

Directorate General of Social Cohesion (DG III)

Overall mandate

To foster social cohesion and promote the improvement of the quality of life in Europe for the genuine enjoyment of fundamental human rights and the respect of human dignity.

Main objectives

- To elaborate and promote European standards, policies, practices and tools in the social, disability, health, bioethical, migration and Roma fields, and to support non-discrimination and equal opportunities as well as ethnic and cultural diversity, with a view to reducing inequality and building confidence in a common and secure future for all;
- to assist and advise the Secretary General on matters pertaining to social cohesion - social, disability, health, migration and Roma policies and bioethical standard-setting - and to provide support and advice to the Committee of Ministers, and, as appropriate, the other statutory organs of the Organisation, whenever such matters arise;
- to assist and supervise the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines and Health Care, the Secretariat of the Partial Agreement on the Council of Europe Development Bank and the Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs (Pompidou Group) in the implementation of their programmes in accordance with the specific terms of reference of these partial agreements.

To meet these objectives, DG III

in accordance with the general instructions and guidelines issued by the Secretary General, and in co-operation with the DSP and other major administrative entities:

- provides secretariat services for the planning, implementation and assessment of intergovernmental co-operation activities in the social cohesion area and, in this context, services intergovernmental and related bodies established under the intergovernmental programme, as well as conferences of specialised ministers;
- designs and implements targeted programmes to assist member states (and applicant states) to fulfil their commitments in the social cohesion area, notably as regards the compatibility of their legislation and practices with the various agreements and conventions of the Organisation and in particular the European Code of Social Security and its Protocol, the European Convention on Social Security, the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers and the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine;
- promotes the effective implementation of the principles embodied in the social cohesion instruments of the Council of Europe through policy development (recommendations) and in particular the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015;

- elaborates standards for the protection of fundamental rights with regard to the applications of biology and medicine;
- leads the Council of Europe transversal programme on children's rights and promotes the integration of a child rights perspective in all Council of Europe policies;
- co-ordinates the work of the Organisation on migration;
- maintains and develops contacts with the competent committees of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the Conference of INGO's of the Council of Europe and the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights where social cohesion-related issues are concerned;
- maintains and develops contacts with national authorities' specialised agencies and NGOs in member states in the area of social cohesion and with similar agencies and NGOs in applicant and Observer states;
- follows closely policies and developments in member, applicant and Observer states which may impact on social cohesion policy and call for action by the Organisation;
- disseminates information on Council of Europe standards, achievements and activities in the area of social cohesion;
- co-ordinates co-operation between the Secretariat and the Council of Europe Development Bank;
- designs and implements assistance activities to facilitate the fulfilment of commitments by member and applicant states, including in the framework of joint initiatives with the European Commission and other partners;
- develops interaction and synergies between the work of the Council of Europe and that of other European, regional and global players in the area of social cohesion through targeted contacts and liaison with the competent services and bodies of the United Nations family, the European Commission, the OSCE, OECD and the Nordic Council of Ministers, taking into account the specific responsibilities of the Directorate of External Relations;
- liaises with Council of Europe field offices and information offices concerning matters within its sphere of competence, taking into account the specific responsibilities of the Directorate General of Democracy and Political Affairs;
- takes into consideration in all its activities, as appropriate, the importance of internal and external communication, in close collaboration with the Directorate of Communication.