

Editorial

I have pleasure in presenting in this issue No. 6 of "Social cohesion developments" the main events organised by the Directorate General for Social Cohesion (DG III) in 2002. These have been mainly concerned with the future of social security and with migrants' place in this context and in our societies in general. They go to the core of key questions raised by the phenomenon of globalisation: flexibility of employment markets, labour mobility and the modernisation of social protection systems.

One of the greatest achievements of the 20th century has been the development of social security systems, in various forms, throughout Europe. Now, these systems need to be adapted to present-day requirements and re-organised while preserving the principles of social justice and solidarity on which they are founded, at the very time when population ageing and falling birth rates are placing their viability in doubt. The Committee of Experts on Standard-Setting Instruments in the Social Security Field (CS-CO) will be analysing these subjects in detail in the coming months.

For the first time, at the 8th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Social Security, which met in Bratislava (Slovak Republic) on 22-23 May 2002, these questions were addressed differently, from the fresh angle of migrant workers' movements and the need to recognise their social rights.

As Mr Péter Magvasi points out, "migration plays a key part in contemporary social transformation (...) and migration policies must balance international solidarity, on the one hand, with social, economic and political

interests in the receiving countries on the other" (see interview on p. 2).

The Conference found that the management of migration, both legal and illegal, has become a most important political issue. For two decades, migration contributed to economic prosperity in the countries of western Europe and at most certain aspects could be regarded as a social problem. After the oil crisis and the economic recession, legal labour migration ground to a halt. The following decade was marked by increasingly stringent measures to control immigration.

The role of a Human Rights organisation such as ours is to emphasise the economic and human investment that migrant workers represent in an enlarged Europe which needs manpower, and to foster their integration in our societies.

Immigration, which ought to be synonymous with successful integration (see May 2001 special issue of the Newsletter), and social protection for migrant workers and their families were presented at the Bratislava Conference as a positive opportunity for governments, because they help to compensate for manpower shortages and increase labour mobility in Europe. Labour migration must be regarded as a positive factor in the short and medium term furthering the viability of systems and helping to balance demographic trends in the receiving countries.

In addressing a difficult, controversial political topic, the Conference brought home to those responsible for social security the part they play in adopting measures to regulate labour supply that combat illegal migration without encouraging racist, xenophobic or unduly security-oriented reflexes.

This Conference was a kind of prelude to

the other major event of the year, the 7th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Migration Affairs, scheduled for 16-17 September 2002 in Helsinki (Finland). The main conference theme will be "Migrants in our societies: Policy choices for the 21st century" The ministers will discuss the challenges migrants represent both for integration policies and for migration management policies.

The third important date in this year's calendar is the Forum "New social responsibility in a globalising world: the role of the State, the market and civil society", to be held in Strasbourg on 2-3 October. It is being organised by the Council of Europe's Division for the Development of Social Cohesion in co-operation with the Committee for Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament and the Flemish Ministry for Economy, Foreign Policy, Foreign Trade and Housing. The aim is to launch a debate on three themes related to social responsibility in the present day: how to exercise social responsibility (institutional roles and frameworks), how to assess (instruments and exercise of transparency) and how to think globally (respect for identities and reduction of inequalities in the world).

Social responsibility is a crucial question, both for governance and for the future of the European social model and the way in which bonds are woven between Europe and the rest of the world.

These three events enable DG III to answer new questions arising in our society and help us pursue our objectives of promoting social cohesion.

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INTERVIEW WITH MR PETER MAGVASI

MINISTER OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AND FAMILY AFFAIRS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Newsletter: What was Slovakia hoping for from the 8th Conference of European Ministers responsible for social security? What do you think were the main achievements of the Bratislava conference?

The thematic of the 8th Conference of European Ministers responsible for social security, held on the threshold of the 21st century, was extraordinarily relevant to Europe. The social processes of Europe were outdistanced by the political and economic integrating processes.

It is necessary to address the integrated unity of political, civil and social rights of the European continent's citizens, otherwise our concern for the universality of human rights would remain just so much talk. However, the processes in-

involved in globalisation comprise not just movements of goods and finances but of people and cultures as well. This is the legacy of the Bratislava conference, clearly formulating that migration is not only an issue addressed by repressive bodies but is also of importance to bodies engaged in questions of social status.

Newsletter: What does immigration mean for your country's economy?

Migration for work has its positive effects and it can lead to an increase in the level of know-how, knowledge of modern technologies, management and processes in industry, research, education and culture. It should, however, be understood as the mutual enrichment of cultures, benefiting a balanced and

sustainable development of the entire human society, not only a few nations.

Newsletter: Slovakia has changed radically over the past few years. What challenges have you faced in the field of social protection?

One of the key factors in the fulfilment of human rights is to socially protect people. Certain neo-liberalist tendencies are trying to narrow down all human action to a profit orientation obtained from economic activities. This resulted in conflicts in the reform of labour law, where slogans such as "flexible labour force" were actually forms of social dumping. Reduced employees' social protection cannot be seen as a competitive advantage. So far, we have succeeded in ensuring this axiom.

INTERVIEW WITH IGOR KOSIR

DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE SLOVAK MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AND FAMILY AFFAIRS



The interview with Mr Kosir was made in Bratislava during the Conference..

What was Slovakia hoping for from the conference and what is your assessment of it?

Firstly, the conference has shown, with a large number of specific examples, that migrant workers are an asset to social protection systems in the receiving countries, helping to finance the systems and to give them long-term solidity. What we have to do now is create general awareness of this, permanently disabuse people of the notion that migrants are some kind of threat and present migrants in a positive light. For the past two days we have been promoting a

new social-security culture based on balanced treatment of all, migrants and nationals alike.

Is Europe going to make any difference to migration patterns in Slovakia?

Having long been an emigration country, Slovakia is starting to attract foreign workers, in particular Ukrainians and, increasingly, Asians. The Spanish and Portuguese representatives demonstrated that, after decades as emigration countries, Spain and Portugal have seen a reversal of the trend since joining the European Union. We shall undoubtedly experience the same process, and so we need to prepare the ground now by learning to be hospitable receivers of immigrants. However we are faced with illegal immigration as

well, and there is the further serious problem of a possible exodus of young graduates to other countries. We need to avert a brain drain by giving the younger generation incentives to stay on in this country.

After this conference, what are the next stages in giving effect to its recommendations?

In addition to creating public awareness of the positive part played by migration in our societies, all Council of Europe member countries must now honour their promises by signing and ratifying the Council's legal instruments in this sphere. Although Slovakia has not yet acceded to all of them I have no doubt that it will be fully playing its part in this in the months ahead.

The 8th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Social Security was held on 22 and 23 May 2003 in Bratislava, at the invitation and under the chairmanship of Mr Péter Magvasi, Minister of Labour, Social and Family Affairs of the Slovak Republic. A very topical theme for the future of social security in Europe was discussed: the implications of labour migration on social security systems.

The conference opened on the morning of 22 May with a signature and ratification ceremony during which three member states once again demonstrated their attachment to the Council of Europe's values. By signing or ratifying relevant Council of Europe legal instruments, they accepted new commitments in the social security field.

By signing the European Convention on Social Security and its Supplementary Agreement, the Republic of Moldova took a step towards equal treatment for migrant workers and the co-ordination of its social security system with those of other European states. Portugal ratified the Protocol to the European Convention on Social Security, which will now enter into force as soon as it is ratified by one more state. And by signing the European Code of Social Security, Romania marked its intention to set in place a social security system based on the minimum standards prescribed in that instrument.

Delegations from 39 of the Council of Europe's member states attended the conference, which was chaired by Mr Péter Magvasi, Minister of Labour, Social and Family Affairs of the Slovak Republic. The Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe were present and took part in the debates. The Holy See, Canada, Japan, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and also the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Social Security Association (ISSA) attended the conference as observers. The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the NGO grouping on "Social Rights, the European Social Charter, Work and Social Policy" attended the ministerial

discussions for the first time as special guests.

At the opening session of the Conference, Council of Europe Secretary General Mr Walter Schwimmer described the main problems faced by social security systems, including population ageing in Europe. He was convinced of "the positive contribution migrants could make to the social and economic development of the host societies" provided that there was "effective management of migration flows". Concerning the millions of migrant workers living illegally in Europe, with no social protection at all, Mr Schwimmer felt that governments "could no longer go on ignoring the problem". He pointed out that the Conference of European Ministers responsible for migration scheduled to meet in Helsinki on 16 and 17 September 2002, would be a unique opportunity to discuss the matter at the pan-European level.

Mr Péter Magvasi, Minister of Labour, Social and Family Affairs of the Slovak Republic and Chairman of the Conference, highlighted the role of the Council of Europe's legal instruments and, in particular, "the key role the European Social Charter has to play in employment policies and health systems".

Spanish Secretary of State, Mr Camps Devesa, Vice-Chairman of the Conference, emphasised the Council of Europe's fundamental role in highlighting the need to work together "to build a prosperous Europe, which could not be achieved without social protection systems that were effective, viable and modern".

The working sessions gave Council of Europe member states an opportunity to take stock of their immigration policies and their social security legislation. Immigration and the social protection of migrants and their families were presented in a positive light, as an asset to the countries concerned, as they helped to offset the shortage of manpower, to combat poverty and to foster labour mobility in Europe.

In their final Communiqué the Ministers acknowledged the need to con-

tinue and step up the implementation of policies to facilitate the integration of migrant workers into the societies in which they live and work. Special attention must be given to their access to social rights, particularly social security. In order to achieve these aims, the participants recommended strengthening the Council of Europe's role as a promoter of co-ordination between its member States in the field of social security.

The Conference also recommended promoting wider ratification of the Council of Europe's legal instruments aimed at facilitating the integration of migrant workers, such as the European Social Charter, the Revised European Social Charter, the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers and the European Convention on Social Security. The Council of Europe should also bear in mind the special situation of migrant women, the consequences of illegal work for social security systems and the impact on social security of the new work and migration patterns.

In the context of European construction, the conference emphasised the need to establish links between the different social security systems in Europe in order to encourage the mobility of migrant workers while respecting their fundamental rights. This would also help to keep Europe's economy buoyant.

Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, the Council of Europe's Director General of Social Cohesion, stressed the importance Europe attaches to its diversity and closed the Bratislava Conference with the words: "the conclusions and recommendations you have just adopted show that you consider labour migration as something positive in the short and medium term that improves the viability of the systems and helps to balance demographic trends in the host countries".

The Conferences of European Ministers responsible for social security of the member states of the Council of Europe have been held on a regular basis since 1979. The next Conference should take place in 2005.

As announced in the issue N°5 of the newsletter "Social cohesion: developments" (February 2002), the Council of Europe is publishing the report entitled "Improving the quality of life of elderly persons in situations of dependency".

This report, which followed an in-depth analysis conducted by a group of experts specialising in provision for dependent elderly persons, is aimed at helping raise public awareness, which is increasingly important worldwide and in Europe in particular, of the needs of populations and societies that are currently ageing at unprecedented rates. It should also be remembered that the year 2002 is seeing two major events on the subject: the 2nd World Assembly on Ageing which took place in Madrid in April 2002, and also, in Europe, a top-level regional meeting to be held in Berlin in September 2002, namely the European Ministerial Conference on Ageing, which will also involve the United Nations (on this issue see article on p. 12).

The report by the Council of Europe Group of Specialists on Improving the Quality of Life of Elderly Dependent Persons (CS-QV) seeks to identify measures to improve the quality of life of elderly persons in situations of dependency, including those suffering from various forms of dementia.

The starting point for the report is the realisation that despite all the different types of medical treatment available for many of the illnesses associated with old age, it is not uncommon in Europe for elderly persons to be unable to perform certain tasks of ordinary everyday life, and therefore to require a wide range of care and help, often for long periods. Moreover, the life expectancy of people with developmental disabilities has increased considerably in recent decades. These facts, together with the moral and contractual obligations of the member states of the Council of Europe (signatories to the European Social Charter and the Revised Charter), have prompted the Organisation, via this report, to urge all European countries to innovate and improve the well-being and quality of life of all people as they grow older, including people who are or become more and more dependant.

The availability and quality of health and social care services are important deter-

minants of health and well-being for dependent persons. The report acknowledges that the Council of Europe states attach great importance to supporting their citizens throughout their lives, including during old age, but also stresses that many of the existing care arrangements for dependent elderly persons are fragmented and, in some instances, inadequate. The report recommends solving this problem by encouraging and developing local, integrated, multidisciplinary, accessible and high-quality local services ensuring continuous provision and respect for the health, social, psychological and emotional needs of dependent elderly persons and their carers. This applies to both formal and informal support mechanisms, some of which fall outside standard health care and social welfare budgets. There is also an emphasis on ensuring freedom of choice, supporting independent living, promoting health and functional ability and preventing dependency at all stages in life.

The report presents various policies and measures aimed at optimising the living conditions of dependent elderly persons and their carers, and one of the Appendices sets out twelve examples of innovation and good practice in different European countries. These examples obviously cannot cover all the efforts being made throughout Europe in this field, but they are a good illustration of what the report would like to promote, such as inter-generation solidarity aimed at promoting social cohesion in Europe, and proper respect for the elderly and their specific needs. Most of the chapters end with a number of recommendations, which are in fact recapitulated at the end of the report itself (see below). The ten recommendations, like the report as a whole, can in no way be seen as closing the debate on the status and well-being of senior citizens in Europe, and the Council of Europe would advocate granting such persons full citizenship and full enjoyment of rights.

Recommendations of the Group of Specialists on Improving the Quality of Life of Elderly Dependent Persons (CS-QV)

1. Care and support services for dependent elderly people should respect the integrity, autonomy and dignity of the elderly person and enhance their participation and independence.

2. Primary health care should be expanded and co-ordinated with social care and with secondary care, and delivered by appropriately trained staff.

3. Home-based care for dependent elderly people should be delivered locally by appropriately trained staff, in a flexible, co-ordinated manner, within the framework of an expanded and integrated health and social care system. A dynamic system should be set up, fostering a progressive transition from help provided at home to various types of centre-based care, geared to the changing needs and requirements of dependent elderly people.

4. Day care centres and respite care provision should be expanded for all dependent elderly people, including people with dementia.

5. People with dementia should receive dementia-specific services in appropriately designed environments from people who are trained to deliver such care.

6. When family members act as carers, this should be expressly recognised by giving them certain legislatively based rights, and their own needs, eg access to information, training, respite and other support services, should be fully met.

7. Special attention should be given to the development of a variety of geriatric medicine facilities, including day hospitals, which are capable of responding to the individual needs of dependent elderly persons.

8. Assessment and rehabilitation services, based on a geriatric and multidisciplinary approach, should be available to elderly people in all types of care settings.

9. High quality long-stay care should be available for dependent elderly people in a variety of appropriate settings staffed by trained personnel.

10. The prevention of loss of autonomy and of dependency for elderly people should be a central tenet of health, social care and environmental policy throughout life.

This report has been published beginning of August 2002 at Council of Europe Publishing, ISBN 92-871-5000-1

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The movement and encampment of Travellers in Europe

The Council of Europe is again looking at this issue, a matter of frequent concern since the 1960s, when the Council's member States were those countries now in the European Union and many Roma, Sinti and Gypsies still had a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle.

At the request of the Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies and Travellers (MG-S-ROM), two Strasbourg consultants (Dominique Steinberger, from the Gypsy association ARPOMT, and Laurent Keller, a lawyer specialising in movement issues) have drawn up a report. *The Movement of Travellers in Council of Europe member States* has just been published and deals with the problems encountered by nomadic groups in terms of movement and encampment, i. e. in maintaining their traditional way of life.

The report was prepared on the basis of a questionnaire sent to all Council of Europe member States and to a number of NGOs involved in this question. It covers the main countries where Roma, Sinti and Gypsies still maintain a way of life that is linked to travelling, and those countries where there is a Traveller population. These are France, Great Britain, Ireland, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany and Italy (where the term nomadic is often wrongly used to refer to groups that do not in fact fit this description).

The consultants propose a number of measures to member States, aimed at reducing the obstacles to the free movement of Travellers and increasing the number of encampments (eg allowing national authorities to intervene if local authorities fail to meet their obligation to create encampment sites, improving site management through dialogue with end-users, setting up an internet site with information on Travellers' rights and duties and encampment facilities, etc).

A round table was held in Strasbourg to discuss the consultants' proposals on 3 and 4 June 2002. About 25 people from 6 countries, representing nomadic groups, travellers' NGOs and the central authorities, discussed their day-to-day experiences. All emphasised the increasing difficulties that they faced in trying to perpetuate a traditional way of life for certain groups in western Europe. In fact, accord-

ing to the participants' accounts, the main obstacle to freedom of movement is the absence of a right to encamp: if one cannot halt, one is forced to become sedentary, since, in order to travel, one must also be able to stop! The difficulties come in all forms: lack of encampment sites, insufficient facilities in those sites that do exist, problems in gaining access to basic civil and social rights (such as the right to vote, access to certain welfare benefits, schooling), rejection and social exclusion, lack of willingness on the part of local authorities to engage in dialogue, etc.

A rough draft of a Committee of Ministers recommendation to member States on the subject was produced at the meeting. It proposes measures to improve the situation regarding movement and encampment. In addition, it is planned to pursue the work on movement within the Council of Europe, since the problems connected with movement and encampment are only the "tip of the iceberg", as Prefect Merheim, representing France at the meeting, observed.

It would seem that the problems facing Travellers continue to be highly topical, especially in view of France's very recent amendment of the "Besson Law"¹⁾ (July 2002). The Council of Europe has no choice but to step up its research, come up with new proposals and promote dialogue in this area. Topics such as access to civil rights, social rights and services, education for travellers' children, etc, should be examined in depth. New working proposals will be put to the Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies and Travellers at its next meeting in October 2002. Incidentally, at the Irish authorities' invitation, the meeting is due to be held in Ireland, which has a large community of well-organised Travellers who are very active in defending their rights and way of life.

1) Law n°200-614 of 5 July 2000 on the reception and accommodation of Travellers

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The European Population Committee

In June 2002 the European Population Committee (CAHP) held its third meeting. This occasion marked the start of the new working methods following the reform of

Strengthening of the Statute of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

ECRI is a body which was set up further to a decision taken at the 1st Summit of Heads of State and Government of the member States of the Council of Europe, which took place in Vienna in October 1993. Since its inception, ECRI has gradually developed a strategy to combat racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance firmly focused on defending and promoting human rights. Over the years its activities have broadened to cover all necessary measures to combat violence, discrimination and prejudice faced by persons or groups of persons in particular on grounds of race, colour, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin.

Two major events in the year 2000 (the Strasbourg European Conference against Racism and the Rome European Ministerial Conference on Human Rights) both recommended the reinforcement of ECRI and, in response, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe recently adopted a Resolution to this effect.

This Resolution, which was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 June 2002 and will enter into force on 1st January 2003, clearly confirms ECRI's specific role as an independent mechanism for monitoring racism and racial discrimination in the 44 member States of the Council of Europe. The Committee of Ministers felt that this reinforced Statute should build on, consolidate and further develop the Commission's achievements so far; accordingly it is in line with the activities carried out by ECRI to date, while giving added weight to certain aspects.

The principle of the independence and impartiality of the members of ECRI is expressly guaranteed in the new Statute. These members, who serve on the Commission in their individual capacity and do not receive any instructions from their government, must have high moral authority and recognised expertise in dealing with racism and racial

the Council of Europe's population activities. The new working methods imply that the committee should engage in four annual research activities and that these activities should have a clear link to the work carried out in other committees and bodies of the Council of Europe. For this reason the European Population Committee seeks to participate actively in the work of other committees and bodies of the Council of Europe.

This year the CAHP, after consultation with the Committee for Social Cohesion, the Committee for Migration and subcommittees of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress for Local and Regional Authorities, suggested to the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers that it carry out work in the following four research areas:

- Active Ageing;
- The Active Population;
- Low Fertility;
- Reproductive Health.

After receiving the Committee of Ministers approval, all four activities were launched in January 2002. (A more detailed outline of the objectives for this work can be found on the European Population Committee web site: http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social_Cohesion/Population/). The draft reports on the four topics prepared by consultants were presented at the June meeting giving the committee members and the consultants the opportunity to exchange opinions and experiences with a view to providing the level of high quality work that has characterized the European Population Committee in the past.

The work has now entered into its finalization phase and final drafts are currently being prepared for presentation at the 4th CAHP meeting which will take place in November 2002. At this meeting the committee should give its approval to publish the work in the European Population Studies series for a wide distribution of the results. In the interim, draft versions of the study will be available electronically via the "European Population Papers" series of the committee's web site. After the November meeting the committee intends to contact those committees and bodies of the Council of Europe that may have an interest in the results and arrange for presentations and hearings of the findings.

As in past years, the European Population Committee continues to publish the an-

nual report "*Recent Demographic Developments in Europe*". The work in preparing the 2002 edition is well underway. It is estimated that the 2002 edition will be distributed in the last week of November, following a press release. The release of the 2002 edition will coincide with the release of two reports in the Population Studies series – "*The Demographic Characteristics of Migrant Populations*" and "*People, Demography and Social Exclusion*".

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Current activities in the health field

Within the context of its overall aim of achieving greater unity between the member states and contributing to social progress, the involvement of the Council of Europe in the field of health is aimed both at raising the standard of medical care and at promoting living conditions conducive to health.

The role of the European Health Committee (CDSP) is to give practical guidelines on policy issues affecting the daily life of citizens in the member states.

It bases its strategy on an integrated approach of medical developments on the one hand and the values of the individual – legal, ethical, social – on the other hand. Its activities are invariably aimed at the democratisation and humanisation of health services.

Availability, safety and quality standards of substances of human origin

Blood transfusion. In 2001 the Committee of Ministers approved the Recommendation Rec (2001) 4 on measures to be taken to prevent possible transmission of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) by blood transfusion.

The 8th edition of the *Guide to the preparation, use and quality assurance of blood components* was published in 2002. The Guide has become the "golden standard" for blood transfusion services world-wide. For example, Australia has mandated the Guide in its standard for blood components.

The European Health Committee (CDSP) published a report on the inactivation of

discrimination. They are appointed by their governments, such appointment being notified to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, who in turn informs the Committee of Ministers. If the Committee of Ministers considers that the appointment of a member is not in conformity with the provisions in the Statute concerning independence and impartiality, it may ask the member State concerned to proceed to another appointment. The members of ECRI are appointed for a term of office of five years.

The new Statute also reinforces ECRI's monitoring function, notably by consolidating its country-by-country approach. In this framework, ECRI drafts report on instances of racism and racial discrimination in all Council of Europe member States. In January 2003, it will begin the third round of its country-by-country approach, focusing on implementation of the recommendations contained in its previous reports and on particular issues, chosen according to the situation in the different countries.

The two other aspects of ECRI's programme cover work on general themes and relations with civil society. In this respect, ECRI is currently drafting its general policy recommendation no. 7 on national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination. This recommendation will spell out what should be the key features of appropriate national legislation in this field, covering constitutional, civil, administrative and criminal law. Lastly, with regard to relations with civil society, ECRI recently adopted a programme of action aimed at involving all sectors of society in an intercultural dialogue based on mutual respect. In the coming months, it will be placing high priority on the implementation of this programme of action.

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labile blood products which diminishes the risks of transfusion-transmitted diseases. The report gives the arguments in favour and against this procedure and gives advice on reaching a balanced decision.

Organ transplantation. In 2001 the Committee of Ministers approved the Recommendation Rec (2001) 5 on the management of waiting lists and waiting times for organ transplantation to ensure equity of access when demand exceeds availability.

The first edition of a *Guide on the safety and quality assurance for organs, tissues and cells in transplantation* was published in July 2002. This Guide is the first international text on the subject.

Access to safe and good quality in health care services

In 2001 the Committee of Ministers approved the Recommendation Rec (2001) 12 on the adaptation of health care services to the demand for health care and health care services of people in marginal situations. The Recommendation considers that it is the responsibility of the state to ensure that policies affecting health are developed in a coherent way to increase the potential for health gain and to avoid adverse effects on health.

The Committee of Ministers also approved Recommendation Rec (2001) 13 on developing a methodology for drawing up guidelines on best medical practices. The main aim of the guidelines is to support and promote good clinical practice in the best interest of patients.

As a contribution to the Stability Pact Initiative for Social Cohesion, the South East Europe Health Network was set up and performed a survey on access to health for vulnerable populations. This contributed to the Health Ministers' Forum in Dubrovnik, set up by WHO and the Council of Europe. The "*Dubrovnik Pledge*" commits ministers to meet the needs of vulnerable populations.

7th Conference of European Health Ministers

The Conferences of European Health Ministers, held at regular intervals, provide ministers with the opportunity to discuss policy issues of interest to all the member states. They are a source of inspiration for future work programmes and give impetus

to the work of the European Health Committee.

The 7th Conference of European Health Ministers is scheduled for June 2003 in Oslo. It will have as its theme "Health, dignity and human rights". This will further boost the Council of Europe's strategy of incorporating ethical, social and human rights dimensions in health policies and in health service reforms, bearing in mind the question of financial sustainability.

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Forum for children and families: Discussion on "Recreation and free time for children and their families" - young participants' views

According to the Forum's terms of reference, six young people participated in the 3rd meeting of the Forum for Children and Families which took place on 18-19 April in Strasbourg. They came from Estonia (Kristjan, 18), Finland (Vera, 17), Hungary (Endre, 16), Sweden (Linnéa, 16), Portugal (João, 16) and from the Russian Federation (Natalie, 17). All of them had previously taken part in Forum meetings. The Addendum to the report of the 3rd Forum's meeting (CS-Forum (2002) 8 Addendum) is entirely devoted to this debate which is summarised here.

The previous Forum meeting, held in November 2001, devoted a panel discussion to "reconciling working and family life: overcoming the obstacles of the present to picture the future". During this discussion the young participants highlighted the importance of recreation and leisure time and invited the Forum to study this issue more closely. As a response to this suggestion, the Secretariat invited all the children and young people nominated to participate in the activities of the Forum to share their thoughts and experiences regarding this topic. Some thirty replies were received. The Secretariat then asked the six young people to present the key points and to think up possible improvements in the area of free time for all family members and present these at the 3rd Forum meeting.

The day preceding the third Forum meeting, the young participants had the chance

The Education for Democratic Citizenship Project of the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe's Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) project was launched in February 1997 in order to identify concepts, methods and practices in the field of education that bring about responsible participation of the individual in democratic life.

In October of the same year the 2nd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe's member States underlined the need to raise citizens' awareness of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society, to activate existing networks and to encourage and facilitate the participation of young people in civil society. In 1999, the Committee of Ministers adopted the "Declaration and programme on education for democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities" and, in 2000, the project results of the EDC were endorsed by the European Ministers of Education at the 20th session of their standing Conference in Cracow. The project has resulted in a heightened understanding of EDC concepts, practices and methods; successful cooperation with, and analysis of, sites of citizenship (grassroots projects) in communities and schools; production of studies and training materials and the creation of a large network of decision-makers, experts, practitioners, NGOs and intergovernmental organisations.

The new programme of EDC activities for the period 2001-2004 is focused on EDC policy development, networking, communication, and awareness raising, including the dissemination of good practice and of EDC project findings. (See the website: http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/E.D.C/).

The Social Dimension of EDC

One of the aims of EDC is to prevent social exclusion by creating space for participation in the life of the society for all citizens, as well as by promoting the provision of equal rights, opportunities and the capacity to

to meet together and prepare this item with Mr Anthony Dronfield from the European Playwork Association (<http://www.go-epa.org>). At the Forum meeting, the young people chaired the agenda item. They started by explaining the background to the topic and gave a summary of their main findings.

The young participants presented four main themes from the written contributions. First, they noted that young people (but not teenagers who prefer to be with friends) do not spend as much time as they want with their parents due to parent's work commitments and children's homework. A third constraint is the lack of money. This is a common obstacle to access leisure activities. Reduced prices for recreational activities, build parks or places where the whole family could be together are suggestions on how to improve the situation; another example is to provide cheap or free holiday homes. Finally, it is difficult for young people to find places where to meet outside school. Either it is too expensive, has limited opening hours, is too far away or is simply closed down.

One participant noted that none of the replies reflected the issue, often discussed elsewhere, of the lack of fathers' participation. Does this imply that young people see the family as a unit, or that they do not separate the role of the mother from that of the father?

Regarding the shortage of places to meet, it was argued that this could be more problematic for girls who may not use sport facilities to the same degree as boys do. The question was therefore raised if activities for girls called for special attention.

Another issue of discussion asked if grandparents could be a substitute to parents. The young participants replied that grandparents are of course also important but they cannot replace parents.

Quality time versus quantity time was also debated. The young persons shared the same opinion. How you spend your time is less important than

the actual amount of time spent together. As they outlined, you need time to just be with your parents without doing anything in particular. Also you need time to argue and to discuss. It can be difficult to find time for this if you always aim to spend your free time in an optimal way.

The young participants defined the following future ideas and recommendations. These were distributed to the Forum members as well as to the children who had contributed written contributions to the topic:

- To encourage governments to support recreational institutions at national, regional, local and private level to provide support thorough low cost/free access to recreational opportunities, e.g. cinemas, museums, libraries, community centres, sports activities, etc. and the transport needed to reach these facilities.
- The establishment of family-friendly work places.
- The establishment of school curriculum that is exciting, relevant and reduces the need for homework.
- The support of tourist facilities to provide low cost/free holiday opportunities for poor/large families.
- Campaign for a portion of family welfare/benefit to be allocated to family recreation, essential for the well being of children and families.

The young people explained that they wanted to continue to carefully look at this subject during the Forum so they asked the other participants to reply to the following two questions: "What did you do when you were young?" and "What prevented you from doing that?" The replies were collected and will be studied by the young people. During the discussion the participants expressed their interest and promised to take back the suggestions to their national context, for example the free access to playgrounds.

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exercise those rights. The EDC in its life-long-learning perspective assists citizens in gaining abilities, which empower them and which provide access to the entire range of rights linking them with society in the areas of health, housing, employment, welfare and education.

EDC embraces a great variety of training, individual learning and non-formal education activities that help citizens develop on the basis of some universal values, such as the human rights, equality, freedom, interdependence, accountability, social justice, participation and partnership.

In the framework of EDC activities people acquire knowledge about democracy, interpersonal relations, human rights and responsibilities, children's rights, the structure and function of social, political, cultural and environmental institutions, etc. In terms of skills, EDC focuses on leadership, communication, problem-solving and decision-making, teamwork and co-operation, conflict resolution, critical reflection, risk taking, etc. As regards attitudes, EDC promotes openness to self and others, acceptance of cultural and social differences, readiness to share and delegate, respect for self and others, and trust and honesty.

EDC helps individuals understand better the functioning of a society. It also enables them to act in society, thus creating conditions for social cohesion and, at the same time, preventing exclusion. The practice of the French Site of Citizenship could be quoted as an example. A group of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Strasbourg received some basic legal training and information for example on the UN Human Rights Convention, rights of foreigners, social rights and criminal law for minors. They were also trained to deal with others in difficult situations, to express their grievances in legal terms and publicise them through the appropriate channels. A number of young people became leaders and mediators in their communities as a result. They assisted others in finding solutions for difficulties encountered in such areas as housing, education and in relations with local police.

(Continued on page 10)

SOCIAL DIMENSION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE INTEGRATED PROJECTS

"Making democratic institutions work" and "Responses to violence in everyday life in a democratic society"

The Integrated Project "Making democratic institutions work" and the Integrated Project "Responses to violence in everyday life in a democratic society" were launched in 2002 for a period of three years as a framework for inter-sectoral co-operation within the Council of Europe.

Integrated Project "Making democratic institutions work"

The Integrated Project "Making democratic institutions work" was set up in order to better assist member states in implementing European standards in democratic practice. The Project's overall aim is to produce a "road map" to strengthen democratic institutions so that they encourage the most equitable and active participation possible of all Europe's citizens.

Social welfare being a vital pre-condition for effective democracy, the Integrated Project "Making democratic institutions work" has planned a series of activities in the social field, in co-operation with the Directorate General for Social Cohesion.

In 2002, Integrated Project "Making democratic institutions work" contributes to a programme initiated by the Forum for Children and Families (Social Policies Department of DG III – Social Cohesion) on child participation in the family, school and local community, in co-operation with the Education for democratic citizenship programme of Directorate General IV – Education, Culture and heritage, Youth and Sport. The programme, which takes as a starting point article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, will actively involve children in evaluating local initiatives and drafting policy guidelines and practical tools for adults working with children.

Together with the Social Cohesion Development Division, Integrated Project "Making democratic institutions work" is co-organising the Forum on "New social responsibility in a globalising world" (Strasbourg, 2-3 October 2002) which will review the impact of globalisation on the social responsibilities of public authorities, enterprises, civil society organisations and citizens and suggest ways to construct new dynamic structures and frameworks for the development and implementation of social policies. The Forum will also stimulate a debate on the European social model and Europe's role in global social governance.

The Conference on Access to social rights (Malta, 14 - 15 November 2002), which is organised by the Social Policies Department, will focus on practical ways to enhance democratic citizenship through better access to social rights for all categories of the population. Integrated Project "Making democratic institutions work" is involved in the preparation of workshop N° 3 "Access to social rights and the functioning of democratic institutions: communication strategies and supervisory and evaluation mechanisms?" and workshop N°6 "The empowerment of users: how to put sufficient resources at the disposal of claimants to enable them to exercise their social rights?". These workshops will examine information strategies concerning social entitlements and services and their availability and accessibility for all potential users. Furthermore, the workshops will explore issues related to continuous evaluation of programmes, the use of resources by public authorities and user participation as ways to guarantee the effective exercise of social rights.

The Citizens' Forum on NGOs – key players in democratic governance (Strasbourg, 4-5 November 2002) is a joint activity of Integrated Project "Making democratic institutions work" and the NGO Unit of the Political Affairs Directorate. The Forum will bring together in a "quadrilogue" representatives of civil society, parliamentarians, locally elected officials and government experts who will debate on how to empower NGOs as partners in democratic governance in European societies and at the Council of Europe. One of the central themes in workshop discussions will be innovative practices in relation to NGO participation in the social field (advocacy, information and service provision).

Last but not least, the Integrated Project "Making democratic institutions work" ensures that issues of the accessibility of democratic institutions for people with disabilities, migrants, minorities and other vulnerable groups are systematically included in its activities.

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Integrated Project "Responses to violence in everyday life in a democratic society"

The Integrated Project "Responses to violence in everyday life in a democratic society", launched in 2002 for a period of three years, has now entered its fully operational phase. While the primary objective of the project is to help member states to implement consistent policies for combating everyday violence, it also contributes to renewing working methods and opening up unnecessary boundaries between departments within the organisation. The different organs and departments of the Council of Europe are pooling their resources to prepare co-ordinated and multi-sectoral responses to everyday violence.

The social dimension is present throughout the project. One of its specific aims is to prevent or curb violence which may be related to certain social developments facing Europe: i.e. cultural and religious diversity, social exclusion, trafficking in human beings and the mass media. Furthermore, another specific objective covers the elaboration of sectoral prevention strategies regarding violence in towns, in the home, in schools, at sports events and among young people.

While the Directorate General for Social Cohesion is contributing to the implementation of a wide range of different activities pursued under the inter-sectoral aegis of this Integrated Project, it has also assumed the leading role for several activities closest to its preoccupations. Such activities include the drafting of recommendations on preventing irregular migration through dialogue between host countries and countries of origin and transit; the preparation of a strategy for preventing drug and alcohol-related violence; and the drawing up of guidelines for the social integration of young people in disadvantaged urban areas. A seminar on corporal punishment of children within the family will be held in conjunction with the Forum for children and families on 21 November 2002.

The Integrated Project "Responses to violence in everyday life in a democratic society" will also publish a series of consolidated documents which will introduce the past and present activities of the Council of Europe in the social field with relevance to its theme.

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South-east Europe Strategic Review on Social Cohesion

The South-east Europe (Strategic) Review on social cohesion became an important element of the programme of assistance activities for 2001 and 2002 and a contribution of the Council of Europe to the Stability Pact for South-east Europe.

At present the following states are actively involved in the activity: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and Moldova.

Since 2001, the activity is being implemented through a series of thematic networks in the field of housing, employment, health and social protection. The networks are composed of national experts from the relevant specialised ministries, assisted by a consultant and the Secretariat.

The social protection Network

Social protection is an important aspect of economic development in the South-east Europe region, and an essential aspect of the contribution of the Council of Europe to the Social Cohesion Initiative (Working Table II) of the Stability Pact.

The Council of Europe together with the ILO and other International Organizations is currently supporting activities in the South-east Europe region in order to assist the ratification and application of international instruments in the field of social protection.

In South-east Europe, the strengthening of social protection depends heavily on improving scheme governance. This need extends both to building technical expertise in administration and to incorporating social dialogue into policy making. At the technical level, governments need enhanced capacity to analyse the financial condition of social protection schemes and to estimate the impact of reform options on financial solvency and benefit adequacy. Such capacity is essential in building public support for restructuring and modernization of social protection. There is also a need to adapt contribution collection procedures - an area in which experimentation and innovation will be required - and to increase operational effi-

ciency in the administering institutions (Stability Pact Social Cohesion Initiative, Draft Action Plan, Social Protection, Council of Europe and International Labor Organization, 2001).

With this objective in mind, the Council of Europe, in collaboration with the International Labor Organization, the Social Cohesion Initiative of the Stability Pact (Working Table II) and the Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia is organizing a two-day Conference on "Pension Restructuring in South-east Europe", to be held in November 2002 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Participants from the Council of Europe South-east Europe Social Protection Network from Albania, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Slovenia, will be debating how to strengthen their pension scheme governance and administration, presenting their experience and recent developments in pension restructuring. A regional overview of the current situation in the region will be presented, along with experiences from Central European countries, such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia.

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The Health Network

The Health Network has been undertaken as part of a joint programme of activities in the health field between the CoE and WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Decision has been unanimously taken that only the proposals responding to the needs of all countries involved in the process would be developed. Each of the countries became a focal point for coordinated development of appropriate projects. This approach clearly created solidarity instead of competition for assistance.

In 2002, The Council of Europe and WHO have continued their joint support to South-eastern European countries to boost public health and health developments with a two-pronged aim:

- To provide a framework within which health related initiatives jointly implemented by South-east Europe member states can develop. Through an overall role of coordination, guidance and technical assistance this would include

Two studies on the social dimension of EDC were conducted in the framework of the EDC project:

- "Education for Democratic Citizenship: Words and Actions" by Jean-Marie Heydt. This report throws light on how EDC is viewed by European citizens active in NGOs. It shows how they define citizenship, their attitudes, how the specific words are used, such as civic education, civics, etc.
- "Education for Democratic Citizenship and Social Cohesion" by Jean-Marie Heydt and Marie F. Brisdet. The second contains a report on a brainstorming session organised by the Council of Europe on EDC and social cohesion and a background study by Jean-Marie Heydt of the socio-economic dimension of democratic citizenship, reflecting on the results of various meetings and research carried out in recent years by various international organisations.

Cooperation and partnership

The current programme of activities in the field of EDC provides for trilateral co-operation on the issue of participation between the Education Directorate, the Youth and Sports Directorate and the Social Policy Department of the Council of Europe. Beyond avoiding overlap of similar areas of work, this trilateral co-operation aims to elaborate a shared strategy on promoting participation in democratic society for different target groups (children, pupils, young people, adults) through improved synergies between education, youth and social policies.

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support to implement South-east Europe commitments under the *Dubrovnik Pledge*.

- To provide continuous support to keep the issue of health on the agenda of the Stability Pact, including exploring the potential to mobilize available resources for the health component of the Stability Pact agenda, and to sustain WHO/EURO's role as an important partner in the Stability Pact process.

The strategic intent of the SEE Health Network is to sustain the momentum of good neighbourhood and to lead towards sustainable autonomous cooperation mechanism in the future, with the Dubrovnik Pledge and the Social Cohesion Initiative as leading guides. In particular, this includes the following projects:

- "Enhancing Social Cohesion in South-east Europe by Strengthening Community Mental Health Services";
- "Strengthening Surveillance and Control of Communicable Diseases in South-east Europe";
- "Strengthening Food Safety and Nutrition Services in South-east Europe".

To sustain the above-mentioned initiatives during the implementation phase of each project, each country involved has established a national core team comprising a focal point for overall national health coordination and one expert within each project area mentioned above.

In addition, Croatia has received a loan from the Council of Europe Development Bank to restructure the Andrea Stampar School of Public Health in Zagreb. Jointly with the Council of Europe Development Bank, the Council of Europe is also funding health activities in the field of blood transfusion and supporting the development of academic curricula for schools of Public Health. The SEE Health Network will also foster partnerships with relevant donors and partners for regional health efforts in South-east Europe.

This activity is governed by the principles of equal participation, equal share and equal benefit for all participating countries. It is based on the exemplary spirit of trust, co-operation and friendship among the participants, allowing the health issue to become a bridge to peace and development in the region.

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From 28 June to 1 July 2002, the Council of Europe's European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity, better known as the North-South Centre, organised a Conference on Euro-Mediterranean partnership for social cohesion and social development in Alexandria (Egypt).

The aim of the conference was to draw up proactive recommendations to combat poverty, encourage social development and strengthen social cohesion in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The plenary sessions and the working groups addressed all these issues, with particular emphasis on the need for greater consistency in economic and social policies for human development, the contribution of the international institutions to the fight against poverty and social exclusion, the shared responsibility for bringing about social development and social cohesion in the Euro-Mediterranean region, and the ways and means of setting up a responsible and committed Euro-Mediterranean partnership to promote social development and social cohesion.

In their final declaration, the participants called for the full recognition of the interdependence of human rights, democracy and development and the need for transparent and accountable governance. They deplored the fact that poverty is still present in the world, and in some cases is increasing (half of the world's population has to survive on less than 2 dollars a day). They considered this to be "the greatest mass violation of human rights in the world today" and expressed their regret that the commitments taken at international level were lacking only the necessary "political will (...) to achieve desirable progress towards already agreed objectives."

They further stated that "social development should become the intentional goal of global economic development. (...) Social development is not a drain on the economy or a mere correction mechanism to make economic policy acceptable, but a necessary and indispensable component of sound economic policy."

In conclusion, the participants put forward a number of measures to strengthen universal, regional and national social development policies.

These included:

- Firm commitment to and full application of gender equality-related objectives;
- Sharing and learning from best social development practices;
- Full recognition of the interdependence of human rights, democracy and development, and the need for transparent and accountable governance over national and global markets to make them serve the public interest;
- Recognition of the essential role of civil society as a mainstream stakeholder in social development;
- Reaffirmation of the recognised principle in international law not to backtrack on social achievements and to hold governments accountable to this principle by monitoring compliance with economic, social and cultural rights;
- Commitment not to violate the human rights of citizens not under a state's direct jurisdiction;
- More resources for human rights monitoring mechanisms;
- Recognition that globalisation without democratisation is unfair and unsustainable and a violation of the basic democratic principle;
- Recognition of the enormous importance of education, from capacity building in the South to raising awareness of the need for new consumption patterns and sustainability in the North, as a matter of common interest for global human security.

The participants' concluding remarks were that "social development efforts are most successful where the poor and vulnerable have been able to define programmes on the basis of their own talents, experience and all too often excluded wisdom."

As regards follow-up, the North-South Centre will see to the implementation of these proposals, maintain links between partners and participants and pursue efforts to encourage Euro-Mediterranean co-operation in the field of social development and social cohesion.

The full text of the Final Declaration adopted by the participants at the Alexandria Conference can be found at the following address: http://www.coe.int/T/E/North-South_Centre/.

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"Mountains of Europe 2002 Pyrenees – Alps – Caucasus" Project

The efforts begun by the Council of Europe in 2001 to develop access to social rights and devise strategies for combating poverty in the South Caucasus are continuing. The year 2002 has been devoted to drawing up a specific project for mountain regions, to fit into the United Nations International Mountains Year.

Three regional seminars were organised successively in July in Ganja/Dashkesan in Azerbaijan (14-16 July 2002), Borjomie en Georgia (17-20 July 2002) and Sevan/Hradzan in Armenia (21-23 July 2002).

The first objective was to mobilise players in each region behind a new approach to economic and social development focusing on partnership, utilisation of local resources and entrusting responsibility to local players emerging from democratic transition (particularly mayors, NGOs and trade unions). The second was to build momentum to ensure project continuity, for example by signing an agreement between the various parties as a guarantee of their commitment to a common co-operation objective.

It was also intended to define conditions for co-operation with Italy and Spain, where 4 young people per region (representing the various local players) will undergo training in 2003 in the territorial development skills they will then put to use on their return to their own regions. Two mayors from European mountain regions – Mr Flaminio Da Deppo (Italy) and Mr Mateo Andres Huesa (Spain) – are working with the Council of Europe Secretariat in this scheme

and have shared their experience of partnership and territorial development with the participants in the various seminars.

In order to take this approach a step further, they have also undertaken to develop activities to promote territorial development by means of twinnings and to receive young trainees in their municipalities. Another concern was to define strategic sectors in which to launch a small-scale pilot project to set an example at national level, in which the newly-trained young people could apply their new skills.

These seminars enabled a new process of consultation and action to be started in the various mountainous parts of the South Caucasus. Getting together round a table all the territorial development players who had not previously met to pool ideas on ways of improving their population's living conditions served to create a real synergy. Each was able to explain his or her analysis of the situation at his or her level. Each was also confronted with the others' views. Solutions will have to be found together. The participants, convinced of the merits of this process, now have the responsibility of continuing it and, with a view to training young people, of defining strategic areas for the development of their territory, choosing candidates for training in western Europe and preparing a pilot project that will be submitted at their next gathering, scheduled during a study visit to Aragon (Spain) in October 2002.

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Second World Assembly on Ageing, and follow-up

The government representatives who met in Madrid from 8 to 12 April 2002 at the Second World Assembly on Ageing decided to adopt the 2002 international plan of action on ageing, to respond to the possibilities and challenges of population ageing in the 21st century. The aim of the Assembly was to promote "a society for all ages", in which senior citizens would have an active part to play, just like the rest of the population, in every realm of economic, social, cultural and political life, as well as enjoying the full benefit of their fundamental rights.

In view of the demographic changes taking place, particularly in the developing countries, where the elderly population is likely to quadruple by 2050, the Madrid Plan no longer presents the problem of ageing solely from the angles of security and social assistance, but adds the notions of development economic policies. It thus hinges on the following three priorities:

- Older persons and development: eight themes present the issues involved and the measures to be taken to secure the integration and independence of older persons and allow them to participate actively in society and its development;
- Promoting health and well-being: in addition to a system of health care tailored to older persons' needs, governments are also requested to take preventive measures to reduce the risk of sickness;
- Ensuring supportive and enabling environments in which older persons can grow old with dignity, in familiar surroundings and with due respect for their individuality and for the role they can play.

A European regional strategy for implementing the Madrid Plan of Action is in preparation and should be presented in Berlin at the Ministerial Conference on Ageing (MICA) organised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the German Federal Ministry responsible for Family Affairs, Elderly Persons, Women and Youth, from 11 to 13 September 2002.

The draft ministerial Declaration calls on UNECE member states to adopt the following priorities: increase older persons' independence and their participation in community affairs; foster fair and sustainable economic growth in order to address the foreseeable consequences of population ageing; strengthen social protection to cater lastingly for present and future

PORTUGAL: Policies adopted and developed to deal with migration issues

Since it became a country of immigration in the late 1990s, Portugal has developed innovative means of fostering quality integration both for the resident immigrant communities and for newcomers. Novel measures have also been taken in response to the structural needs of the labour market and to regulate migration flows between non-EU countries of origin and Portugal.

The following are examples of the measures taken:

Co-operation agreement between the Portuguese government and the International Organisation for Migration (15 December 1997): the parties decided to broaden and intensify co-operation in the migration field, in keeping with the aims and priorities of the Portuguese government's migration policy and the activities of the International Organisation for Migration. It is important to note that the parties undertook to make the most of the opportunities migration flows offered at the international level, both for states and for international organisations.

Co-operation Protocol between the Portuguese government and the International Organisation for Migration to implement a pilot programme on voluntary repatriation (15 December 1997): the protocol provides for the repatriation, free of charge, of immigrants who want to return to their countries of origin. The programme got under way in the first half of 1998 and worked satisfactorily thanks to the co-operation of governmental and non-governmental organisations

Immigrants' associations: the aim of these associations is to protect the rights and interests of immigrants, in order to enhance and foster their integration. They also work to improve the living conditions of immigrants and propose practical measures to prevent or put a stop to any instances of racial discrimination. Since 1999 immigrants' associations have been entitled to:

- participate in the definition of immigration policy and the related legislative procedures;
- air-time on public radio and television;
- the rights and advantages enjoyed by public law corporations;
- exoneration from the payment of legal costs and stamp duties;
- request and obtain all information and documents from the competent authorities to enable them to participate usefully in the definition and implementation of immigration policies;
- take steps vis-à-vis the public authorities to defend immigrants' rights;
- help local authorities to define and implement immigration policies at the local level; and

- receive technical and financial aid from the state.

The powers of the consultative Council on immigration issues were increased in 1999. They include:

- the power to give opinions on draft laws concerning immigrants' rights;
- the power to take part in the definition of social integration policies aimed at eliminating discrimination and promoting equality;
- the power to take part in the definition of measures and activities aimed at improving immigrants' living conditions and in their implementation.

Bearing in mind that the new migration movements come from Ukraine, Moldova and Romania, Portugal's High Commissioner for immigration and ethnic minorities (Alto Comissário para a Imigração e Minorias Étnicas - ACIME) has published a brochure in Russian on the rules governing the presence of foreigners in Portugal. This information also exists in English and Russian on the ACIME Internet site: <http://www.acime.gov.pt>.

The ACIME-co-ordinated "Equality on every face" project site also contains information in French and English on the entry, sojourn and departure of foreigners, as well as on their rights. This project was launched with a view to circulating information among the migrant communities and ethnic minorities residing in Portugal, in order to foster their harmonious integration and effectively combat the exclusion and discrimination these people may encounter. The work was done in co-operation with governmental and non-governmental organisations.

The Aliens and Border Control Department has also widely circulated information, in French, English, Russian and Romanian, on the formalities for acquiring a residence permit in Portugal.

At present the government proposes to amend the existing legislation on the entry, exit and expulsion of foreigners. The amendments mainly concern the setting of annual limits to the number of non-EU nationals who may enter the country to work, bearing in mind the needs of the labour market.

The social and human dimension of these measures is fundamental to the proper reception and integration of foreigners into Portuguese society, in conditions worthy of a country respectful of human rights.

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

generations; encourage labour markets to take population ageing into account and take advantage of the potential older people have to offer; promote lifelong learning; foster lifelong physical and mental health and well-being; guarantee equality of access to high-quality health and social protection; introduce a gender-specific perspective into all activities concerning ageing; support older persons, their families and their communities in the care and assistance they dispense; promote solidarity between the generations.

For further information on the Berlin Conference, consult the following Internet sites: www.mica2002.de and www.unec.org/ead/berlin2002.

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Towards a world fit for children

A special session of the United Nations General Assembly, devoted to children and adolescents world-wide, took place in New York from 5 to 10 May 2002. At that session the governments reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to offering each child a better world and, to that end, adopted a plan of action entitled "A world fit for children".

The plan of action comprises 21 new goals and specific objectives and focuses on four priority areas of action, each going hand in hand with strategies and measures to be implemented so as to ensure attainment of the international development targets set for 2015. The priority areas of action are:

- Promoting better and healthier lives by combating poverty and facilitating access to basic social services, health care, drinking water and food and to information on healthy living habits;
- Providing quality education, in particular by guaranteeing access to free, compulsory, quality primary education for all children;
- Protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence through general protection and protection from the repercussions of armed conflict and by combating child labour and eliminating trafficking in and sexual exploitation of children;
- Fighting HIV/AIDS.

The participants resolutely came out in favour of national planning and incorporation of the goals of the plan of action into

The Protestant Solidarity France-Armenia Association

It all began on 7 December 1988 when Armenia was hit by an earthquake. For the first time in its history, the Soviet Union opened its frontiers to a global relief effort. Samuel Sahagian, a French Reformed Church minister of Armenian origin, went to Armenia with his wife and a small team to provide aid to the victims. The Protestant Solidarity France-Armenia Association (SPFA) was set up in 1992. At the time no one would have imagined that in 2002 SPFA would have 3,000 members from all backgrounds and different religions, but all sharing the same conviction: that the people of Armenia are very courageous and the country's socio-economic problems can only be temporary.

SPFA has a range of different projects in the social, cultural and educational fields. Although it is aware of the potential importance of sustainable development projects to a developing country such as Armenia, the association currently puts the emphasis on schemes to help vulnerable social groups (orphans, the elderly) who, in its view, are not receiving sufficient support from the state.

Armenian society is changing and new phenomena are emerging such as the increasing number of street children and abandoned elderly people. Phenomena such as these are the result of the socio-economic problems besetting the country, which are driving the second generation of Armenians to seek work abroad. The effect of this is to disrupt the family unit, which has always been sacred to the Armenians. With a state still unable to provide adequate social services, voluntary activity is essential.

This explains why, for the past six years, SPFA has been funding three canteens in Armenia (two in Gumri and one in Stepavan) which provide daily meals to some 250 elderly people living alone. Under the "Shower Project", people who come for a meal also have access to hot water, which has become a luxury in Armenia, especially in the towns damaged by the earthquake.

Concerning its current work with children, the SPFA is working with Vardachen, a state school with boarding facilities for delinquent children. Young volunteers from the SPFA go there regularly to help the children prepare their classes, watch

educational programmes with them and animate debates. They also organise twice weekly excursions or outings to museums.

As well as addressing human and social issues, SPFA also deals with health issues. An example of this is its collaboration with the European Lien-Tacis project and the Seine-Normandy water board to improve water distribution and quality in Gumri (Armenia's second-largest city, which was the worst hit by the earthquake) by installing an ultra-filtration plant at the hospital for infectious diseases and changing 2,500 metres of pipes, thus enabling 5,000 inhabitants to enjoy a 24-hour water supply.

The association sets great store by one project in particular: encouraging foreign visitors to discover Armenia and develop a love for the country. More specifically, SPFA fosters cultural exchanges between France and Armenia by organising visits three times a year. In April 2002, for example, to mark the 1,700th anniversary of the adoption of Christianity, SPFA received 112 visitors from France. SPFA believes that tourism is a sector which should be capitalised on.

The association has high hopes for Armenian young people, who, in its view, have great potential and are bursting with energy and creativity. SPFA has therefore set up the first youth clubs in Armenia (6 clubs across the country). The members of these clubs are young people sharing a common aspiration towards Europe who come together to discuss and reflect upon Armenia's future. They are motivated volunteers who participate in humanitarian projects, work with physically and mentally handicapped children in orphanages and with street children at the centre, they organise concerts and shows in old people's homes. They undergo training so that they can do social work in residential institutions.

SPFA is convinced that everything possible must be done to make young people want to stay in Armenia, work there and help the country to prosper, for the good of all its citizens.

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national public policies and any plan or strategy for economic and social development. The text specifies that the plan of action will be implemented through such measures as:

- putting in place national legislation, policies and action plans and allocating resources to promoting and safeguarding children's rights and well-being;
- establishing or strengthening such national institutions as independent ombudspersons for children and other institutions or schemes for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child;
- developing national monitoring and evaluation systems to assess the impact of measures taken for children's benefit;
- enhancing and spreading awareness and understanding of the rights of the child.

So as to establish the framework necessary for achieving the plan's objectives, the Heads of State and Government, voicing their conviction that "investments in children are extraordinarily productive ... and lay the foundation for a just society, a strong economy and a world free of poverty", also considered the question of mobilising resources. They acknowledged that, to contribute to economic and social development, without which there could be no guarantee of a better world for future generations, the allocation of significant additional human, financial and material resources was essential, and enhanced international co-operation, North-South and possibly even South-South, was required.

Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF, said she was "enormously proud and pleased" at what had been accomplished, the promises made and the document adopted during the session in New York. She also pointed out that the participation of over 500 youngsters in the proceedings as official delegates was doubtless what had most influenced world leaders. She nonetheless stressed: "It will take committed and bold leadership over the next few years if we are to meet the standards we have set for ourselves. In the 1990s we learned that making promises is not enough - you have to act on them."

The official documents and fuller information on this subject can be found on the Website <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/>.

The question of what should be done within the Council of Europe to act on the commitments entered into at the special session on children will be discussed by the Forum for Children and Families on 21 and 22 November 2002.

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ADOPTED TEXTS

Recommendations:

- Rec 1570 (2002) of the Parliamentary Assembly on the situation of refugees and displaced persons in Armenia, in Azerbaijan and Georgia (adopted on 27 June 2002)
- Rec(2002)6 of the Committee of Ministers on higher education policies in lifelong learning (adopted on 15 May 2002)
- Rec(2002)5 of the Committee of Ministers on the protection of women against violence (adopted on 30 avril 2002)
- Rec(2002)4 of the Committee of Ministers on the legal status of persons admitted or family reunification (adopted on 26 mars 2002)

Resolution:

- Res(2002)8 of the Committee of Ministers on the statute of the European Commission against racism and intolerance (adopted on 13 June 2002)

NEW PUBLICATIONS

- New Web Site address of the **Social Policies Department of DG III** : http://www.coe.int/T/E//Social_cohesion/Activities_for_Social_Cohesion/; you will find information on: Access to social rights, Ageing, Children and Family, Employment, Social Security, Social Services, European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS), Newsletters, Strategy for Social Cohesion.
- New Web Site address of the Secretariat of the European Social Charter: http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Esc/; you will find full information on the news, a general presentation, information about the European Committee of Social Rights, the State Reports, recent conclusions, collective complaints, activities in the member States and a database.
- Web Site of the Council of Europe Activities under the joint Council of Europe, OSCE-ODIHR and the European Commission Project "Roma under the Stability Pact": http://www.coe.int/T/E/social_cohesion/Roma_Gypsies/Stability_Pact/

Reports:

- *Improving the Quality of life of Elderly Persons in Situations of Dependency*, Report and Conclusions of the European Group of Specialists (CS-QV), Council of Europe Publishing, ISBN 92-871-5000-1
- *Access to Social Rights in Europe*, Report prepared by Mary Daly (Queen's University, Belfast) with the assistance of the Editorial Group for the Report on Access to Social Rights (CS-ASR) and adopted by the CDCS in May 2002, ISBN 92-871-4982-2

Publications:

- *Safeguarding adults and children with disabilities against abuse*, 2002, Council of Europe Publishing, ISBN 92-871-4919-4
- *Assessing disabilities in Europe: similarities and differences*, 2002, Council of Europe Publishing, ISBN 92-871-4744-2
- *Guide to safety and quality assurance for organs, tissues and cells*, 2002, Council of Europe Publishing, ISBN 92-871-4891-0
- *Urban rehabilitation policy in Tbilisi (Georgia)*, 2002, Council of Europe Publishing, ISBN 92-871-4944-5

CALENDAR FROM SEPTEMBER 2002 TO NOVEMBER 2002

Conferences:

- 16-17 September: 7th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Migration Affairs, "Migrants in our societies: Policy choices for the 21st Century" - Helsinki (Finland)
- 30 Sept.-1 Oct.: Evaluation Conference of the Council of Europe Activities under the joint Council of Europe, OSCE-ODIHR and the European Commission Project "Roma under the Stability Pact" - Strasbourg
- 2-3 October: Forum on "New social responsibility in a globalising world: the role of the state, the market and civil society" - Strasbourg (France)
- 17-19 October: Conference on women's contribution to socio-economic development in Russia in partnership with the organisation "Women and Management" - St-Petersbourg (Russian Federation)
- 14-15 November: Conference on Access to social rights - Malta

Seminars and other meetings:

- 27-28 September: Seminar on Access to social protection - Dublin (Ireland)
- 21-26 October: Study visit of 20 representatives from South Caucasus to the Region of Aragon (Spain)
- 24-25 October: Multilateral Round Table on "Labour Migration in Europe: an Alternative to Irregular Migration?" - Sofia (Bulgaria)
- 30-31 October: Expert meeting on social and employment activation policies and measures in the Volga District - Nijni Novgorod (Russian Federation)
- 12-13 November: Seminar on "New outline of irregular migration in Europe" - Strasbourg

Committee Meetings:

- 28-29 October: 5th Meeting of the Committee of Experts on Integration and Community Relations (MG-IN) -Strasbourg
- 7-8 November: 2nd meeting of the Group of specialists on Employment for marginalised groups (CS-MA) - Strasbourg
- 12-13 November: 9th meeting of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) - Malta

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