation was the first to deal with the question of social rights at international level by recognising the economic and social rights of workers and then, through the 1944 Philadelphia Declaration, the right of all those in need to a basic income. Through the Philadelphia Declaration, poverty became the object of rights².

In the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the United Nations Organisation put economic, social and cultural rights alongside civil and political rights. The Declaration was implemented through the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* of 1966. Reference should also be made to the World Summit in Copenhagen in March 1995, at which participating states adopted a declaration on social development and an action plan for implementing it.

The aim of the Council of Europe is "to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress". "As a vehicle for international cooperation on social cohesion, the Council of Europe offers its unique situation as a pan-European forum bringing together forty-one States united by their commitment to a Europe based on pluralist democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law"³. Accordingly, its first major achievement was the drafting of the *European Convention on Human Rights*, which was signed in Rome in 1950. The Convention sets out the inalienable rights and freedoms to which every individual is entitled, regardless of their financial situation⁴. It was the first time that the subject of social exclusion had been dealt with at European level. Another basic text that should be mentioned is the *European Social Charter*, adopted by the Council in 1961 and revised in 1996, the aims of which are to secure the enjoyment of social rights without discrimination, and improve the standard of living and promote the well-being of populations. The rights it guarantees can be divided into two categories: those which concern conditions of employment and those pertaining to social cohesion⁵.

At national level, Article 23 of the Belgian Constitution sets out fundamental

social, economic and cultural rights. This Article is therefore the key to the *First Report on Social Cohesion in the Walloon Region*, which comprises three sections.

The aim of the section on statistics is to assess Walloons' access to certain fundamental rights, as set out in Article 23 of the Belgian Constitution.

The inventory section lists and explains no fewer than 86 measures taken by the Walloon Region concerning fundamental rights. There is no doubt that the question of the appropriateness and possibility of transposing them will provide plenty of fuel for discussion.

The section on analysis and recommendations, which is intended to be neither laudatory nor defeatist, attempts to convey faithfully expectations on the ground and supply decision-makers with a reference framework.

A methodological challenge and the fruit of co-operation between eighteen partners from the public and private sectors, this first report covers the whole range of Walloons' concerns as Europeans and paints a picture of their everyday life. The abundance of data that it contains, much of which is new, will help to fight the incisive judgments and comfortable platitudes that are too often excuses for not taking action to deal with exclusion as it really is. The complexity and urgency of this problem allow for no amateurishness.

The report or a summary can be obtained free of charge from the *Direction interdépartementale de l'intégration sociale (DIIS)*, Ministère de la Région wallonne, Place de la Wallonie, 1 bât. II, 5100 Jambes, Belgium - Tel: 32 81 33 31 40 - Fax: 32 81 33 31 44 - E-mail: DIIS@mrw.wallonie.be.

1) European Committee for Social Cohesion (2000), *Social Cohesion Strategy, revised third version*, Strasbourg.

2) E. Vogel-Polsky, *Les droits économiques, sociaux et culturels dans la Constitution*, Proceedings of the colloquy held at the Université Libre de Bruxelles on 21 and 22 December 1994, Bruylant, Brussels, 1995, p. 66.

3) European Committee for Social Cohesion, *Social Cohesion Strategy*, Strasbourg, 2000, p. 3

4) Council of Europe, *Activities and Achievements*, p. 22

5) Council of Europe, *op.cit.*, p.24

EAPN – fighting against poverty and social exclusion at European level

The European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN) was created in 1990 to bring together at European level organisations involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. The twin objective was and still is to be a platform for exchange of experience between them and to put the fight against poverty and social exclusion on the agenda of the European Union.

Only a few years after its foundation, EAPN asked for consultative status with the Council of Europe. This stemmed from the belief that, to be effective, the fight against poverty and social exclusion should not be restricted to the European Union and that EAPN should be present and bring its experience wherever anti poverty policies are discussed and designed. This also led us to be present at the Copenhagen Social Development Summit in 1995 and its follow-up meeting in Geneva in 2000.

EAPN obtained consultative status with the Council of Europe at an auspicious time. The Council of Europe had embarked in the ambitious Human Dignity and Social Exclusion project in which the organisations, which make up EAPN, were able to contribute fully.

EAPN is involved in the follow up to this project with a representative in the expert group on access to social protection. Other organisations in membership of EAPN take part in the group on access to housing (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless - Feantsa) and on access to employment (Association Internationale des Charités - AIC).

EAPN's main focus remains with the Institutions of the European Union. Early last June the social inclusion unit of the Employment and Social Affairs Directorate General of the European Commission received a voluminous document from each of the fifteen member states. These were the first national action plans against poverty and social exclusion drawn up by the member states as part of the European Strategy against poverty and social exclusion. EAPN claims to have played a major role in bringing this strategy about.

As soon as the Treaty of Amsterdam¹⁾ was ratified in May 1999, EAPN put forward the idea of a European Strategy to combat exclusion modelled on the employment strategy, with common guidelines, national action plans and verification procedures. EAPN issued a paper in May 1999²⁾ calling for a three-pillar strategy built on:

- the promotion of the effective exercise of fundamental rights by all;
- the promotion of an integrated approach; and
- the promotion of participation and partnership.

These ideas were further developed at a conference organised by EAPN in Helsinki in December 1999 supported by the Finnish presidency. At the same time EAPN pushed the idea with the Portuguese Government, which was to take over from the Finns in January 2000.

The Lisbon European Council of March 2000 did in effect launch the strategy over ten years giving a mandate to the following presidency (France) to propose common objectives to be agreed at the December 2000 Nice European Council. EAPN issued another paper putting forward objectives related to the three pillars of its earlier paper.

89th Session of the International Labour Conference

The International Labour Office (ILO) staged the 89th International Labour Conference in Geneva from 5 to 21 June 2001. The themes discussed were the decent work deficit, forced labour, health and safety in agriculture, cooperatives and social security.

The outcome of the debates was as follows:

- having considered the fundamental challenge of reducing the decent work deficit in a global economy and the argument that “reducing the decent work deficit is the quality road to poverty reduction and to greater legitimacy of the global economy”, participants (workers, employers and governments) acknowledged above all the need for an integrated approach combining labour standards with development priorities;
- for the first time at this level, labour standards were adopted in the field of health and safety in agriculture with the aim of protecting 1.3 billion workers in this sector;
- consideration was given to the Global Report on stopping forced labour and the Report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories;
- a new campaign under the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) was officially launched on 12 June 2001 with the aim of putting an end within the next ten years to the worst forms of labour exploitation affecting millions of children in three targeted countries – Nepal, Tanzania and El Salvador;
- in the light of the report on “Social security – issues, challenges and prospects”, which argues that social security is a key element of decent work, partici-

In the end, the objectives agreed at Nice are fairly close to what EAPN was advocating; they comprise four broad groups of aims:

- to facilitate participation in employment and access by all to resources, rights, goods and services;
- to prevent the risk of exclusion;
- to help the most vulnerable; and
- to mobilise all relevant bodies.

Member states committed themselves to translate these objectives into national action plans to be produced by June 2001.

A vital element of the "open method of coordination" consists in evaluating the strategy and in elaborating common European indicators. The European Council is due to agree indicators at the end of this year.

EAPN has issued a paper on these last June, which makes the following proposals:

1. The basics of a methodology for monitoring and evaluating the strategy to tackle poverty and social exclusion must be spelled out: participation and self-expression by people experiencing poverty and exclusion, involvement by NGOs in the evaluation carried out at European level, open peer review meetings, the Commission's development of its own sources of expertise, setting up a network of national and regional observatories on poverty and social exclusion.
2. A process must be set rolling to develop indicators with the participation of people experiencing poverty and exclusion, and to develop common quantitative and qualitative indicators on access to fundamental rights, prospective beneficiaries, key life experiences, forms of hardship, participation in community life.

3. As a first step indicators of poverty and social exclusion to be agreed should include indicators of access to fundamental rights (access to income, work, education and training, healthcare, housing, family life).

¹⁾ EAPN had fought hard to get a social exclusion chapter into the Treaty of Amsterdam. We did not get it, but Article 137 enlarged the possibility for the Union to foster co-operation between Member States in this area.

²⁾ Most EAPN documents are available on the Internet at following address: www.eapn.org

EAPN lobbying documents

- EAPN proposals for evaluation, monitoring and indicators (June 2001)
- Adequate objectives for a European strategy against poverty and social exclusion: EAPN's proposals (June 2000)
- Mainstreaming poverty and social exclusion: Integrating the fight against poverty and social exclusion across all areas of public policy to promote social cohesion (March 2000)
- Social exclusion: Time for action - Summary report of the EAPN Helsinki Conference (November 1999)
- A Europe for all: For a European strategy to combat social exclusion (May 1999)

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Participants discussed social security developments around the world. They agreed that the priority of any social policy must be to offer social cover to those without it and reaffirmed the principle of equality between women and men in access to social security;

- the ILO Working Party on the Social Dimensions of Globalisation set out plans for strengthening measures. Two topics, employment and trade liberalisation, will need to be examined at greater length as of November, and an authoritative report on the social dimensions of globalisation should be prepared.

Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, the Council of Europe's Director General of Social Cohesion, addressed the conference on the topic of social security. She spoke of the importance attached by the Council of Europe to guaranteeing universal access to social protection and emphasised the Organisation's own approach, which focuses on human rights. In this connection, attention was drawn to the particular interest of the Council's two main legal instruments – the European Social Charter and the revised Charter on the one hand, and the European Code of Social Security, the Protocol to it and the revised Code on the other. Also highlighted were the political, economic and social advantages of establishing minimum standards of social protection so as to guarantee solidarity, social cohesion and socio-economic development in our societies. Ms Battaini-Dragoni concluded by observing that the two organisations must co-operate in order to ensure the continued development and survival of sustainable social protection systems which will in turn play a part in the sustainable economic development of member states.

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ADOPTED TEXTS

Recommendations:

- Recommendation Rec. (2001)6 of the Committee of ministers **on the prevention of racism, xenophobia and racial intolerance in sport** (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 18 July 2001)
- Recommendation 1523 (2001) of the Parliamentary Assembly **on Domestic slavery** (adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly on 26 June 2001)
- Recommendation 1530 (2001) of the Parliamentary Assembly **on the Situation and prospects of young people in rural areas** (adopted by the parliamentary assembly on 27 June 2001)
- Recommendation Rec. (2001)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states **on the management of organ transplant waiting lists and waiting times** (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 March 2001)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Newsletters:

- The newsletter *Activities on Roma/Gypsies* (Migration and Roma/Gypsies Division) available on Internet : http://www.coe.int/T/E/dg3/Roma_Gypsies/Archives/ or from Judith Butler, Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 27 31, E-mail: judith.butler@coe.int
- The *Newsletter on activities within the Project "Roma under the Stability Pact"*, Issues Nbr 1 and 2, also available from Judith Butler, Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 27 31, E-mail: judith.butler@coe.int
- The Newsletter on the European Social Charter *Social Rights = Human Rights*, available on Internet: <http://www.socialcharter.int>
- *The Pompidou Group Newsletter n° 2* (mid-October 2001), will be available on Internet www.pompidou.coe.int or from Catherine Lahmek, Tel: + 33 (0)3 88 41 29 87 or E-mail: catherine.lahmek@coe.int

Reports:

- *Education and Social Cohesion*, Council of Europe Publishing, November 2000, ISBN 92-871-4443-5
- *Innovatory Social Policies in the City - Proceedings of the Oslo Conference* (22 - 24 June 2000), Vol. 1 and 2, July 2001, Council of Europe Publishing

CALENDAR FROM SEPTEMBER 2001 TO NOVEMBER 2001

Conferences:

- 25 - 26 October : Conference on "The role of social services in sustainable social development" - Berlin, Germany
- 7 - 9 November : Regional conference : "Which social policies for anti-poverty strategies in the Caucasus ?" - in one of the Caucasian countries
- 20 - 22 September: Conference on "Prisons, drugs and society: good practice guidelines for prison services" - Bern, Switzerland

Seminars:

- 8 - 9 October: Seminar on Substitution programmes (Pompidou Group) - Strasbourg
- 18 - 19 October: Forum on "New social demands and governance" co-organised with the Nordic Council of Ministers - Strasbourg

Meetings:

- 18 - 20 September: 3rd meeting of the Committee of experts on standard-setting instruments in the social security field - Strasbourg
- 10 - 11 October: 48th meeting of the Pompidou Group's Permanent Correspondents - Strasbourg
- 10 - 12 October: 6th meeting of the Group of Specialists on Access to Housing - Strasbourg
- 15 - 16 October: 6th meeting of the Group of Specialists on Access to Social Protection - Strasbourg
- 18 - 19 October: 5th meeting of the Committee of Experts on promoting Access to Employment - Strasbourg
- 23 - 24 October: 12th meeting of the Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies - Helsinki, Finland
- 25 - 26 October: 5th meeting of the Group of Specialists on the demographic characteristics of immigrant populations - Strasbourg
- 6 - 7 November: 4th meeting of the Group of Specialists on the demographic implications of social exclusion - Strasbourg
- **14 - 16 November: 7th meeting of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) - Strasbourg**

"Social Cohesion: Developments" is the DG III - Social Cohesion Directorate's electronic newsletter - **Publication:** issued three times a year - **Members of the editorial committee:** **Gilda Farrell** (responsible editor), Head of the Social Cohesion Development Division - Maria Ochoa-Llido, Head of the Migration and Roma/Gypsies Division - Cathie Burton, Press Officer - John Murray, Head of the Social Policy Department - **Françoise Zahn** (writing, co-ordination and layout), Tel.: + 33 (0)3 90 21 47 94, E-mail: francoise.zahn@coe.int