

Draft recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Council of Europe's Charter on shared social responsibilities

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on ...)

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe

Considering that:

a. Europe, via the historical pathways specific to each country, seeks to secure equal access to fundamental rights, the ideal of universal social protection and a dignified life for all, enabling all individuals to freely develop their personality, retain control over their life, participate in societal choices and exercise their responsibilities towards their families, the community, the environment and future generations;

b. the people and institutions of Europe have acquired skills in the field of democratic citizenship, the welfare state, the rule of law, local self-government, social dialogue, partnerships and strategies for the political and non-violent resolution of conflicts and for developing frameworks and points of reference for harmonious co-existence; their knowledge and cultural heritages foster a critical and entrepreneurial spirit which is at the basis of institutional innovation, social experimentation and economic initiative;

c. in the current context, the democratic skills of the people of Europe and their social and institutional achievements are faced with major social changes. In particular:

- the rise in inequalities, financial insecurity and poverty is combined today with a global situation which casts doubt on the link between economic growth, job creation and sustainability, particularly in a context of increased competition for non-renewable natural resources, environmental limits for the absorption of waste produced by human activity and rapid climate change;
- migration towards Europe, and the presence of descendents of immigrants legitimately calling for full social and political recognition, requires European societies to ensure equal treatment, while at the same time incorporating cultural, religious and ethnic diversity into their practices;
- public overindebtedness, in a context of financial speculation, exposes states to the risks of repeated crises and weakens their ability to fulfil their role of ensuring access to social protection, health care, education, housing and common goods in general, even though equal access for all constitutes a fundamental source of confidence and social cohesion;
- the pressure of globalised markets on national institutions and local communities leads to fundamental decisions being taken which lack transparency and democratic control and which fail to meet the aspirations and hopes of the population;
- the lack of a comprehensive understanding of the impact of choices, including those relating to the private sphere, makes it impossible to implement a sustainable development policy capable of preventing and overcoming the threats of irreversible environmental destruction;

d. faced with these challenges, the gap between politics and citizens, democratic deficits and inadequate forms of regulation, and the prevalence of short-term visions weaken the attachment felt for democratic institutions, increase the risks of violence and threaten social cohesion;

e. these changes, conveyed and amplified by the media, are directly reflected in European public opinion, which fluctuates between the search for a vision of the future and a feeling of uncertainty, unease and loss of confidence given the unpredictability of social changes and the limitations of the proposed alternatives to the status quo.

Convinced that:

a. in a context in which no-one is totally independent or immune from the damaging consequences of other people's actions or failure to act, the most advantaged population groups cannot ignore their interdependencies and responsibilities vis-à-vis the rest of society, particularly when the least advantaged see their achievements in terms of access to rights, public services and common goods placed under threat;

- b. there is insufficient recognition of the unequal distribution of powers, resources and opportunities, bearing no relation to the allocation of social responsibilities, and inadequate steps are taken to rectify this situation, whether in decision-taking or in social and institutional arrangements, producing an unacceptable waste of human capacities and knowledge which are essential for collective progress;
- c. traditionally, traditionally, social responsibilities have been the preserve of the states, while the markets have been asked to guarantee the efficient allocation of resources through mechanisms encouraging the pursuit of private interest. At a time when the public sector is tending to reduce its role in the field of social policies and common goods, the other stakeholders do not always have the skills and motivation necessary to share social responsibilities in a context of interdependence, to appreciate the urgent need to reduce inequalities and protect common goods, or to ensure interaction in diversity;
- d. the failure to take adequate account of the possible areas of complementarity between representative democracy, deliberative democracy and participatory democracy acts as a break on innovation in all fields in which the reciprocal nature of commitments and joint decision-making based on impartial reasoning are essential in order to guarantee the principles of social, environmental and intergenerational justice; to this end, it is imperative that individuals and other social stakeholders are involved to a greater extent in the framing, implementation and evaluation of policies and measures having an impact in public life;
- e. without renewed confidence in the possibility of inclusive societal progress, there is a danger that the exceptional legacy of the democratic values championed by the Council of Europe will be dissipated and that the most vulnerable groups, such as migrants, the poor and minorities in general, will be held to blame without justification.

Resolved to:

- a. gain an in-depth understanding of the nature of changes under way, so as to develop the collective skills to manage transitions and acquire a shared long-term vision in order to ensure that institutions and citizens are not paralysed by a feeling of powerlessness and fear or that power is not left solely in the hands of the strongest;
- b. combat the causes of inequalities, poverty, insecurity and discrimination by developing and placing greater emphasis on a universal framework of inalienable and indivisible rights and common goods, as the basis of democratic citizenship which is inclusive of all forms of diversity;
- c. reduce the gap between the formal recognition of rights and democratic principles (such as human dignity, equality, participation, social, environmental and intergenerational justice, harmonious co-existence in a plural society) and decisions and behaviour in practice which disregard or violate these rights and principles;
- d. overcome the ideological barriers and inertia which make it difficult to link responsibilities and individual interests to approaches for joint action designed to secure social, environmental and intergenerational justice and acknowledging the value of reciprocity, solidarity and co-operation;
- e. restore the ability of public institutions to rectify democratic deficits and to settle social and distributive conflicts by developing forms of dialogue with individuals and stakeholders, based on the impartial search for the common good and mutual advantage, with the aim of establishing fair agreements and ensuring that the most vulnerable are fully recognised and protected from the harmful consequences of decisions in which they have had no part; and to support the steps taken by states to secure a fair taxation system and guarantee common goods;
- f. promote the ability of companies to take account, in their strategies, of the interests of all stakeholders, both internal and external, and of the impact of their activity on society at large, going beyond a reductive view of economic efficiency that ignores collective well-being and drawing inspiration from the principles of the socially responsible and solidarity-based economy;
- g. give greater acknowledgement and consideration to the contribution of the ethical and solidarity-based initiatives of citizens, non-governmental organisations, social enterprises, co-operatives and other forms of social networks to the preservation and creation of common goods and innovation in policies and public services;

- h. broaden the choices available to citizens in pursuit of social, environmental and intergenerational justice, by providing them with relevant information and strengthening confidence in their capacity for initiative and in their creativity;
- i. turn to account, in a globalised world, the advantages and values of the European model based on democracy, fundamental rights, recognition of human dignity and social cohesion;

Recalling that:

- a. the Council of Europe's Revised Strategy for Social Cohesion, which defines the latter as the capacity of society to ensure the well-being of all its members, calls for the construction of a Europe of shared social responsibilities in order to achieve this goal, as one of its fundamental pillars;
- b. the Social Cohesion Plan, launched by the Council of Europe in 2010, seeks to foster the involvement of citizens and players in defining priorities and responsibilities by means of deliberative democracy and the accession by territories taking part in a European Network of Territories of Co-Responsibility;
- c. the European Union's 2020 Strategy calls for "intelligent", sustainable and inclusive growth and sets among its chief objectives the reduction of poverty and a decrease in the use of fossil fuels and that the European Platform against Poverty gives practical form to the aspirations of several groups of citizens and civil society organisations committed to constructing a more just Europe;
- d. the enjoyment of the rights secured by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the European Social Charter and the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights entails responsibilities and duties both between individuals and towards the human community at large, and to future generations, and consequently a European Charter on Shared Social Responsibilities is an indispensable complement to those instruments;
- e. many recommendations approved by the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly and Congress of Local and Regional Authorities support a change in the economic and social model based on the principles of democratic participation, social justice and sustainable development;
- f. the Council of Europe already supports the establishment of a context conducive to the sharing of social responsibilities through the Convention on access to official documents, the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority, the New Urban Charter and the Convention on the participation of foreigners in public life at local level;
- g. the Aarhus Convention, which was adopted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe on 25 June 1998 and entered into force on 30 October 2001, recognises and protects citizens' rights to information, participation and access to justice in environmental matters;
- h. numerous international documents, such as the UNESCO Declaration on the responsibilities of the present generations towards future generations, the Earth Charter, the Manifesto on the future of the climate, the Manifesto on the future of food, the Aalborg Charter of European cities and towns towards sustainability, the Charter of Human Responsibilities and the Agreement adopted by the World Conference of People on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth recognise the need to preserve common goods and pass them on to future generations in a context of shared responsibility in the field of social and environmental justice;
- i. the ISO 26 000 standard defines the societal responsibility of organisations by highlighting different core subjects which organisations should promote: governance, human rights, labour practices, the environment, fair operation practices, consumer issues and community involvement and development;
- j. on 1 October 2009 the Council of Europe's Conference of International Non-governmental Organisations adopted a code of good practice for citizen participation in the decision-making process [CONF/PLE(2009)Code1];
- i. numerous international projects underway, such as *Beyond GDP*, supported by the OECD and the European Union, and the Council of Europe's activities on defining societal progress in co-operation

with citizens and communities, are working on innovative ideas on the objectives of the prosperity and well-being of all, combining access to material goods with access to non-material, relational and environmental goods, clarifying in a concerted way the possible approaches to achieving these objectives and the shared responsibilities that this entails in terms of regulating production and consumption, and recognising each person's contribution to social cohesion;

Recommends that the governments of member states:

1. alert all stakeholders to the risks of a regression in rights, social protection and democracy when faced with recurring crises and to the waste of citizens' human, intellectual and moral skills;
2. raise all stakeholders' awareness of reciprocity and mutual compliance with commitments in the establishment of rules, priorities and jointly decided action strategies;
3. encourage experimentation of a new approach based on the principle of shared social responsibilities, which seeks to link the decisions and action of the different players to the objectives of securing welfare and social, environmental and intergenerational justice, in a spirit of reciprocity, mutual accountability and a shared commitment to reducing social inequalities and inequalities of influence and to minimising the harmful consequences of unilateral decisions;
4. promote shared social responsibilities in order to nurture knowledge, skills and common strategies able to re-establish confidence in the future and the possibility of achieving progress in well-being for all, while taking the different interests into account in an impartial way, and assigning priority to the protection of fundamental rights and satisfying the needs required for a decent life;
5. encourage and legitimise new forms of deliberation, aimed at reducing inequalities of power and formulating preferences through reasoning and exchanges of views, using, in particular, the methods proposed by the Council of Europe in its work on social cohesion;
6. recognise and actively support the vital role played by local stakeholders, neighbourhoods, cities, towns, villages, cantons, districts and regions in constructing a Europe of shared social responsibilities, especially with regard to the application of the principles of this Charter in more disadvantaged areas;
7. help bring about new forms of co-operation and new structures of governance, involving all stakeholders and the various levels of responsibility and sectors of society, conducive to non-hierarchical and shared decision-making, including all current generations to ensure that political action is geared to the long-term, thereby avoiding a transfer of the risks and costs to the weakest groups or to future generations;
8. encourage renewed criteria for assessing initiatives in order to provide stakeholders with tools to ensure that the decisions taken are implemented in practice, and to verify the quality of results; to this end, adopt progress indicators taking into account individual and collective needs, both material and non-material, quality of life, freedoms and abilities, reductions in social disparities and prevention of the risks of a regression in achievements and the risks of environmental damage;
9. ensure that learning processes, forms of participation, structures of governance and assessment criteria capitalise on the knowledge and contributions of all stakeholders in accordance with their abilities, roles and resources, paying particular attention to those who have less power, whose voices are less often heard, who have less legal protection and who suffer from the harmful consequences of other people's choices;
10. incorporate into public policies the lessons learned from experimental practices encouraging a sharing of social responsibilities, particularly in the field of combating the causes of poverty, inequality, discrimination and household overindebtedness, the protection of common goods and the environment, the improvement of social protection and health-care systems and other public policies encouraging active citizenship through joint decision-making and co-production, sustainable choices regarding budgetary decisions, production, consumption, lifestyles and public and private investments and harmonious co-existence with due regard for plurality;

11. ensure that the Charter is widely disseminated among institutions, public authorities, companies, civil society organisations, trade unions, foundations, professional organisations, the media, social networks and citizens in general;

12. facilitate ownership and implementation of the contents of the Charter by setting up a subordinate Committee for the Promotion of Shared Social Responsibility, tasked with promoting its application, identifying lessons learned from the experiments carried out and putting forward policy recommendations in the different areas concerned.

Instructs the Secretary General to transmit this recommendation:

- a. to the political bodies of the Council of Europe;
- b. to the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions;
- c. to the national parliaments of member states;
- d. to the international organisations.

Appendix to Recommendation Rec. (2011)...

Council of Europe Charter on Shared Social Responsibilities

Adopted under Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec. (2011)

Preamble

1. Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of promoting the ideals and principles which are their common heritage, and safeguarding human dignity and the freedom and equality of everyone in Europe;
2. Committed to the principles laid down in the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter and the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights which stipulate that the enjoyment of rights entails responsibilities and duties both between individuals and towards the human community at large, and to future generations; considering that a European Charter on Shared Social Responsibilities is an indispensable complement to those instruments;
3. Concerned at the threat to the political and social achievements of Europe, linked to public overindebtedness, company relocations, climate change and the depletion of natural resources;
4. Considering that the succession of economic, financial and environmental crises affects people unequally, with the greatest effects being felt predominantly by the weakest and the least protected, even though they are not responsible for current imbalances;
5. Concerned at the growing gap between the formal recognition of rights and their implementation; considering that this gap fuels a sense of insecurity vis-à-vis the future, undermines legitimate confidence in democratic mechanisms and raises doubts about the ability of public and private institutions to improve living conditions, especially those of the less well-off;
6. Mindful of the risk of the resulting stigmatisation of those groups which can most easily be blamed without any real justification, such as the poor, migrants and minorities;
7. Concerned, in a context of interdependence, by the trend among states to reduce their role in key policies and services for collective well-being and by the continuing deterioration of economic conditions such as to prevent full employment;
8. Considering that these changes fundamentally alter the scope and substance of specific responsibilities, be they individual or collective, voluntary or statutory. Interdependence brings to the fore differences in values, conceptions of well-being and interests present in society. These differences can give rise to mutually destructive conflicts, to the waste of social, environmental and economic resources and to other negative externalities;
9. Considering that the gravity of the situation calls for new methods of governance, regulation, conflict management and redistribution incorporated into a long-term vision;
10. Convinced of the need, in order to generate confidence in the future, for social responsibilities to be shared equitably among public authorities, companies, civil society organisations, families and individuals.
11. Considering that in order to avoid friction, reduce imbalances of power and exploit the potential of mutual gains, it is essential to put in place co-operative solutions which can ensure for all stakeholders an equitable share of social and economic benefits.
12. Considering that such solutions will be possible provided that there is an impartial consideration of the different social demands, concepts of well-being and interests at stake, so as to identify common interests, while at the same time acknowledging the primacy of

fundamental rights and the value of diversity. This consensual approach will enable European societies to pull together, generating solidarity imbued with the principles of social, environmental and intergenerational justice;

13. Confident that the sharing of social responsibilities is an alternative to the status quo which, through the involvement of all stakeholders, both strong and weak, will give rise to common and sustainable solutions, fully acknowledging their contributions and legitimate aspirations;
14. Convinced that Europe is the appropriate level for action to promote social cohesion, reduce inequalities and bring about social innovation, based on an interplay of skills between multiple stakeholders, sectors and tiers of authority;
15. Considering that the future of Europe and the preservation of its democratic and social achievements are closely linked to the ability of citizens and public and private institutions to understand the changes taking place and address the uncertainty generated by unprecedented interdependence between individuals, communities and organisations.
16. Wishing to stimulate a climate of confidence in the future, to strengthen democracy and develop the necessary social and moral resources to enable the citizens of Europe to act together to foster the universal protection of rights, the well-being of all, social cohesion, sustainable development and interaction between cultures, the Council of Europe proposes the implementation of the principle of shared social responsibility and agrees on the following:

Section 1: Definitions for the implementation of the present Charter:

Article 1: Definition of shared social responsibility

- a. responsibility is defined as the state in which individuals and public and private institutions are required or are in a position to be accountable for the consequences of their actions or omissions in all fields of public and private life, with due regard for the applicable moral, social and legal rules or obligations;
- b. social responsibility is defined as the state in which individuals and public and private institutions are required or are in a position to be accountable for the consequences of their actions or omissions in the fields of social welfare and the protection of human dignity, the environment and common goods, the fight against poverty and discrimination, and the pursuit of justice and social cohesion, showing democratic respect for diversity and for the applicable moral, social and legal rules or obligations;
- c. shared social responsibility is defined as the state in which individuals and public and private institutions are required or are in a position to be accountable for the consequences of their actions or omissions, in the context of mutual commitments entered into by consensus, agreeing on reciprocal rights and obligations in the fields of social welfare and the protection of human dignity, the environment and common goods, the fight against poverty and discrimination, the pursuit of justice and social cohesion, showing democratic respect for diversity.

Article 2. Definition of social, environmental and intergenerational justice

Shared social responsibility is a means of securing social, environmental and intergenerational justice.

- a. Social justice is the guarantee of human rights, while meeting fundamental human needs, striving, through redistribution mechanisms, to reduce inequalities and securing collectively the conditions conducive to the development of the individual and his or her skills, regardless of gender, origins, race, beliefs or convictions;

b. environmental justice is the fair management of natural resources, the protection of common goods, the preservation of a healthy environment for all and, where appropriate, the reparation of or compensation for ecological damage. Under the principle of social justice, no group or individual should have to bear in a disproportionate way, the harmful consequences of damage to the environment;

c. intergenerational justice places future generations and their possibilities for development at the heart of present-day decisions, without their having to suffer the irreversible damage caused by the generations preceding them, while at the same time benefiting from what they have achieved. It is to be seen primarily in the preservation, enrichment and transmission of common goods and the frameworks of democracy and social protection for all. It presupposes dialogue among the present generations on the reduction of current inequalities in order to restore confidence in political processes which will result in social structures providing everyone with a level of security and control guaranteeing their autonomy.

Article 3. Scope

Shared social responsibility does not replace specific responsibilities. Rather it complements and enhances them by encouraging social stakeholders and individuals to engage in transparency and to be accountable for their actions in a context of knowledge and decision-making constructed through dialogue and interaction. Nor does shared social responsibility entail assigning indiscriminately to the weakest players individual responsibility for their economic and social situation, but rather calls for a new approach to responsibility in a context of interdependence.

Article 4. Implementing conditions

The shared exercise of social responsibilities is a right. It requires the following conditions to be in place:

a. No one shall be excluded from the decisions which have or may have significant and irreversible consequences for his or her existence and on the local or global political community in which he or she lives. Each individual or group of individuals must have the ability to take a decision or take part in an action having significant effects in the public arena. The public authorities, corporate bodies and individuals are urged to eliminate the legal, operational and material obstacles to the exercise of this right;

b. in particular, for their actions to be legitimately subject to the approval or disapproval of others, each individual or group of individuals must be able to have access to information on the impact of their actions, in order to foresee and verify their compliance with the norms of life in society;

c. there must be the broadest possible level of transparency in order to ensure that the information required for the sharing of social responsibilities is available to all the various stakeholders;

d. the principles, norms and priorities in the field of social, environmental and intergenerational justice must be the subject of broad debate and be agreed by democratic consensus having a significant influence on their substance and application;

e. these principles, norms and priorities must be able to create a feeling of solidarity and reciprocity between stakeholders, motivating them to action and to honouring their mutual commitments.

f. responsibility for acts cannot be regarded as shared between different individuals, institutions or bodies, if the latter have been unable to make any choice with regard to those acts.

Section 2 Guiding principles

Article 5: Standards of action and decision

Budgetary, economic, intergenerational and harmonious co-existence policies are based on the principle of shared social responsibility. They seek to

- a. safeguard the social and political achievements of Europe and ensure their sustainability faced with the dangers of regression;
- b. take account of the harmful consequences of decisions and actions in order to learn lessons from the mistakes of the past, to reduce as far as possible uncertainty and fear, injustice and unjustified discrimination, and to protect the rights of present and future generations;
- c. encourage discussion and innovation in the field of welfare and social, environmental and intergenerational justice, based on new multi-stakeholder, multi-level and multi-sectoral institutional and organisational arrangements;
- d. provide the weaker stakeholders with opportunities to influence decisions and priorities;
- e. manage conflicts through the impartial mediation of interests and an understanding of the complexity of the issues at stake, while bearing in mind the principles of social, environmental and intergenerational justice;
- f. build up everyone's confidence and ability to take action by giving them an opportunity to express their views on the objectives pursued, the means to be deployed and the criteria for assessing the strategies adopted;
- g. produce performance indicators making it possible to measure societal progress in terms of well-being for all, the reduction of disparities in living conditions and access to skills and common goods, the level of harmonious co-existence in a plural society and limitation of the harm caused to the environment.

Article 6: means of implementation

An effective strategy in the field of shared social responsibilities presupposes:

- a. recognition of the full range of stakeholders, their demands and possible contributions in terms of action or suggestions, their rights and obligations, and their role in a social system based on close interdependencies;
- b. deliberative processes, making it possible to refine the preferences of the stakeholders and establish priorities through exchanges of different arguments and viewpoints, and through the impartial arbitration of differing interests;
- c. multi-stakeholder, multi-level and multi-sectoral innovation and skill and knowledge-acquisition processes making it possible for all involved to evaluate the consistency between the decisions taken and the European frames of reference in the field of fundamental rights, and paving the way for the equitable and democratic management of common goods;
- d. forms of partnership and governance broadly involving the stakeholders at different levels and making it possible for a plurality of players to become involved and co-operate in a sustainable way;
- e. institutional mechanisms offering confidence in the fact that each partner will act in accordance with the decisions taken and will refrain from any harmful behaviour or acting solely in his or her own interest to the detriment of the interests of others.

Proximity is a crucial factor. Within regions, towns, neighbourhoods, local institutions, public services, enterprises and the work place it is possible to bring together all the stakeholders required to share social responsibilities. Proximity also encourages the setting up of partnerships and networks, strengthening reciprocity and the stakeholders' confidence in joint action.

Article 7: Role of common goods

The exercise of shared social responsibility requires recognition of material and non-material common goods. Among the objects of rights, common goods are those which express a functional utility for the exercise of fundamental rights and the development of the individual, and which contribute to the feeling of belonging to the human race. Common goods include natural resources, the cultural and historic heritage, social protection, social cohesion, democratic institutions and the sharing of knowledge. Access to common goods is a fundamental right. Common goods are guaranteed and enhanced for the benefit of present and future generations.

Article 8: Principle of non-regression

In order to eliminate poverty, social exclusion and unjustified discrimination, and to secure long-term social cohesion, the preservation of Europe's social and democratic achievements must be guaranteed. Strengthening these achievements is one of the objectives of public policies and of the action of individuals and public and private institutions. No-one may fall into distress, be prevented from exercising their social, civil and political rights or jeopardise their own life and human dignity.

Article 9: Principle of recognition

The sharing of social responsibilities presupposes the recognition, representation and capacity to influence of everyone, in accordance with his or her needs, contributions and the consequences suffered by him or her.

The views of the weaker stakeholders must be able to be heard, heeded and able to influence decisions and results. This means avoiding situations where the stronger stakeholders, in possession of more information and organisational power relinquish their specific responsibilities, impose priorities based on their interests alone and fail to acknowledge and compensate for the harm to which they may give rise.

Everyone must be able to contribute, individually and collectively, to the well-being of all, future generations included. If some people are incapable of accepting social responsibilities because of circumstances beyond their control, it falls to all parties to rectify the situation.

Section 3: The stakeholders of shared social responsibility

Article 10: The role of the stakeholders

Sharing social responsibilities in an equitable way requires a reassessment of the allocation of roles and powers among all stakeholders, private and public, and their rights and obligations.

A reassignment of roles, specifying the arrangements for the participation of the various stakeholders in well-being for all and the enjoyment of common goods must take account of the following:

- a. the relative urgency of the different expectations expressed by the various stakeholders, acknowledging the priority of those which satisfy fundamental needs and corresponding rights;
- b. the possibility of causing harm to others or the risk of having to suffer such harm;
- c. the material or non-material contributions of all stakeholders and their corresponding merits.

Article 11: States and governmental authorities

State and governmental authorities are encouraged to promote the sharing of social responsibilities by adopting appropriate legal rules.

To this end, they are required to

- a. encourage and legitimise forums for negotiation and discussion between the many stakeholders;
- b. motivate stakeholders to comply with the principles relating to the sharing of social responsibilities and the implementation of decisions;
- c. make interaction with stakeholders a key opportunity for learning, so that representative democracy and deliberative democracy become mutually reinforcing;
- d. communicate information so as to explain the thinking behind public policies enabling a sharing of social responsibilities, and to encourage action to that end;
- e. where convincing data are available, promote and publicise the positive results of innovation in the field of social, environmental and intergenerational justice
- f. set up institutions specialising in mediation and conflict resolution, facilitating the exercise of shared social responsibility;
- g. reassess the role of public servants as mediators between different stakeholders who may have different interests, bearing in mind the constitutional principles and democratic procedures in force;
- h. adopt fair taxation mechanisms;
- i. encourage multi-lateral and cross-border activities, including the networking of territories committed to implementing the Council of Europe's Action Plan for Social Cohesion;
- j. exchange, develop and codify positive results, in the context of the Council of Europe and with other international organisations.

Article 12: Municipal and local and regional authorities

Local and regional authorities, and especially, city, neighbourhood and village authorities, are encouraged to promote the sharing of social responsibilities. To this end, they are required to:

- a. strengthen consistency between the objectives of social, environmental and intergenerational justice, decided by common accord, and individual and institutional choices;
- b. introduce mechanisms of participatory and deliberative governance, making possible the sharing of social responsibilities;
- c. conclude agreements with other administrative tiers facilitating the establishment of local participatory structures;
- d. foster the involvement of residents in projects of general interest, through the preservation and enhancement of common goods, the landscape, the cultural heritage and all local resources contributing to the strengthening of capital, motivations and shared confidence, while including the diversity resulting from immigration;
- e. frame local policies which acknowledge and take into account the contribution made by everyone to strengthening social protection and social cohesion, the fair allocation of common goods, the formation of the principles of social, environmental and intergenerational justice and which also ensure that all stakeholders have a negotiation and decision-making power;

Article 13: Companies

Companies are encouraged to adapt their forms of governance to incorporate the general principles of shared social responsibility, so as to:

- a. rethink their aims and operational principles in a context of social, environmental and intergenerational justice, bearing in mind all the costs and impacts of their activity;
- b. seek lasting competitive advantages by taking into account societal values and social and ecological needs and adapting production processes, rather than focusing exclusively on reducing labour force costs and the socialisation of environmental harm;
- c. ensure that working conditions comply with national legislation and are compatible with international working standards in force;
- d. integrate further in decision-making the viewpoints of workers, consumers, those who experience the harmful consequences of production, institutions and the relevant civil society organisations;
- e. develop ways of managing relationships and conflicts, both in-house and with the stakeholders in the communities and areas where they are located, in a spirit of dialogue, confidence and mutual respect.
- f. make the life cycle of products transparent, from the origin of the raw materials to the management of waste;
- g. publish periodic reports on the social and environmental impact of their activities, including those of a financial nature;

Article 15: Financial sector

Banks, credit societies and the financial sector are encouraged to participate in the sharing of social responsibilities. To this end, they are required to:

- a. rethink their aims and operating principles in a context of social, environmental and intergenerational justice, ensuring their actions do not weaken public and private institutions, families and individuals as a result of short-term speculative choices;
- b. be totally open about their offer of financial products, particularly when such products jeopardise the security and dignity of the weakest;
- c. adopt measures to avoid the over-indebtedness of families and individuals.

Article 16: Foundations and stakeholders in the social and solidarity-based economy

Foundations and stakeholders in the social and solidarity-based economy are encouraged to participate in the sharing of social responsibilities, in order to:

- a. ensure that economic construction is based on the primacy of human dignity, the protection of common goods and a fair reconciliation between individual and collective needs;
- b. develop consumption, saving and investment choices enabling everyone to contribute to social, environmental and intergenerational justice;
- c. improve information on the social and environmental impact of their activities;
- d. support experimentation and research on shared social responsibility.

Article 17: Media and education

The media, teachers and training staff are encouraged to participate in the sharing of social responsibilities. To this end, they are required to:

- a. alert public opinion, pupils and students to the principles and processes of shared social responsibility
- b. develop, in an educational context, experiments in the field of sharing social responsibilities

Article 18: Trade unions and organised civil society

Trade unions, associations and non-governmental organisations are encouraged to participate in the sharing of social responsibilities. To this end, they are required to:

- a. incorporate the principles of shared social responsibility in their aims and organisational structure;
- b. take part in forums for deliberative and participatory democracy which enable shared social responsibility to be exercised;
- c. take part in multi-stakeholder, multi-level and multi-sectoral processes;
- d. exercise, particularly in the case of trade unions, the right to be informed and consulted and defend the employment rights established by the ILO;
- e. subscribe, particularly in the case of NGOs, to the code of good practice for civil participation in the decision-making process, adopted by the Council of Europe's Conference of INGOs on 1 October 2009 [CONF/PLE(2009)Code1].

Article 19: Families and individuals

Families and their members are encouraged to participate in the sharing of social responsibilities. To this end, they are required to:

- a. take part in forums for deliberative and participatory democracy which enable shared social responsibility to be exercised;
- b. bring their consumption, saving and investment choices into line with the pursuit of social, environmental and intergenerational justice;
- c. develop forms of shared social responsibility in their everyday settings and immediate neighbourhood, focusing on harmonious co-existence, bringing up children and young people, sociability, job creation through community links, the enhancement of public areas.

Section 4: Deliberative processes and governance

Article 20: Objectives of deliberative processes

The sharing of social responsibilities calls for deliberative processes making it possible for everyone to put forward their own visions and reformulate their preferences through reasoning and exchanges of views and contribute to the development of shared knowledge, objectives and projects. These processes should make it possible to:

- a. bring to the fore and examine in a public, transparent setting the different interests put forward by citizens and stakeholders;
- b. evaluate in an impartial way social preferences and demands, so as to identify common interests and reach agreements acceptable to each stakeholder;
- c. construct shared visions and knowledge capable of reconciling the aspirations of present and future generations;
- d. conclude agreements acknowledged as being fair and which will encourage each stakeholder to honour and implement them in practice.

Article 21: Deliberative process methods

Deliberative processes must be structured in accordance with well-defined methodological principles. Each stakeholder must be able to:

- a. interact on an equal footing with other stakeholders, all present and duly represented;
- b. have an equal right to information and freedom of expression;
- c. hear the viewpoint of others in the context of impartial discussions, seeking a consensus that is as equitable as possible;
- d. take part in choosing alternatives and taking decisions;
- e. discuss differences of opinion openly and publicise the agreements reached;
- f. clarify and take into account the long-term effects and interests of decisions on objectives and means of action, including their impact on the weaker players and on future generations;
- g. make commitments and receive guarantees about the implementation of decisions and the respective contributions of the other stakeholders;
- h. take part in the construction of criteria to assess decisions and initiatives regarding the well-being of all and in the design and implementation of evaluation procedures.

Article 22: Purposes of deliberative processes

By upholding these principles, deliberative processes contribute, amongst other things to:

- a. clarifying the actual needs of stakeholders and highlighting their interrelations;
- b. reconciling individual preferences with common priorities in the field of social, environmental and intergenerational justice and the well-being of all;
- c. reducing imbalances of power between strong and weak stakeholders and neutralising the impact of those imbalances on the construction of knowledge and on decision-making;
- d. renewing the sense of specific responsibilities and broadening the scope of individual and collective choices;
- e. reactivating the stakeholders' moral and social resources, forms of collective intelligence and democratic skills;
- f. highlighting the key role of social citizenship in countering the fragmentation of responsibilities of individuals as workers, consumers, savers, investors, etc.;

Article 23: Link with representative democracy procedures

Deliberative processes are not a substitute for representative democracy; rather they strengthen it and are an essential complement for initiating new policies and bringing citizens, stakeholders and public authorities closer together.

Article 24: Governance

In order to ensure the effectiveness of co-operative and fair agreements and compliance with the decisions taken, forms of multi-stakeholder, multi-level and multi-sectoral governance should supplement existing institutional structures.

Article 25: Innovation and learning processes

In order to initiate new general policies, particular attention should be paid to multi-stakeholder, multi-level and multi-sectoral initiatives today encouraging institutional and social innovation, especially at local level. Of particular relevance are initiatives seeking to:

- a. combat the causes of inequalities, impoverishment and discrimination, making it possible to improve individuals' capacities for equitable participation and ensuring the irreversibility of social rights;
- b. improve health and social protection systems and other public services by means of joint decision-making and co-production with users, the companies concerned, service providers and public authorities;
- c. create and manage common goods, both material and non-material, as a source of learning skills, mediation and identification of shared interests, including with migrants and minorities;
- d. set up companies, social enterprises and co-operatives incorporating into their accounts all social and environmental costs, and the interests of the other stakeholders in their forms of socially responsible governance.
- e. strengthen resilience and devise sustainable lifestyles in terms of production, consumption, mobility, housing, savings and public and private investment;
- f. create social links and networks using the new technologies capable of ensuring a pooling of skills and the formulation of relevant responses to the maintaining of social, environmental and intergenerational justice;
- g. promote institutions and professions whose aim is the resolution of conflicts, through the impartial consideration of the interests at stake and by broadening the perspectives of the different stakeholders;

Learning processes should be facilitated at all levels in order to promote and disseminate the most relevant innovations and improve evaluation and governance methods.

Section 5: Final Provisions

Member states are invited to disseminate the Charter and encourage and facilitate implementation of its principles.

Article 26: Voluntary accessions

All other interested parties, with the exception of natural persons, may also accede by application to the Secretariat of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS). The voluntary accession procedure provides for the following, in order:

- a. a statement of interest in the general provisions and strategies of the Charter;
- b. submission of an account of activities already carried out or in progress relating to the general provisions and strategies of the Charter;
- c. presentation of objectives in relation to one or more policy areas mentioned in the Charter, together with an indication of the methods to be employed and the results expected;
- d. formal accession to the Charter.

Article 27: Co-operation

All parties to the Charter are invited to make themselves known to each other, exchange their experiences and identify areas of complementarity between their initiatives.

Article 28: Evaluation and revision

Member states and all other parties should at regular intervals evaluate the strategies, action and policies pursued in accordance with this Charter and adapt them in line with changing needs and contexts. Evaluation and revision will be the subject of co-operation at various levels.