

Editorial

Revision of the Strategy for Social Cohesion

At the time of editing this Newsletter, the European Committee on Social Cohesion (CDCS) is adopting the Revised Strategy for Social Cohesion. This new strategy is based on experiences and learning from the initial 3 years period of existence of the Council of Europe Strategy for Social Cohesion and brings to the forefront the principles of rule of law, democracy and human rights.

The Revised Strategy highlights a new definition of social cohesion which promotes human dignity, equity, pluralism, sustainability and responsibility. Social Cohesion is: *“the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimizing disparities and avoiding polarization. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means”*.

This definition implies that the State, the economic sector and civil society all share a responsibility for ensuring the well being of our communities.

The full text of the Revised Strategy introduces an analysis of the fundamental determinants of social cohesion enabling us to

understand which are the basic factors from an economic, social, legal and cultural points of view that create an environment beneficial to the development of social cohesion or, when missing, provoke dysfunctions, polarization or lack of stability. They can be summarized as follows:

To guarantee the essential role of the State through legislative and policy instruments

- At a time when the proper role of the State is changing and subject of much debate, it is necessary to reaffirm the essential responsibilities of the State acting as guarantor of human rights (including social rights) and participatory democracy. Through mechanisms of solidarity such as redistributive taxation and social security, the State restores equity in the distribution of wealth, reducing economic disparities. The State acts to protect vulnerable groups at risk of social exclusion. In order to achieve these goals, there is a positive trend towards devolving responsibility to regional and local authorities and working in partnership with civil society.

To integrate the social dimension into economic life

- Sound macro-economic policies are of crucial importance in establishing stable conditions for growth. They cannot, however, be directed solely by market mechanisms without risking

damaging social consequences. Particularly since the Johannesburg Summit, it has been increasingly recognized that sustainable economic development depends on sustainable social development as well as on a sustainable environment. The right to work is a fundamental right and a key element of citizenship. The social responsibility of economic actors is emerging as a crucial question for post-industrial societies. Individuals are also developing new forms of economic action capable of contributing to social cohesion.

To support the role of the family, the community and civil society as the fabric of social cohesion

- A social cohesion strategy, while fully respecting the autonomy of the private sphere and of civil society, must therefore seek to be supportive of families and other networks and relationships which bring individuals together into wider circles of solidarity. Changes in values and behavior are resulting in a much greater variety of family patterns than in the past, but this does not in any way detract from the social role of families, which remains as fundamental as ever. A variety of civil society bodies, are also important factors of social cohesion. Non-governmental organizations and voluntary bodies

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of all kinds are flourishing and everywhere becoming indispensable partners of government in building social cohesion.

To promote values of diversity, pluralism and social solidarity -

A strategy for social cohesion must identify the factors of division within society and then facilitate mechanisms, processes and institutions that prevent them from endangering social peace. Managing diversity involves fighting racial, ethnic, religious, gender and other forms of discrimination; it requires active policies to integrate migrants and minorities and groups with particular needs into mainstream society on the basis of respect for their difference and full recognition of their rights. Managing diversity means recognizing it as source of mutual enrichment rather than a factor of division and conflict.

The emphasis put in the Revised Strategy on the determinants of social cohesion brings naturally the Council of Europe to design appropriate ways of measuring social cohesion policies. (See also [article on page 5 of this newsletter](#))

This is why the Council of Europe has also been working on the development of operational tools for monitoring progress. A *Methodological Guide for the Use of Social Cohesion Indicators* is currently being developed and will be presented in 2004 to member States, while work is in progress to test out this methodology in selected countries and regions. Moreover, in the near future, social cohesion indicators could be used to develop a Social Cohesion Index, to be employed by member States to measure the degree of social cohesion in the Organization's forty-five countries and adapt the social cohesion strategy to their most concrete needs.

Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni
Director General of Social Cohesion Council of Europe

Exclusion affects all our societies and is becoming increasingly widespread. The Council of Europe, which covers the whole of the European continent, cannot ignore the growth of this problem. It actively seeks to encourage universal access to social rights as a way of combating exclusion and insecurity, based on Europe's heritage of social and economic rights embodied in the rules and standards laid down in the European Social Charter and related Council texts.

Universal access to social rights is also a keystone of French social policy, as reflected in its [National Plan for Combating Insecurity and Exclusion \(PNLE\)](#). The plan was announced by the Prime Minister, Mr Jean-Pierre Raffarin, in a general policy statement on 3 July 2003 and presented by Ms Dominique Versini, French state secretary concerned with insecurity and exclusion, in March 2003.

Despite major progress in the field of social rights, there is clear evidence that the rights in question are far from being a reality or enforceable by all European citizens. This was why the Council of Europe's Directorate General of Social Cohesion and the French State Secretariat for Combating Insecurity and Exclusion jointly organised the conference on access to social rights, combating exclusion and reducing inequalities in Paris on 3 November 2003.

The conference formed part of the Council's 2003 follow up to the report on [Access to Social Rights in Europe](#) presented to the November 2002 Malta Conference. It gave those taking part an opportunity to discuss member states' policies and some of the major issues surrounding access to rights.

There were three round tables on:

- access to rights and reducing inequalities;
- dealing with emergency social situations;
- preventing such emergencies through user participation in social services.

Speakers from government, social services and NGOs and various experts gave the public a good picture of what was being done nationally and locally in France in these three areas.

They were also told about social policies in other Council of Europe member states by

speakers from Slovenia, Malta, Scotland and Ireland. Ms Margaret Curran, the Minister for Communities in the Scottish Executive, described her authorities' strategy to reduce homelessness, Ms Dolores Cristina, Parliamentary Secretary in the Maltese Ministry of Social Policies, talked about consumer participation in the management of social services and Davor Dominkus, Deputy State Secretary of Social Affairs in Slovenia, described that country's social policy.

The various contributions revealed a number of key elements of any effective exclusion and insecurity policy:

- with ever more limited resources and growing inequalities and exclusion, our established body of social and economic rights must be protected;
- in order to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged, an overall approach must be combined with specific measures for the most vulnerable groups;
- to enable everyone to benefit from their social rights, relations with institutions must be simplified, as Ms Versini stressed, and users must be better informed about and given a greater role in social services' day to day operations;
- simplifying the operations of institutions, particularly local ones, involves the introduction of such new ideas as the one-stop shop;
- a more "made to measure" approach to the excluded or those at risk of becoming so is preferable to an automatic response that fails to take account of individual circumstances and aspirations;
- finally it is essential to exchange information on good practices and innovations, particularly on a European scale, to help refine our instruments for assessing existing policies and activities.

Further information can be found on following Website: http://www.coe.int/T/F/Cohesion_sociale/Activites_de_Cohesion_Sociale/Activites/I_Acces_Droits_Sociaux/Paris.asp

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THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND THE WORLD DAY TO OVERCOME EXTREME POVERTY

Strasbourg, 17 October 2003



made by Ms De Boer-Buquicchio and the other speakers who took part in the celebration on 17 October.

“Poverty is not inevitable”. These words, spoken by Ms De Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, on 17 October 2003 at the ceremony to mark World Day to overcome extreme Poverty, reflect the Council of Europe’s firm belief. Combating social exclusion and poverty is one of the main thrusts of the Council of Europe’s activities, for social exclusion essentially means that some people are deprived of their basic rights, such as the right to employment, decent housing, social protection, health care and education.

Overcoming poverty and exclusion therefore entails promoting access to social and economic rights for all and safeguarding these rights is the only way to guarantee the harmonious and sustainable development of European societies. These were the main points

The Council of Europe actively promotes access to social rights in its member states. It also pays special attention to the situation of the most vulnerable sectors of the population and those most threatened by exclusion in our societies, eg immigrants, elderly people, people with disabilities, the long-term unemployed and ethnic minorities. This work, which is at the heart of the Council of Europe’s Strategy for Social Cohesion, is based on the common body of social rights to which the Organisation has made a major contribution. Norms and standards such as those guaranteed under the European Social Charter and the European Social Security Code are the fundamental core of all policies for combating poverty and social exclusion. The Revised European Social Charter (1996) enshrines a whole range of social and economic rights, some of which are entirely new, such as the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion (Article 30) and the right to housing (Article 31).

The ceremony on 17 October, which took place in front of the commemorative stone against extreme



poverty, unveiled in 1991, was organised in co-operation with ATD Fourth World, which, together with many other organisations, is the voice of those suffering from exclusion. It is essential that the Council of Europe base its work in this field on the views and aspirations of the most deprived members of society. That is why NGOs are and will continue to be closely involved in the Organisation’s work. “Wherever men and women are condemned to live in poverty, human rights are violated. It is our solemn duty to come together to ensure that these rights are respected”. These words spoken by Father Wrezinski, the founder of ATD Fourth World, which are inscribed on the commemorative stone against extreme poverty, should be a daily source of inspiration to us all.

Françoise Kempf, Social Policies Department, DG III - Sociale Cohesion

INTERVIEW WITH MR JEAN-PIERRE GOLLÉ OF ATD FOURTH WORLD ON THE WORLD DAY TO OVERCOME EXTREME POVERTY (17 October 2003)



Jean-Pierre Gollé speaking in front of the Council of Europe’s stone against extreme poverty (17 October 2003)

Newsletter: What is the aim of the World Day to overcome extreme poverty?

Its main purpose is to enable individuals and families living in extreme poverty, other citizens and senior figures from the community at large and government circles to stand shoulder to shoulder and show their commitment to the fight against poverty. This aim is perfectly summed up

in inscription on the commemorative stone against extreme poverty inaugurated ten years ago on the forecourt of the Council of Europe: “Wherever men and women are condemned to live in poverty, human rights are violated. It is our solemn duty to come together to ensure that these rights are respected”.

This day is an excellent opportunity for everyone to remember that there are millions of people living in extreme poverty in the world, and to show that something can be done about it. We listen to the stories of the victims in order to have a better understanding of their difficulties in finding decent housing and a stable job and to have access to other fundamental rights in the health, education, culture and citizenship fields.

It is also an opportunity to publicise the action taken to fight poverty, starting with

what the most disadvantaged themselves are doing, and then the steps taken by other players in society, from individuals to groups of friends, associations, local and national governments and institutions such as the Council of Europe.

Newsletter: “Choose to see, choose to act” is the theme selected for this year. Can you explain why?

When we talk about extreme poverty around us, it is clear that many people think that it is only to be found in the developing countries. They find it hard to believe that there are cases of extreme poverty much closer to home in the industrialised world. Too many citizens fail to “see” extreme poverty in their own country. However, if you decide to open your eyes, you will see that every day you come across people having to cope with extreme poverty. And if you then listen to

what they have to say, you will hear not only of the unbearable burden of their hardship and the consequent denial of their dignity and violation of their human rights, but also of how important it is to them for other people who do not live in the same destitute situation to join them in their fight against extreme poverty.

That is why we chose the theme “choose to see, choose to act”. Seeing means first of all “opening your eyes”, “realising what is going on around you”, and acting means “deciding to do something in defence of the dignity of others”. It is for each person to act as best they can, but there is always something that can be done, even if it is just offering a smile to those we come across who are suffering.

Newsletter: We are today celebrating the 10th anniversary of the laying of the commemorative stone at the Council of Europe. What is your assessment of the Council’s work in this field over the last ten years? What can be done to improve co-operation between the Council of Europe and NGOs, and with your own ATD Fourth World in particular?

The Council of Europe is waging a major battle on various fronts, including the fight for human rights and social cohesion, and combating poverty. The message engraved on the commemorative stone is still highly relevant. We need to continue the fight to ensure that everyone, including the most disadvantaged, has effective access to social rights, and to promote solidarity and social cohesion.

The Council of Europe has made much progress in recent years. Its legal instruments have been strengthened by the adoption of the Revised Social Charter – Articles 30 and 31 of which refer to the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion and the right to housing – the drafting of the Social Cohesion Strategy, and all the Organisation’s recent activities to promote effective access to social rights. The case-law on social rights is also being developed thanks to the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and the decisions of the Social Charter’s European Committee of Social Rights.

NGOs have played a part in this significant progress. Over 400 NGOs meet every three months to discuss topical issues and general policy matters. They also take part in a number of Council of Europe working

parties and committees. In my experience, this co-operation between the Council of Europe and NGOs works very well. As far as the issues with which I am familiar are concerned, it is my impression that the people in the Council take the Organisation’s objectives very much to heart.

Relations between NGOs and the Council of Europe are soon to be stepped up as the NGOs are to move from a consultative status to a participatory one within the Council. This change shows the importance attached by the Council of Europe to the contribution made by NGOs and strengthens the latter’s commitment to increase still further their input to the Council’s activities. In practice, this means that they will have an acknowledged role in the work of the Organisation, going beyond one of merely reacting to proposals. Henceforward they will play an active part in framing, implementing and monitoring policies. This marks a significant stage in our co-operation and should make for a much more dynamic relationship.

Above and beyond matters of status – which are clearly essential as they spell out the framework for our action – what is really important is the will and commitment of all parties to help bring about a more just and more human-oriented society. The Council of Europe’s approach based on human rights and viewing poverty as a violation of human rights is an ideal framework for this action.



I have been very moved by the many people in the Council of Europe who have been involved, not just in a professional but also in a personal capacity, in helping with the organisation of this year’s World Day on October 17, and who have helped ensure that it will be a resounding success. Ms De Boer-Buquicchio’s commitment to the fight against extreme poverty and her presence at the ceremony are very important for the families of the Fourth World.

Newsletter: How do things stand at the moment and what is your view of our societies today?

It is a very complex subject. In Europe, as in other parts of the world, there is an alarming disparity between declarations of intent and action. Europe is in an economically difficult situation: no growth, national budgets under pressure and social budgets are often not up to the challenge. In such a difficult context, societies – from governments to the people – must do more, and the theme “choose to see, choose to act” was deliberately chosen to bring about a change. Personally, I believe that each one of us has a contribution to make to the fight against extreme poverty, going beyond the all-too-easy criticism of other people’s failure to act effectively.

Newsletter: What is your view of the European social model and what can be done to avoid a two-speed society?

The European social model is a very important feature of Europe and a benchmark for the whole world. We have to preserve this achievement and further develop it so that it becomes a model in which everyone has his or her place. One of the ways this model can be strengthened is by ensuring that the concept of human rights is also applied to development. This means, for example, that if one accepts that social rights are fully-fledged rights on a par with civil and political rights, and that poverty is a violation of human rights, then the fight against poverty cannot be seen as a luxury or even an act of charity; rather it becomes a moral and legal obligation. This change in approach reflects the higher priority that must be attached to the fight against extreme poverty.

Over and above budgetary questions, we have to ensure that the programmes that exist are actually benefiting all those for whom they are designed. In this respect, the emphasis placed by the Council of Europe on access in practice to social rights is very important. It is all very well to have a particular right, but it is meaningless if some people cannot exercise it. In addition, the Council of Europe’s report on access to social rights clearly shows the indivisible and interdependent nature of social rights. When you lose one of your social rights (eg your job) there is a grave danger of losing others (eg housing). This can be a cumulative process and can threaten the lives of those concerned. One of the things on which ATD Fourth World places

considerable emphasis is that society must involve the poorer sections of the community in the framing and implementation of policies. As a recent report of the French Social and Economic Council puts it so well, we have to ensure that by actively involving everyone (including the most disadvantaged), everyone can have access to the rights to which all are entitled. This is how best to avoid a two-speed society.

I would like everyone to play a part in making society progress. Solidarity does not mean "you take care of me and of those who are in need" but rather "I am part of a group and I too have a contribution to make".

The tragedy is that the most disadvantaged are too often forgotten. In first aid courses, we are told that among those wounded in accidents, those who cry the least are often the most badly affected. We simply have to reach out to the poor because their voice counts and they have important things to tell us. We mustn't just do things for them, but with them. This is one of the major challenges we have to address.

Newsletter: How do you see extreme poverty in the world developing in the next ten years?

My hope is that poverty will be eradicated, that everybody's dignity is upheld and that everyone can, in his or her own way, make a contribution to society. In 2000, the United Nations adopted the Millennium objectives which are aimed at, amongst other things, halving poverty in the world by 2010 and making significant progress in several areas which are crucial for human development (access to education, health-care, drinking water, promoting gender equality and respect for the environment). If I look at what is currently being undertaken, I have to say that most of these objectives will not be fulfilled in time. It is therefore imperative to step up our efforts and stir all the players to action. Each and every citizen has a role to play and we have to support and encourage politicians to take more forceful measures. We have to do more informing, and we have to "choose to see and choose to act".

I am confident that the Council of Europe will continue to promote and develop still further its legal instruments, take forward social cohesion and serve as a forum for exchanges and knowledge, including with our friends in eastern Europe. I would also like the most vulnerable sections of the community to be involved in this approach.

Interviewer: Anna Pelegri



The FORUM 2003 on "Social cohesion or public security: how should Europe respond to collective feelings of insecurity?" took place on 23-24 October 2003 at the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg.

All information concerning this event can be found on following website:

<http://www.coe.int/forum2003>

Revision of the Social Cohesion Strategy

In July 2000 the Committee of Ministers approved the Strategy for Social Cohesion, which was drawn up by the newly created European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS). The strategy represented a statement of intent setting out an agenda for the Council of Europe in the social field during the coming years.

Having now completed several significant activities, the Committee has decided to prepare a revised version of the strategy. This document, on which work is now well advanced, refines the concept of social cohesion in the light of the experience of the first few years, lists the principal achievements of this initial period of work and sets out objectives for the future.

As understood by the Council of Europe, social cohesion is the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation. The new strategy document will show how social cohesion has to be built on a basis of human rights. It is necessary not only to proclaim social rights, however, but also to take practical action to ensure that everyone in fact has access to their rights. Furthermore, social cohesion also depends on all sectors of society accepting responsibility for the welfare of all, and especially the welfare of those who live in vulnerable situations or are at risk of exclusion. The revised strategy draws attention to the responsibilities of the State, of business and civil society, and of families. It calls for

better integration of the social dimension into economic life.

It is expected that the revised strategy for social cohesion will be published early in 2004.

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Palliative care: the Committee of Ministers adopts new Recommendation

On 12 November 2003, the Committee of Ministers adopted Recommendation Rec (2003)24 on the organisation of palliative care. A first and unique set of guidelines in this field to which all 45 member States of the Council of Europe adhere.

In aging European societies, a 20% increase in the need for palliative care is to be expected in the next 10 – 15 years, both for cancer and for non-cancer patients. This poses great challenges for all European countries, both quantitative and qualitative. It demands the development of coherent palliative care policies, integrated into existing health care systems. It opens the important political question - to what extent do societies feel responsible for the quality of the last phase of life of their citizens?

Inspired by the 1980 Report of the European Health Committee (CDSP) on "Problems related to death: care for the dying" and by the Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1418 (1999) on the protection of the human rights and dignity of the terminally-ill and the dying, in 2001 the CDSP decided to address the important issue of palliative care at a pan-European level by setting up a committee of experts which over a two-year period prepared European guidelines in this field.

The recommendation calls for an integrated approach bringing together Cure, Care, Communication, Companionship and Compassion. Five "C" that put in a nutshell the vocation of modern palliative care. Although it cannot add days to the patient's life, it certainly adds quality of life to the patient's days.

Palliative care is the active, total care of all patients: men, women and children, with

advanced, progressive diseases with the objective of controlling pain and other symptoms. It encompasses psychological, social, and spiritual support. It repositions death as a part of the normal life process and the patient as an individual deserving respect, comfort and pain relief. It aims at the achievement of the best possible quality of life for patients and their families with no intention to hasten or to postpone death.

The recommendation calls on palliative care to become an integral part of the health care system and an inalienable element of a citizen's right to health care. Hence, it is governments' responsibility to guarantee that palliative care is available to all who need it. This should include increased cooperation between countries with a view to reducing differences in the availability and the quality of palliative care.

The recommendation thoroughly details core elements of a national policy framework for palliative care, including guidance on settings and services, policy and organisation, quality improvement and research, education and training, the family, communication with patient and family, care planning and bereavement.

This recommendation puts forward a moral obligation for 800 million Europeans and 45 European Governments. It is a valuable tool to include in ever-evolving health care reforms. An active and proactive approach to palliative care can contribute to a radical evolution in member States.

The recommendation is useful for all countries, either to newly introduce the issue in a health care policy or to review existing policies, legislative and other measures necessary for a coherent and comprehensive national policy framework for palliative care.

The full text of the recommendation on the organisation of palliative care and its explanatory memorandum as well as further information can be found by visiting the following Websites: http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social_Cohesion/Health/ and <http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/Themes/Health/default.asp>

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Integration of people with disabilities in Europe

The Committee on the Rehabilitation and Integration of People with disabilities (Partial Agreement) (CD-P-RR) held its 26th session from 7-10 October 2003 in Strasbourg where, for the first time since its creation, all 45 Council of Europe member states had been invited to attend. The Chairman, Dr Peter Wright (United Kingdom), was happy to welcome 13 new states which were not members of the Partial Agreement (18 member states).

This was the follow-up to the 2nd European Conference of Ministers responsible for Integration Policies for People with Disabilities (Malaga, 7-8 May 2003) and to the initiative launched by Mr Walter Schwimmer, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, to extend the activities of the Partial Agreement in the Social and Public Health Field to all 45 Council of Europe member states

In conformity with the decisions taken on 24 September 2003 by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, the CD-P-RR started discussions on the establishment of a Council of Europe Action Plan for people with disabilities. The latter will constitute a new European policy framework on disability, based on human rights and partnership between different actors, involving all policy sectors and stakeholders, empowering individuals, in order to achieve full citizenship and active participation of people with disabilities in the life of the community: a partnership between governments, social partners and civil society, including people with disabilities themselves, to reach practical solutions and to develop workable, affordable and sustainable policies. The CD-P-RR set up a Drafting Group to elaborate further proposals for the Action Plan and a Working Group, open to all Council of Europe member states, which will meet in February 2004 to prepare a draft for discussion at the next Committee meeting (27th session).

Furthermore, the Committee took note of its forthcoming publications on non-discrimination legislation and on discrimination against women with disabilities. It adopted significant reports on new trends in service provision, on people with disabilities in need of a high level of support, on the prevention of disabilities linked to chronic diseases, on

The Social Charter: the impact of collective complaints

The 1995 Additional Protocol providing for a system of collective complaints was drawn up in order to strengthen the supervision of the application of the European Social Charter and give the social partners and NGOs a greater role in the process.

Five years after it came into force in 1998 it is now possible to assess this procedure and the impact of the collective complaints so far examined by the European Committee of Social Rights (the Committee).

Thirteen countries have accepted the procedure (Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden) and 21 complaints have so far been lodged.

The first complaint, which alleged that numerous Portuguese children aged under 15 were working, to the detriment of their education, was lodged in 1998 by the International Commission of Jurists. The European Committee of Social Rights ruled that there had been a violation of Article 7.1 of the Charter.

The following year, Portugal introduced various legal measures to rectify the situation. Act No. 58 of 1999 set 16 as the minimum age for work and also defined light work. Under Acts Nos. 113, 114, 116 and 118, the illegal employment of children was classified as a very serious offence and strict penalties were imposed. At the same time steps were also taken to bring Portuguese practice into line with the Social Charter. For example, there was a considerable strengthening of the labour inspectorate's anti-child labour activities, particularly in the form of visits to the employment sectors concerned. A plan was drawn up to eliminate the exploitation of child labour, together with an integrated education and training programme for children likely to abandon school.

The experience has been repeated in connection with a number of other complaints, in particular Nos. 6/1999, 7/2000, 11/2001 and 12/2002:

- Complaint No. 6/1999: following a complaint lodged by the *Syndicat national des professions du tourisme* (violation of Article 1.2), France took a series of measures that are described in Conclusions 2002 of the Revised Charter (pp. 26-28);

the education of children with disabilities, and on access to social rights for people with disabilities in Europe.

It continued discussion of its activities on the status of sign languages in member states and on people with disabilities who wish to travel by air. Finally, it decided to start activities on the education of autistic children and on Universal Design (accessibility) in order to collect and exchange examples of good practice and make policy recommendations to member states aimed at harmonising their legislation and practice.

On invitation of the Romanian government, the 27th session of the CD-P-RR will take place in September 2004 in Romania. All Council of Europe member states will be invited to participate.

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Conference on Roma Women

Non-existent or inadequate access to health care is a major aspect of the poor living conditions facing Roma communities and this has a particular impact on Roma women. The concern and the need to develop appropriate health policies, which take into account the real needs of Roma women and ensure their equal access to health care, were the starting points for the joint project "Roma Women and Access to Health Care"¹⁾.

During the final conference, which took place on 11-12 September 2003 in Strasbourg, governments officials, NGO representatives working on women's health and Roma issues and Roma women had the opportunity not only to discuss the findings of the report "Breaking the Barriers-Roma Women and Access to Health Care" but also to propose concrete actions to improve Roma women's access to health care.

Participants at the conference described the alarming health conditions of Roma populations in Europe and particularly of Roma women. The issues tackled include discrimination and denial of access to public health, forced sterilisation of Roma women and the trafficking of human beings

of which the Roma population is also a victim. The conclusions of the conference were based on the assumption that by improving the health status of Roma women the whole community would benefit.

The main recommendations to governments were that they should involve Roma women in the drafting and implementation of strategies addressing Roma issues and encourage the appointment of a gender advisor for this purpose. They should also encourage the health services to take a more positive attitude towards Roma through awareness raising campaigns and develop the health services' capacity to combat discrimination against Roma patients. Governments should learn from the good practices of member states in improving access to public health care (for example the health mediator's programme in Romania). These good practices are aimed at developing Roma's trust in the state which, as the participants pointed out, was sorely lacking.

Moreover, the need for data on the situation and needs of the Roma population and on cases of discrimination was repeatedly highlighted during the conference and in the report. The Council of Europe provides the legal instruments to ensure that data are collected in full compliance with the regulations governing data protection.

One of the major challenges for the Roma/Gypsies Division will be to ensure that the conclusions and recommendations not only of the conference but of the entire project become an integral part of national strategies for Roma and are used to empower the newly created Roma Women's International Network to function as a pressure group at international level.

¹⁾ Project jointly undertaken by the Council of Europe's Migration and Roma/Gypsies Department, the European Union's Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) and Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

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- Complaint No. 7/2000 by the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues: it was ruled that Greece was in breach of Article 1.2 of the Charter because career army officers who had benefited from several periods of training were required to complete a period of compulsory service of up to 25 years, which the Committee deemed to be too long. The Greek Government is preparing legislation to repeal the relevant decree on the length of compulsory service. Information should be included in Conclusions XVII-1;
- Complaint No. 11/2001: shortly after the European Council of Police Trade Unions had lodged this complaint, the Portuguese Government amended the 1990 legislation that restricted police officers' freedom of association and right to bargain collectively. Act No. 14/2002 brings the law into line with Articles 5 and 6.2 of the Charter.
- Complaint No. 12/2001: negotiations are currently under way in Sweden to end agreements that introduce trade union closed shops into collective agreements. Between the date of the admissibility decision (19 June 2002) and that of the decision on the merits (15 May 2003) on the complaint lodged by the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (violation of Article 5), hundreds of such agreements have been terminated and the Swedish Government has undertaken to abolish all the others.

It can be concluded that Committee decisions under the collective complaints procedure finding violations of the Social Charter have helped to expedite reform – legal and other.

Such cases have also been given substantial media coverage and the number of complaints lodged is evidence of the growing interest of the social partners and NGOs in the Charter. States that have accepted the procedure will certainly not be the only ones to feel its effect.

The collective complaints procedure is still in its infancy but it has already shown that it can make a significant contribution to protecting social rights embodied in the Charter.

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SOUTH-EAST EUROPE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON EMPLOYMENT

Bucharest, 30-31 October 2003



All our societies have been hard hit by unemployment but this applies even more to countries which had to make the transition to a market economy and were involved in armed conflict in the nineteen nineties. In South-East Europe unemployment rates range from 8.6% in Romania to between 30 and 40% in countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina or "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". As a result of these unemployment rates and the shortcomings of social protection systems, many people find themselves living on or below the poverty line. Some of the more vulnerable groups, such as refugees, young people, elderly people, demobilised soldiers or even Roma/Gypsies are particularly affected by the problem. Unemployment and the major income disparities resulting from unemployment present a threat to the stability and cohesion of countries in this region.

The Council of Europe, in co-operation with the Belgian Federal Public Service for Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and the Initiative for Social Cohesion of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, has therefore launched a regional co-operation process on employment in the beneficiary countries of the Stability Pact. The purpose of this process is to improve the efficiency of employment policies and the functioning of labour market institutions and to create a situation which would be conducive to investment and consequently bring prosperity to the region.

The method chosen to meet these challenges is co-operation among countries in the region and with the international institutions working in South-East Europe. Restoring confidence and dialogue, pooling experience of common problems and matching offers of and requests for assistance more carefully should help

these countries to combat unemployment.

The countries concerned by this initiative are: Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia".

This co-operation process was officially launched on 30 and 31 October 2003 at a conference of ministers responsible for employment in these eight countries. Romania had offered to hold this first conference in Bucharest. The ministers responsible for employment in this part of Europe, representatives of the social partners and several international organisations (the ILO, the European Commission and the United Nations Programme for Development) and international financial institutions (the Council of Europe Development Bank and the World Bank) took part in the conference.

The ministers described the employment situation in these countries, highlighting a number of areas of employment policies that should be taken into account in the co-operation process; some of the main goals should be to:

- bring national laws into line with international social and labour rights standards (in particular the European Social Charter) and incorporate, and adapt, the objectives of the European Strategy for Employment;
- improve the functioning of labour market institutions, in particular national and local employment agencies;
- adopt specific measures to address the needs of the most vulnerable sectors of the population;
- foster labour mobility in the region and develop a regional employment market;
- promote active back-to-work policies;
- strengthen social dialogue;
- provide support to small and medium-sized businesses.

The international institutions and the representatives of the social partners

(ETUC and IOE) also described their activities in the region and their priorities for the future.

The ministers of the eight participating countries and the representatives of the Council of Europe, the ILO and the Stability Pact signed a final declaration in which they undertook to co-operate in all the above-mentioned fields with a view to reducing unemployment and recreating the right conditions for bringing prosperity back to the region so that all citizens can fully exercise their social and economic rights.

At the opening of the Conference, Ms De Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, pointed out that social rights were not a luxury and that unemployment and poverty were an unacceptable violation of the dignity of the men and women affected by these problems. Access to basic rights for all citizens was the best basis for sustainable and well-balanced economic social development.

The Bucharest Conference was not an end in itself but the beginning of a co-operation process which must be continued over the long term to achieve positive and lasting changes. As of December 2003 a working group comprising the Directors General of employment in the countries concerned will hold its first meeting in Brussels to decide on the objectives and working methods of the co-operation process. (The Council of Europe will co-ordinate the process under the auspices of the Stability Pact, and the ILO will be closely involved).

In 2004 other working groups made up of representatives of the countries concerned and of international organisations will evaluate employment policies and seek ways of improving the functioning of labour market institutions and of meeting the needs of the groups most affected by unemployment. One of the aims is to improve the co-ordination of international aid.

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Seminar on “Committed citizenship in the social economy” (4-5 December 2003, Namur, Wallonia – Belgium)

Since early 2003 the Social Cohesion Development Division has been working on a project that consists in comparing the different approaches to citizens' commitment to the economy (notably ethical and solidarity-based financing, fair trade and responsible consumption), establishing a dialogue with governments to discuss their specific contribution towards, in particular, social cohesion and sustainable development and the support needed with respect to development, and promoting European cooperation on these issues, particularly between countries of eastern and western Europe.

The idea is that the project should culminate in a European platform for citizens' commitment to the economy, to be launched in October 2004 at the Division's annual forum devoted to this theme (see article already published in “Social Cohesion Developments” N° 9 of September 2003).

It has taken nearly a year of research, surveys, summary reports, and proposals drawn up with the relevant networks in meetings and working groups for the project to reach the stage now where a dialogue can be established with the governments on the basis of what has been learnt so far and the various proposals drawn up.

The seminar “Committed citizenship in the social economy: what future for ethical finance, fair trade and responsible consumption” being held on 4 and 5 December 2003 in Namur (Belgium) is intended as a “trial run”. Organised in conjunction with the Walloon Region which, like the Austrian government, has co-funded the project with the Council of Europe, it will provide a first opportunity for players working in the field, network representatives, governments, and experts to come together and exchange their experiences.

Representatives of different European countries and networks will be there to present the initiatives in which they

are involved and to give their views on a document summing up the main conclusions of the work to date in terms of the following five questions:

- Why is it necessary to incorporate ethics into the economy (in the social and environmental field)?
- Are some citizens already working to achieve that goal? If so, how many, and where?
- In what way do these initiatives have a key contribution to make towards social cohesion and sustainable development?
- In what areas do these initiatives need to be stepped up?
- What support is needed from governments, and what kind of deal can be struck between the governments and different players in the field?

Insofar as the seminar is being organised in the form a partnership between the Walloon Region and the Council of Europe, it will also provide an opportunity for regional players to enter into contact with players who are active at the European level.

It is hoped that the seminar will achieve the following results:

- an enriching debate, coupled with a certain degree of consensus on the reference document, with the possibility of seeing it develop in 2004 into a European Charter that could serve as a basis for launching the European platform;
- better knowledge, at all levels, of existing networks and the measures put in place by the governments, as well as better mutual knowledge of the players involved, who may be from different countries;
- a better understanding of what can constitute the bases of a European platform for dialogue between governments and the European networks operating in the three areas concerned by citizen commitment.

The seminar will also provide an opportunity to define the follow-up activities that will be carried out in connection with the project in preparation for the forum to be held in October 2004.

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ECRI - Debate on the threat posed to democracy by extremist parties and movements in Europe and the racist, xenophobic and intolerant political discourse

Extremist movements and parties pose a serious threat to the fundamental values that the Council of Europe sets out to defend. The Organisation itself was founded in the aftermath of a world-wide conflict based on nationalistic and authoritarian excesses with the clear mandate to promote and defend the values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights.



In the past the Council of Europe and its different bodies and organs, including the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE)¹⁾ and the European Commission for Democracy through Law²⁾, have repeatedly underlined the need to make political parties aware of their responsibility. The Council of Europe played a leading role in the preparation of the European contribution to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance in Durban. At the European Conference against Racism, “All different, all equal: from theory to practice” (Strasbourg, 11-13 October 2000) the essential role that politicians and the political parties can play in the fight against these phenomena was extensively discussed and the [Charter of Political Parties for a Non-racist Society](#) was attached as an appendix to the General Conclusions of this Conference. This Charter calls on democratic political

(Continued on page 10)

parties in Europe to act responsibly when dealing with issues related to race, ethnic and national origin and religion, and encourages political parties to work towards fair representation of racial, ethnic, national and religious minorities within and at all levels of their party system.

In the fulfillment of its mandate, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the independent human rights monitoring body of the Council of Europe on issues related to racism and intolerance, has regularly addressed the issue of xenophobic discourse in the political arena in the framework of its country-by-country reports, its general policy recommendations as well as its annual reports.

ECRI's latest general policy recommendation, [General Policy Recommendation no. 7](#) on national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination, is particularly valuable in this respect, as it includes aspects relating to the institutional reaction against political parties which promote racism. According to this recommendation political parties that resort to racist or xenophobic propaganda can be countered:

- through the effective implementation of the ordinary criminal law provisions against racist offences and racial discrimination;
- the existence of criminal law provisions aimed at penalising the leadership of a group which promotes racism, as well as support for such a group and participation in its activities; and
- the obligation to suppress public financing of organisations which promote racism including the public financing of political parties. In addition ECRI also encourages self-regulatory measures developed by political parties themselves.

In its latest [Annual Report](#), ECRI voiced again its grave concerns concerning the widespread use of racist or xenophobic propaganda in politics and called on all democratic political parties to espouse the principles contained in the Charter of European political parties for a non-racist society. ECRI and the EU Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) were also among the driving forces behind the re-launch of the Charter this year and therefore also warmly welcomed the Joint Declaration of the Presidents of the PACE and the European Parliament (EP) on the Charter at the last PACE/EP joint meeting on 25 September 2003.

There is no doubt that political leadership is crucial in order to combat racism and to influence public opinion in a positive way. It is therefore of major importance to involve political parties as much as possible in the combat against racism and intolerance as led by ECRI and the other bodies and organs of the Council of Europe.

For further information on this subject and ECRI's work, please consult the following Website: http://www.coe.int/T/E/human_rights/Ecri/

1) [Recommendation 1222 \(1993\)](#) on the fight against racism, xenophobia and intolerance; [Rec 1275 \(1995\)](#) on the fight against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance; [Rec 1438 \(2000\)](#) on the threat posed to democracy by extremist parties and movements in Europe; [Rec 1543 \(2001\)](#) on racism and xenophobia in cyberspace; [Res 1308 \(2002\)](#) on restrictions on political parties in the Council of Europe member states; [Res 1345 \(2003\)](#) on racist, xenophobic and intolerant discourse in politics; [Res 1344 \(2003\)](#) Threat posed to democracy by extremist parties and movements in Europe.

2) [Guidelines on Prohibition and Dissolution of Political Parties and Analogous Measures: CDL-INF \(2000\) I.](#)

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Learning democracy through citizenship and human rights education

The Education programmes of the Council of Europe have always been close to the fundamental vocation of the Organisation, that is, to protect and promote pluralist democracy, human rights and the rule of law. One of these programmes, "Education for democratic citizenship and human rights" (EDC), has been particularly appreciated by member States. It was launched in 1997, at the Second Council of Europe Summit of Heads of State and Government and has since provided a forum for discussion between EDC experts and practitioners from all over Europe. They have defined concepts for EDC policies, developed strategies for their implementation and collected good practices. On the basis of this work, in 2002 the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers adopted Recommendation (2002) 12 on education for democratic citizenship, the first text to be adopted by the Committee of Ministers on this issue.

Education for democratic citizenship includes all practices and activities designed to help young people and adults participate actively in democratic life by accepting and exercising their rights and responsibilities in society. It seeks to instil a sense of belonging, a commitment to democratic society and an awareness of shared fundamental values in order to build a free, tolerant and just society at national and European levels. Such education can enable the individual to understand the world and act throughout life as an active and responsible citizen, respectful of the rights of others.

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Over the last two years, the main priorities of the project have been the development of EDC policies on the one hand, and networking, communication and dissemination of results on the other. In the field of policy development, the most recent achievements are an all-European study on EDC policies and an all-European study on student/pupil participation. As far as information and communication are concerned, a network of EDC coordinators, nominated by member States, has been set up and is now one of the key elements of the project. The coordinators, who meet regularly, bring together the various actors involved in EDC policies at the national level and disseminate the work of the Council of Europe. Besides this

multilateral work, the Council of Europe has also organised bilateral activities with member States, in the form of policy development seminars, information and dissemination activities and teacher training. Some of these bilateral programmes have been carried out with the support of the European Commission.

The EDC project, in its present form, will be completed at the end of 2004. However, in order to ensure an optimal use of the products and results of the project, the Committee of Ministers intends to declare the year 2005 the "European Year of Citizenship through Education". It is hoped that the "Year" will increase awareness amongst EDC professionals at

different levels, as well as amongst the general public. It will be a unique opportunity for sharing the wealth of knowledge built up during the project with those involved in EDC policies in member States, and, wherever the need appears, assist decision-makers with reforms of national curricula.

For further information, please consult the EDC website: http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Cooperation/education/E.D.C

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EUROPEAN ROUND TABLE ON POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION



The role of the family in promoting social inclusion

The Italian Presidency of the European Union held the second round table on poverty and social exclusion in Turin on 16 and 17 October 2003. The purpose of this annual meeting is to study the progress made in addressing these issues. This year the focus was on "the role of the family in promoting social inclusion".

The round table had three main objectives:

- to assess how the European Union "Open Method of Co-

ordination" (OMC), adopted in Lisbon in 2000, is progressing towards the goal of making a decisive impact on social exclusion and poverty by 2010;

- to highlight the role of the family with a view to devising innovatory family policies and safeguarding the rights of children in accordance with the measures set out in the 2003 national action plans for social inclusion (NAPs/inc);
- offer EU member States a first opportunity to discuss and assess the NAPs submitted at the end of July 2003.

With these objectives in mind, four seminars were held on the following subjects:

- the use of commonly agreed indicators and the setting of goals in national plans;
- relations between the different tiers of government (national, regional and local) and the mobilisation of all protagonists in the preparation, execution and

monitoring of the plans;

- guaranteeing equal access to services and improving their quality;
- the use of specific financial tools to support national plans.

As part of the first seminar, Gilda Farrell, Head of the Social Cohesion Development Division of the Council of Europe, presented the "Guidebook on using social cohesion indicators", which is currently being prepared, in particular the principles on which the concept of social cohesion is based and the group of indicators selected to operationalise the concept.

Further information can be found on the following Website: http://www.ueitalia2003.it/EN/LaPresidenzaInformatario/10/16/ev_16ottae.htm

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Social cohesion development in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Background information

The last decade of the past century marked an extremely difficult period in the eleven centuries long history of Bosnia and Herzegovina: the dissolution of the SFRJ followed by the chain of wars in the Balkans, of which the most brutal was the one on the soil of B&H (1992-1995). It left the country devastated: huge human losses, overall poverty, displaced persons and refugees, devastated housing stock, decreased standard in health services, increased morbidity and mortality, worsened mental health status of the population, destroyed industrial capacities and consecutive loss of jobs, high number of military and civil victims of war, demobilized soldiers, difficulties in accessing health and pension rights, etc. Additionally, the process of transition from old self-governed to modern market-oriented economy, the beginning of which coincided with the turbulent times in the Balkans, has been extremely difficult for the already vulnerable country.

The Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), which ended the war in B&H in December 1995, established B&H as a state consisting of two entities (based at the results of war and ethnic cleansing): the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska, and later, the Brcko District, each of them with a high level of autonomy. According to the DPA, the social sector and social policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina are the exclusive responsibility of the entities, without any roof institution or body at the state level, which causes numerous problems whenever the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a subject participating in the international field.

Eight years after, with the efforts of both the international and the local community, there has been a significant recovery in all aspects, particularly in the process of physical reconstruction, return of refugees and displaced persons and property repossession. However, the social sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains burdened with numerous problems, among them the high percentage of marginalized and vulnerable groups such as refugees and displaced persons, children, the elderly, unemployed...

Working towards social cohesion

Anticipating a better and safer future for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina

within the process of European integration, the state made numerous steps towards achieving those goals. In the field of social rights, the first activities at the state level were launched through the Initiative for Social Cohesion (ISC) within the Department for Cooperation with the Stability Pact (Ministry for European Integration of B&H). In line with those activities and recognizing the increasing needs for coordination of social cohesion issues at the state level, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina established a Working Group for Social Cohesion in September 2001. The WG has been composed of representatives of both entities, additionally involving other relevant partners from various levels of public sector into its activities. Among other activities, the WG prepared the Action Plan for Social Cohesion, which was accepted by the Council of Ministers of B&H in June 2002.

Together with other activities within the ISC of the Stability Pact, the WG successfully nominated a Regional project on Mental Health, which is currently being implemented, and through this project B&H undertook a role of the regional leader in the area of mental health.

Becoming a member of the Council of Europe in April 2002, B&H undertook a number of commitments, including signing and ratifying the European Social Charter within a period of two years, and in the meantime, making efforts to implement compatible with the Charter. In line with those requirements, B&H Working Group for Social Cohesion takes an active role in the Council of Europe activities, although with extremely limited human resources.

The new Law on Ministries of Bosnia and Herzegovina (February 2003), allocated to the Ministry of Civil Affairs responsibility for the coordination of entity policies and activities, harmonization of their policies with international standards, and definition of their participation at international level in the field of labour and employment, health, social protection and pensions. The new Department for Labour and Employment, Health, Social Protection and Pensions is in the process of being established, with 13 people to be employed. Although it will take a while to become fully operational, the department will play a very important role in coordinating activities in the social policy field in B&H, as well as improving social cohesion in the country.

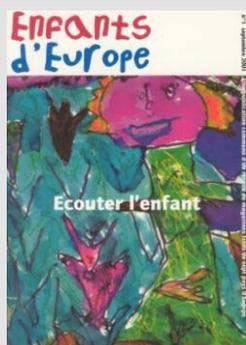
It is important to say that during all these processes the B&H Working Group for

Social Cohesion has been receiving strong support from the Council of Europe (Directorate General for Social Cohesion). Within the Organisation's Programme of Assistance Activities for 2003 and in line with the number of similar events in other Council of Europe member states, a seminar on "Access to Social Rights in Europe" was organized by Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 15-16 September in Sarajevo. Along with the guests from the Council of Europe, the seminar brought together representatives of the state, entity and cantonal institutions of B&H, Brcko District, international organisations, NGOs as well as guests from abroad.

The seminar dealt in fact with issues related to social cohesion as a whole, and two specific themes were considered: social protection and access to social rights. The Council of Europe Strategy for Social Cohesion, the Organisation's activities in the field of employment, housing, etc. as well as its legal instruments in the field of social protection were presented. The importance of signing and ratifying the European Social Charter was particularly stressed. Furthermore, the European Code of Social Security and the mechanism for coordination of social security were presented too.

Certainly the launch and presentation of Bosnian translation of Mary Daly's "Report on Access to Social Rights in Europe" were the most important part of the seminar. This was followed by a panel discussion involving all relevant actors in the social sector in B&H. All participants at the seminar, including the Ministry of Civil Affairs of B&H, agreed that the Report will serve as a sound base and a guideline in the further process of improving social rights in B&H, and thus the report will be widely distributed to the all relevant institutions and organisations across B&H. Furthermore, the Ministry of Civil Affairs committed itself to taking all possible steps in order to foster the signing of the European Social Charter, and, through the new mandate given to this ministry, to facilitate positive solutions to current problems in the social sphere in B&H. The ministry will also do all it can to create a positive environment for the promotion of European standards in social rights. In doing so, further support and expertise from the Council of Europe would be extremely important.

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A network of magazines for children in Europe

Children in Europe is published jointly by a network of magazines in nine European countries and is targeted at professionals from services for children from birth to age 10 and their families. The magazines involved are: *Kiddo* (Flanders and the Netherlands), *Infancia* (Spain), *Bambini* (Italy), *Children in Scotland* (United Kingdom), *Grandir à Bruxelles* (French-speaking community, Belgium), *Børn & Unge* (Denmark), *Gross und Klein* (Germany) and *Le Furet* (France).

The decision to launch the magazine was based on discussions between certain former members of the European Commission Childcare Network who wished to carry forward the activities started by the network and establish a new vehicle for joint research and for exchanging ideas and practices. It was therefore felt that it would be worthwhile using existing national publications to help disseminate recent thinking.

The networking makes it possible to open up the various partners' working methods to other contexts and other practices, while also helping to build a joint vision for early childhood, it being widely recognised that diversity is a source of wealth that enables differences to be overcome in the pursuit of a common goal.

Children in Europe is a supplementary publication for all of the magazines involved. In autumn 2001, following two years of meetings and discussions about organisational arrangements and the fundamental principles for the new magazine, the first issue of *Children in Europe* came out in seven countries (Germany joined later).

The current circulation is around 40 000 copies throughout Europe and worldwide.

The topics reflect the partners' working principles:

- highlighting diversity and complexity;
- offering a forum for exchanging ideas, practices and information;
- establishing links between theory and practice;
- helping develop new practices at European, national, regional and local level;
- recognising history's influence on the present;
- raising awareness of the situation of young children in Europe (in the past, present and future).

The magazine is open to any contributions from countries not currently in the network and would welcome new partners.

The publication is made possible by the commitment of the individual partners and support from the [Bernard Van Leer Foundation](#).

Topics covered in the first five issues of *Children in Europe*:

- Various practices for listening to children in Europe: Pedagogy of listening to children; Young children as experts, listening through the mosaic approach; At what age do children become citizens?; Children's contribution and self-determination; Listening to young children in care services and out-of-school environments.
- Difference and diversity in all their forms: Images and prejudices among children and educators; The integration of children with disabilities in Italy; Diversity: a positive value; The rule and not the exception; Spotlight on Belgium's French-speaking Community.
- Parents' participation in services for their children: New early childhood services in Italy; Facilities for young children and their families: tradition and future; Parent power in Denmark; Emergence of parenting; Spotlight on Scotland and Robert Owen.
- Services for school-age children: School-age children: services undergoing sweeping changes; Free time for everybody; Out-of-school

clubs in Germany; Managing children's time; Forging one's identity; The Freinet schools in Ghent.

Contact of the various partners:

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ADOPTED TEXTS

Recommendations:

- Recommendation Rec(2003)24 of the Committee of Ministers on the organisation of palliative care (adopted on 12 Nov. 2003)
- Recommendation 1626 (2003) of the Parliamentary Assembly on the reform of health care systems in Europe: reconciling equity, quality and efficiency (adopted on 1 Oct. 2003)
- Recommendation 1625 (2003) of the Parliamentary Assembly on Policies for the integration of immigrants in Council of Europe member states (adopted on 30 Sept. 2003)
- Recommendation 1624 (2003) of the Parliamentary Assembly on Common policy on migration and asylum (adopted on 30 Sept. 2003)
- Recommendation 1623 (2003) of the Parliamentary Assembly on the Right of national minorities (adopted on 29 Sept. 2003)
- Recommendation Rec(2003)19 of the Committee of Ministers on improving access to social rights (adopted on 24 Sept. 2003)

Resolutions:

- Resolution ResAP(2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers on food and nutritional care in hospitals (adopted on 12 Nov. 2003)
- Resolution Res(2003)7 of the Committee of Ministers on the youth policy of the Council of Europe (adopted on 29 Oct. 2003)

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Publications:

- *Civil society and new social responsibilities based on ethical foundations*, Trends in social cohesion N°7, Council of Europe publishing, November 2003, ISBN 92-871-5309-4, 13 Euros
- The Mary Daly Report on *Access to social rights in Europe* is now available in 17 different languages: Armenian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Moldavian, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian and Spanish.
- *Demographic consequences of economic transition in countries of central and eastern Europe*, D. Philipov, J. Dorbritz, Council of Europe Publishing, 2003, ISBN 92-871-5172-5, 19 Euros
- *The economically active population in Europe*, R. Palomba, I. E. Kotowska, Council of Europe Publishing, 2003, ISBN 92-871-5183-0, 19 Euros
- *Active ageing in Europe - Volume 1*, D. Avramov, M. Maskova, Council of Europe Publishing, 2003, ISBN 92-871-5240-3, 19 Euros
- *Reproductive health behaviour of young Europeans - Volume 1*, N. Bajos, A. Guillaume, O. Kontula, Council of Europe Publishing, 2003, ISBN 92-871-5257-8, 15 Euros

Rapports:

- Proceedings of the Conference on Access to social rights (14-15 November 2002 in Saint Julian, Malta), Final documents, July 2003.
- Working Programme 2003-2006 of the Pompidou Group, available at the Secretariat at Pompidou.Group@coe.int.

CALENDAR FROM DECEMBER 2003 TO FEBRUARY 2004

- 10-12 December: World Summit on the Information Society - Geneva (Switzerland)

Seminars and other meetings:

- 2-3 December: Workshop on Employment for women - Kruja (Albania)
- 4-5 December: Seminar on "Committed citizenship in the social economy: what future for ethical finance, fair trade and responsible consumption?" - Namur (Belgium)

Committee Meetings:

- 1-3 December: 6th meeting of the European Population Committee (CAHP) - Strasbourg
- 4-5 December: 2nd meeting of the Specialists Group on user involvement in social services (CS-US) - Strasbourg
- 8-10 December: 46th Meeting of the European Committee on Migration (CDMG) - Rotterdam (Netherlands)
- 9-10 December: 6th Forum for Children and Families - Strasbourg
- 9-10 December: 1st meeting of the permanent high-level committee on the Employment cooperation process in South-East Europe - Brussels (Belgium)
- 18-19 December: 1st meeting of the Ad hoc Drafting Group on the Disability Action Plan (P-RR-DGAP) - Strasbourg
- 5-6 February: Ad hoc Working Group on the Disability Action Plan - Strasbourg
- 26-27 February: Meeting of the Permanent Correspondents of the Pompidou Group - Strasbourg

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