



## Editorial

### Fundamental Rights and Social Cohesion

This first issue of the "Social Cohesion: Developments" newsletter coincides with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights, which will be celebrated in Rome in November 2000.

But is this really a coincidence? Probably not, because the significance of social cohesion in a human rights organisation is surely that it contributes in a substantial way towards the enjoyment of the fundamental rights.

How was it possible for the Council of Europe, in the space of only 50 years, to progress from a narrow, old-fashioned view of human rights (civil and political rights) to a much wider and more up-to-date view (including social and economic rights) in which social cohesion "is one of the foremost needs of the wider Europe", a goal which "should be pursued as an essential complement to the promotion of human rights and dignity" (Final Declaration of the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government, 1997)?

Did you know that it took only 18 months to draft the European Convention on Human Rights but that it took over 10 years to agree on a text that would safeguard social and economic rights and almost as many years to draw up a European Code of Social Security? As early as 1950 the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe recognised that not only political, economic and technological measures but also the development of social security, as part of a comprehensive social policy, could play an essential role in improving Europeans' living conditions, but the Code was not adopted until 1964. This shows how difficult it was to reach a consensus on the scope of such rights and how to enforce them at international level.

Although Article 1 of the Statute of the Council of Europe states that the Organisation's aim is "to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress", this aim has not been sufficiently highlighted in the Organisation's activities. It was not until the Second Summit of Heads of State that social cohesion was acknowledged as a priority.

Is it thanks to the universality of human rights - those indivisible and interdependent rights, claimed for

with a new impetus within the Organisation, especially since the enlargement to Central and Eastern European countries - that the inextricable link between human rights and social cohesion is emerging?

There are various factors which may prevent human beings from enjoying their human rights: among these factors, social exclusion (what access do the most deprived members of society have to most rights?) and political exclusion (exacerbated by social rejection and discrimination).

In this context, recognition of the need to promote social cohesion takes on a new meaning.

In this issue, we are pleased to publish excerpts from the Strategy for Social Cohesion and the "Diversity and Cohesion" study. These texts clearly show that the Council of Europe addresses social development issues from a human rights standpoint.

Now that "internationalisation" and "globalisation" pose a threat to the progress we have made at European level, is it not time to ensure that the "globalisation" of human rights is recognised as the real challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

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# INTERVIEW WITH MR PIETRO ERCOLE AGO : AMBASSADOR OF ITALY - Chairman of the Ministers' Deputies

## Why did governments rank social cohesion among the Council of Europe's priorities at the 2nd Summit in 1997?

*I think the answer is to be found in the summit's final declaration, where it says that social cohesion is one of the main objectives in a greater Europe, as a necessary adjunct to promoting human rights and human dignity. The Italian government in fact endorsed that objective as soon as it took over the chair of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, on 11 May 2000.*

*But combating social imbalances, protecting vulnerable sections of the population, and a fairer distribution of wealth are not just but-tresses and safeguards making for stable democratic systems. I think the importance now attached to this particular issue is connected with recent events in Europe, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of socialist regimes.*

*Western countries were forced to look, within their market-economy systems, for appropriate ways of tackling issues like social justice or eradication of poverty, which, ideologically, formed the very basis of those regimes.*

*In Italy there is a very common expression, "rogue liberalism", by which is meant – and the term is of course highly uncomplimentary – all policies that are solely market-oriented and contain no social "correctives".*

## What are the main challenges facing the member states?

*I think there are quite a few. For Italy and Western Europe generally I see migration as one of the main problems, the biggest, most pressing challenge being to reconcile the very necessary integration of immigrants with respect for their cultural identity.*

*I see the conditions of immigrant workers and their families as something western governments must treat as a priority, otherwise there are going to be problems such as social exclusion and growing racism and xenophobia in our societies.*

*Another very important challenge is to tie in the progress in the various areas of telecommunications (I particularly have the Internet in mind here) with preservation of the values, which are basic to our societies, values which misuse of the new tools very often threatens. There has been a furore in Italy recently over the discovery of a sexual traffic in teenagers via the Internet. We need to rethink and update our child-protection strategies, and in particular how we go about protecting children exposed to serious risk and children in the poorest social groups and in immigrant communities.*

*As far as the eastern countries are concerned, the major challenge is to consolidate their infant democracies. It is very difficult to persuade*

*people who have lost homes and jobs that hard-won civil freedoms and democracy are an improvement.*

*In addition, there are the problems everyone knows about:*

- tackling unemployment;
- eradicating poverty;
- providing an appropriate level of social protection;
- population trends and population ageing.

## What impetus is the Committee of Ministers going to give to the social cohesion strategy?

*I think impetus has already been created by setting up the European Committee for Social Cohesion and by last January's European Conference on Social Development in Dublin. The conference worked out the basic common message of Council of Europe member countries, a message that the Italian chair delivered to the United Nations General Assembly's special session on social development, in Geneva in June 2000. The message title, "Towards social development for all: a European strategy based on co-operation and partnership" very aptly sums up European countries' approach.*

*In addition, in adopting the social cohesion strategy on 13 July 2000, the Committee of Ministers signalled its resolve to convert this declaration of genuine intent into a detailed framework for action in the social field in the years ahead.*

*The Committee of Ministers' recent adoption of a recommendation on security of residence for long-term immigrants is an important stage in that process. The Committee of Ministers is of course a body that expresses government positions and it sometimes has difficulty adopting very bold or very innovatory stances. That is why I attach great importance to co-ordination with other Council of Europe bodies, in particular the Parliamentary Assembly.*

*Assembly adoption of recommendations on social questions forces the Committee of Ministers to respond, initiates debate and very often leads to recommendations to governments. Needless to say it is then for governments to act on the recommendations and give them practical effect. But that, of course, is another matter.*

## In what way is the Committee of Ministers able to act as a catalyst for social cohesion in the member states?

*In fact, the Committee of Ministers is a catalyst in all the Council's fields of activity and consequently in that of social cohesion as well. But I would stress the importance of co-ordination and co-operation between the Council of Europe's various institutions. The Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional*

*Authorities of Europe and the specialist committees also have a key role to play in lending impetus to initiatives.*

*Sometimes communications break down – it is not unknown for a country's experts, members of parliament and other representatives to give very clear support to initiatives or instruments that are then rejected by that very country's representative in the Committee of Ministers.*

*This is a general observation, and it applies to many of the Council of Europe's fields of work as well as to social cohesion.*

*You particularly mentioned the Rapporteur Group on Social and Health Questions (GR-SOC), which is undoubtedly an important tool. It is a discussion forum, which prepares decisions of the Committee of Ministers. It does not actually take decisions itself, and therefore discussion is more open, less constrained. Its exchanges of views help to clarify and shape the positions, which governments subsequently adopt in the Committee of Ministers.*

*The group's new chair has just been appointed and I am personally convinced he has every qualification for doing an excellent job.*

## How do we make the Council of Europe's work on social cohesion more visible and how do we get the strategy's message across?

*The question of visibility of the Council of Europe's social cohesion work is inevitably part of the often-discussed wider question of getting through to the outside world about the Council of Europe's activities. Some of the basic problems are well known – lack of funding, for example. But the real problem, in my view, is the content of the information we put out. The subject of social cohesion has an important advantage: it involves issues which closely affect the daily lives of millions, and which refer to concrete realities. Discussion and reception of the message must not be confined to a small community of specialists. And to get the message across to the outside world, it needs to be translated into concrete government programmes and initiatives.*

*Europe-wide, there may be relatively few who have a detailed grasp of the Council of Europe's activities and purposes, but nowadays everyone knows about the role and function of the European Court of Human Rights. I do not think that is because the Court spends more money than we do on public relations. It is simply that its work has effects, direct implications for the lives of Europeans.*

*So the real problem, the actual challenge, is not so much to circulate the message effectively as to create a climate in which the message is translated into visible programmes and initiatives that give our peoples better quality of life.*

## **Towards social development for all: a European strategy based on co-operation and partnership**

The Council of Europe is and remains committed to Social Development. In the five years since the Copenhagen World Summit, European countries have reaffirmed their conviction that social development provides an essential basis for the development of inclusive societies, sound economic growth and the prevention of conflict.

In line with this conviction, the Council of Europe - a pan-European Organisation bringing together 41 states united by their commitment to democracy, respect for human rights, including social rights, and the rule of law - is developing a European Strategy for Social Cohesion as one of its main priorities.

In developing and implementing this Strategy, the Council of Europe draws upon the political determination of its member states to prepare social development policies at national level aimed at promoting active participation in decision-making, fostering civic and social ties, and developing mutually supportive relationships between state, local government, public and private sectors and civil society.

The Council of Europe's Strategy for Social Cohesion aims to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the commitments undertaken at the Copenhagen World Summit. This strategy incorporates the following core elements:

### **Enabling environment: a common framework of social standards**

The European Convention on Human Rights, as well as the relevant legal instruments of the Council of Europe in the social field, in particular the European Social Charter and Revised Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security and Revised Code, protect social rights for everybody without discrimination. Efforts to assist member states in making their legislation compatible with these instruments are being stepped up.

Despite any guarantees offered by states' ratification of legal instruments, there are various obstacles to access to social rights for many people. Therefore, the Council of Europe has set up programmes on access to housing, employment, social protection and health. In this context, particular attention is paid to vulnerable persons or groups at risk of exclusion and to children.

### **Initiatives aimed at poverty eradication.**

National strategies against poverty and social exclusion must have clear objectives, targets and monitoring mechanisms. Civil society and people suffering from poverty and social exclusion should be involved in developing such strategies. The Council of Europe has relevant experience to offer in assisting governments further develop such strategies.

The Council of Europe's campaign "Global Interdependence and Solidarity: Europe against Poverty and Social Exclusion" is one of the ongoing efforts of the Organisation to increase awareness of the importance of eradicating poverty in a world-wide context.

### **Initiatives to promote employment**

The Council of Europe is ready to work with the European Union and relevant international organisations to encourage the development of policies to promote employment, particularly as regards access to employment by groups at risk of exclusion. The Council of Europe Development Bank has greatly increased its activity aimed at enhancing social cohesion and promoting employment; it will continue its efforts.

### **The promotion of social integration**

Action to combat all forms of discrimination, notably on grounds of race, ethnicity, gender or age, and to promote equality and equal opportunity, is pursued vigorously by the Council of Europe and these activities will be mainstreamed into the social cohesion strategy, as well as those aimed at the social integration of migrants. Furthermore, in recognition of its competence in this field, the Council of Europe has been entrusted with the preparation of the European contribution to the United Nations' World Conference against Racism and Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance.

As part of its broader commitment to the protection of minorities, the Council of Europe will continue to play a leading role in the development of policies and programmes to enable the Roma population to integrate into European societies on a basis of full equality of treatment and opportunity.

### **A common agenda on social development.**

The recent European Conference on Social Development demonstrated the readiness of the Council of Europe and its member states to play an active part in social development. The conference also represented a significant advance in active co-operation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations in this field. In particular, the Council of Europe stands ready to take forward the social development agenda by:

- sharing its experience of developing and implementing standard-setting instruments in the social field with other world regions, bearing in mind the specific situation and resources of each region. To this end, the European Conference on Social Development proposed the organisation of an inter-regional forum on social standards jointly with the United Nations;
- further developing the assessment and measurement of progress in social development and facilitating the exchange of best practice. This requires effective use of indicators and benchmarks for social cohesion through appropriate co-operation between the United Nations and its agencies, the European Union, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Council of Europe;
- encourage the progressive integration of the goals of the World Summit for Social Development into social and economic development policies at national and international level;
- continuing to participate actively in the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Social development is one of the essential components of this comprehensive international effort to promote peace and prosperity and prevent future conflicts in the region.

The Council of Europe will examine the outcome of Geneva 2000 with a view to participating actively in international efforts to take forward the social development agenda.

## The CDCS adopted its own Strategy for social cohesion

On 12 May 2000, during its 4th meeting, the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) adopted its Strategy for social cohesion. In what can be considered a statement of intent, the 41 member States of the Council of Europe define social cohesion as being about "what binds societies together".

It is worth noting that the Council of Europe has decided to develop a strategy for social *cohesion* rather than a strategy for combating social *exclusion*.

For the CDCS members, the challenge is to create societies that can manage conflict and change constructively and creatively.

A strategy for social cohesion must first identify the factors of division within society and then design or facilitate mechanisms, processes and institutions that prevent them from becoming so acute as to endanger social peace.

What are the most important factors of division? On the one hand there are socio-economic divides (excessive gap between the rich and the poor), and on the other hand, multiple forms of discrimination (racial, ethnic, religious, gender and other forms of discrimination). These two aspects put social cohesion seriously at risk.

Therefore, a social cohesion strategy involves action to combat inequalities and must also seek to strengthen those forces that help to create social solidarity and a sense of belonging. The areas concerned are housing, health, education and training, employment and income distribution, and social services.

Moreover, the main objectives of the Strategy for Social Cohesion are the strengthening of social security sys-

tems and the development of policies for families with a particular attention given to children and the elderly. Civil society organisations will also be of great importance for social cohesion.

**The Council of Europe has, therefore, committed itself to help the member States tackle the following challenges:**

- how to make economic and social rights more effective and enable people to claim their rights through appropriate procedures;
- how to prevent the emergence of a "two-speed society" where some enjoy prosperity while others are confined to a marginal existence;
- how to take effective action to eradicate poverty and combat social exclusion, including new forms of exclusion from access to information technology and new means of communication;
- how to reduce unacceptably high levels of unemployment in a globalising economic system and to promote access to employment with appropriate economic policies and measures to support employment;
- how to improve the standard of services to the public and ensure that all members of society have effective access to them;
- how to achieve and maintain a high level of social protection at a time when many pressures make it necessary to look afresh at traditional concepts;
- how to respond to the needs of an ageing population, including the need to finance pension systems and to establish inter-generational solidarity;
- how to create a new sense of social solidarity and mutual responsibility in a society characterised by the pursuit of individual fulfilment;
- how to respond to changing patterns of family life and their effects on children, for example the need to reconcile family and working life;
- how to develop policies for the protection and participation of children and youth in society;
- how to integrate migrants into society and combat effectively all forms of racism and discrimination;

- how to make growing ethnic and cultural diversity a source of strength in a globalising world.

The content of the strategy will naturally evolve as time goes on and as more experience is gained in this new approach to the Council of Europe's work in the field of social affairs.

### Policies which contribute to social cohesion must:

- help to revitalise the economy and capitalise on the contribution made by the social partners and other interested bodies, particularly in creating employment, stimulating enterprise and ensuring employment opportunities for all;
- meet people's basic needs and promote access to social rights within the universal spirit of the Council of Europe's many conventions and recommendations, particularly in the fields of employment, education, health, social protection and housing;
- recognise human dignity, making the individual person the centre of policies and guaranteeing human rights in Europe;
- establish and organise forums and procedures which allow the underprivileged, and those whose rights are insufficiently respected, to make themselves heard;
- develop an integrated approach bringing together all the relevant policy areas.

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## Social policies

### **A Closing Conference on Innovative Social Policies in the City** (Oslo, 22-24 June 2000)

The Conference concluded the work of the activity which was started in 1997 by the Council of Europe in the field of area-based social policies. Run jointly by the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) and the Norwegian Health and Social Affairs Ministry, the Conference fitted in well with the new Council of Europe strategy for social cohesion.

The participants looked at various projects run in towns and cities throughout Europe designed to encourage, in an urban environment, greater social cohesion amongst different social groups, especially the integration of the most vulnerable (to begin with, an in-depth study was made of around 50 projects from 18 European countries). The Conference highlighted innovative efforts – especially by local actors – to build partnerships between administration and citizens and to promote the active involvement of the whole population.

The proceedings of the Conference and the thematic report will be available beginning of 2001.

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## Access to Social Rights

**The Council of Europe has developed a series of programmes in the field of social cohesion with a view to achieving access to social rights for everybody. These programmes cover five main aspects of access to social rights: access to employment, housing, social protection, health and education, and are based on the recognition that while there is usually a legal entitlement to social rights, there are various obstacles to their realisation for many people in practice.**

### **Access to Employment**

A Committee of Experts on Promoting Access to Employment (CS-EM) started

its work in October 1999. All Eastern and Central European member States of the Council of Europe are represented at the meetings, in addition to experts from Western European member States, Observers from the ILO, OECD, the European Commission, NGOs in the employment field and from Council of Europe Steering Committees and bodies.

The Committee, at its first meeting, quickly and unanimously decided to concentrate on the problems of long-term unemployment, which was a pressing problem in many countries. It also considered how local employment initiatives, for example, through the 'social economy' or other community employment initiatives could help prevent this phenomenon. The members have then been asked to provide examples of good practice on such local employment initiatives.

Over 24 members responded and also included labour market information.

On the basis of this good practice examples, Kevin O'Kelly (consultant, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in Dublin) was asked to draw up a report and suggest possible themes for guidelines on local employment development. This has since been considerably developed by the Committee into 20 proposed Guidelines under following headings: training, entrepreneurship, partnership and equal opportunities, monitoring and evaluation. However, they are still at the discussion stage within the Committee.

The next of the stage of the CS-EM Committee's work, will be to develop integrated approaches on the basis of these draft guidelines. It may also consider that they need to develop the guidelines further in the area of specific obstacles and barriers to employment and on the role of the social partners in promoting access to employment.

Finally, through bilateral and regional employment co-operation activities between the Council of Europe and its member countries in Central and Eastern Europe, there will be an opportunity to transmit local experience on the implementation of the draft guidelines to the CS-EM Committee.

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## **The European Social Charter**

Since the Ministerial Conference on Human Rights held in Rome in November 1990, the European Social Charter has been considerably changed.

### **The main steps are the following :**

Adoption of the Protocol reforming the supervisory machinery (1991); Modification of the intervals between the periodic submission of national reports (1992); Adoption of the first recommendations by the Committee of Ministers (1993); Number of independent experts increased from 7 to 9 (1994); Adoption of the Collective Complaints Protocol (1995); Adoption of the revised Social Charter (1996); First ratification by a Central European state, Poland (1997); Entry into force of the collective complaints procedure (1998); Entry into force of the revised Social Charter (1999).

### **Today four principal objectives have been achieved:**

**Extension and strengthening of the rights guaranteed:** firstly the Revised Social Charter of 1996 added new rights, secondly the European Committee of Social Rights has consolidated and developed a detailed case law under the Charter, with the result that the Charter is truly a human rights treaty, which benefits the citizens of Europe.

**More efficient control mechanisms:** the procedure for the examination of national reports has been rationalised and simplified. The time limits for the different stages of the supervisory process have been reduced. Therefore the supervisory process is now faster. In particular, the procedure for examining collective complaints permits the examination of the application of the Charter in concrete situations.

**Increase in the number of states bound by the Charter:** 39 out of 41 member states have signed the Social Charter or Revised Social Charter and the number of ratifications has increased considerably (28 out of 41 member states). Further ratifications are expected in the coming months.

Increased visibility of the Charter at the national level: this is due to a better awareness of the Charter at the national level; the Charter is often taken into account by the social partners in collective bargaining, by governments and parliaments when modifying and implementing legislation and by the courts that apply the Charter, or

## Access to housing

A Group of Specialists on Access to Housing was set up for an initial three-year period (1999-2001). The Group includes representatives from member and observer States, but also from NGOs which are active in the fields of housing and the fight against homelessness.

The task of the Group is to propose new or revised policy measures on access to housing for vulnerable categories of persons. The focus is on four specific themes: housing emergencies, evictions, supply of quality housing and area-based policies. A main source of information for the Group will be the replies to a questionnaire, which has been sent to the national authorities, selected regional and local authorities and NGOs in member and observer States, asking for information and examples of good practices.

The Council of Europe is also running a number of housing-related activities in Central and Eastern Europe. A programme consisting of expert level meetings on housing and refugees in Bulgaria has been started and will continue next year. In the framework of the joint co-operation programme between the Council of Europe and its Development Bank, a pilot project on "Social infrastructure development and re-integration of returnees into multi-ethnic local communities" is being set up in Croatia with a view to increasing the sustainability of the post war reconstruction and re-integration programmes of the Croatian authorities.

A task force on housing from five South-Eastern European countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, "The Former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia" and Romania) has been set up. It will discuss common problems and priority issues, and solutions will be suggested by means of national and regional reports.

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## Access to social protection

Social benefits and services may exist but, for various reasons, might not be sufficiently used or taken up and, as a result, are not fully effective. With a view to analysing the reasons for this, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of

Europe set up in 1999 the Group of Specialists on access to social protection (CS-PS). This group's work aims at identifying and assessing obstacles to access to social benefits and services in the Organisation's member States. These obstacles can be of a very diverse nature, varying from legal to psychological, to administrative or social.

The information collected through the wide distribution of a questionnaire on access to social protection in 1999 provides an overview of the different obstacles encountered by beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries regarding access to social benefits and services as well as insight into the details of government programmes in this field and of the various modes of intervention, aimed at overcoming these obstacles in the member States. At its third meeting, held in Moscow in May 2000, and based on the report on obstacles to access to social protection prepared by Dr Peter Melvyn (European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Austria), the Group of specialists identified four main issues for its future work: communication policy concerning social protection, specific obstacles faced by vulnerable groups in accessing social benefits and services, obstacles generated by the organisation and the management of social benefits and services, and the role of partnership between public administration and non-governmental organisations in improving access to social protection.

One of the aims of the work of this group of specialists is to promote the exchange of experiences between national social protection bodies and to make proposals for the improvement of access to social benefits and services. For that reason, an activity on improving access to social protection in the Russian Federation has recently been launched. It will culminate in the organisation of two seminars: the first seminar should take place next year in Penza (Russian Federation) and deal with the barriers encountered by certain vulnerable groups of persons in the Russian context. Based on the experience of other member States, a series of policy proposals aimed at overcoming these obstacles should be suggested as a result of the work of the seminar.

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more and more often refer to it in their judgements.

To obtain further information on the Social Charter:

- consult the Internet site [www.socialcharter.int](http://www.socialcharter.int)
- study the publications on the Social Charter [www.book.coe.fr](http://www.book.coe.fr) in particular the recent *Vade mecum on the Social Charter*
- ask the Social Charter secretariat [social.charter@coe.int](mailto:social.charter@coe.int)

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## The Parliamentary Assembly and Social Cohesion

The Parliamentary Assembly, one of the two statutory organs of the Council of Europe with the Committee of Ministers, serves as a Europe-wide forum for political debate on the major issues of the day, as an "ideas laboratory" for proposals in all areas of policy except defence designed to bring the member States closer towards European unity, and as a political guardian of the Council of Europe's founding values of pluralist democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights

Questions relating to social cohesion are dealt with by the Assembly's Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee. Its areas of interest include, for example, employment and labour, the new ethical questions raised by biomedicine, and the fight against drug abuse. It is also particularly concerned with the protection of vulnerable population groups such as the elderly and children. Among its priorities are a more effective application of the fundamental social rights endorsed by the Council of Europe in its legal instruments and their ratification by all the member states.

Lately, the Committee has proposed an additional Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights concerning fundamental social rights (Recommendation 1415 (1999)). In parallel to the Assembly's monitoring of member states' civil and political commitments, the Committee has been charged with monitoring the social undertakings of member states. This process will begin with Hungary and the United Kingdom.

On the basis of the Committee's reports

## Access to health

Equitable access to health care is one of the most important issues studied by the European Health Committee. One study finishing this year concerns the adaptation of health care services towards meeting the demand for health care of marginalized groups. In fact, several persons living in marginal situations often fail to receive the health care to which they are entitled.

In 2001, the European Health Committee will be examining what health policies are needed for health promotion and health protection in society today. This study will be done in the light of Article 11 of the European Social Charter, and of the national reports on the implementation of this Article. A Protocol to this Charter is also being considered.

The European Health Committee will also be carrying out a study on the organisation of palliative care, to ensure that this type of care is available equitably to all those who need it.

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## Technical programmes

### Social cohesion services : management training project

Social cohesion services (health, employment, social protection, housing, education) have a key role to play in giving disadvantaged people access to their social rights and human dignity. The complex nature of the problems with which they and their clients are confronted requires that these services are managed effectively taking full account of the modern-day principles of social policy: client participation; evaluation-based programme design; co-ordinated and integrated service delivery etc.

The management training project will develop a model strategic training pro-

gramme for public officials and other persons with responsibility for establishing, implementing and evaluating services at local level. It is based on a series of local pilot projects in each of the five participating states (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia and Azerbaijan) aimed at capacity building and regional co-operation.

The local projects will involve different services in the social cohesion field and introduce the participating staff to modern management techniques relevant to their work.

The first local project began in Armenia on 10-12 October 2000 with the staff of two social work centres in Yerevan. The training workshop helped the participants to identify ways of improving their service through the application of management techniques relating to project planning and work processes. Technical support will be provided by the Council of Europe over the next 12 months to help the staff implement these changes.

The next local projects will start in Azerbaijan (employment service) in November and Moldova (social services) in December.

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the Assembly adopted Resolution 1195 (1999) on the social functions of co-operatives, mutual insurance companies and associations which form the basis of Europe's social economy, and on 9 November 2000 the Assembly's Standing Committee will debate the impact of new technologies on labour legislation.

With regard to child protection, the Committee has proposed the creation of a European ombudsman for children (Recommendation 1460 (2000)), called for greater respect for children's rights in international adoption (Recommendation 1443 (2000)), promoted an action plan for the children of Kosovo (Recommendation 1459 (2000)), and condemned the enlistment of child soldiers (Resolution 1215 (2000)). The Committee intends to deal with the issues of children and adolescents in towns and cities, social measures for children of war in South Eastern Europe, the abduction of children by one of the parents, the misdiagnosing of children, and trafficking in children.

The International Year of the Elderly 1999 was an opportunity for the Committee to show its commitment to the respect of the rights of the elderly and solidarity between generations (Recommendation 1428 (1999)). The Committee will soon be looking into the challenges of social policy in our ageing societies.

The Committee has conducted an in-depth reflection on care and assistance for the terminally ill and the dying while respecting their wishes and their rights (Recommendation 1418 (2000)), and established guidelines both on the use of non-conventional therapies in medicine (Resolution 1206 (1999)) and on health security for Europe's populations (Recommendation 1445 (2000)). It is about to adopt a report on the social consequences of drug misuse, and intends to promote public health action to reduce tobacco and alcohol consumption. The Committee's current work programme includes the question of rehabilitation policies for people with disabilities and the social and health conditions of youth malaise.

Finally, the Committee is about to adopt guidelines on improving the status of volunteers, who often play a key role in promoting social cohesion, as an Assembly contribution to the International Year of Volunteers 2001.

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### Two reports on community relations

**Recognising that Europe has become an ethnically and culturally diverse continent, governments are led to devise coherent policies aiming at the integration of immigrants and at improving community relations.**

The process of reflection carried on under the aegis of the European Committee on Migration (CDMG) has resulted into two main reports important for the future work of the Council of Europe in this field.

Both reports were presented at a major Conference organised on 7 - 9 September 2000 in Namur and Brussels on the theme of «Diversity and cohesion».

### **"Diversity and cohesion: new challenges for the integration of immigrants and minorities "**

The report, prefaced by President Václav Havel, sets as a basic principle that integration of immigrants and national minorities is one of the pillars of social cohesion. It encourages the development of diversity in all aspects of life in society.

Forward-looking in its nature, it identifies ways and means of establishing, with a comprehensive approach, positive community relations for European societies of the new millennium through the promotion of a political, economic, cultural and legal environment favourable to diversity and the promotion of social cohesion based on the strengthening and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and particularly of social rights.

### **"Framework of integration policies"**

This publication brings together the proposals and recommendations in this area which have been made by various bodies within the Council of Europe. It maps out policy action needed in the three different stages of the integration process: measures needed in connec-

tion with new arrivals of immigrants, measures aimed at the promotion of equality of opportunities for long-term immigrants and measures needed in multicultural and ethnically diverse societies to ensure social cohesion.

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### Coordinated Research

### **"Elderly people within their family – legal and social responsibilities"**

**One of Council of Europe's coordinated research programmes has now been completed. The draft final report on "Elderly people within their family – legal and social responsibilities" was presented to the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) who adopted it last Spring.**

The Study Group, directed by Mrs Marie-Thérèse Espinasse (France), had been asked to conduct a study on the above-mentioned theme in 1998. It collected the information necessary to write the final report through a questionnaire and also study visits to a few countries.

The report has three chapters:

- Chapter 1 contains comparative information on the characteristics and circumstances of elderly people: demographic data, state of health, dependence, resources and lifestyles, and looks at how elderly people participate in the life of the community.
- Chapter 2 analyses forms of family solidarity. It presents the existing rules and obligations in various countries and forms of "spontaneous" intergenerational solidarity, giving particular attention to the role of women in this regard.
- Chapter 3 examines interaction between family solidarity and public support.

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## **European Conference against Racism**

Over 500 participants met between 11 and 13 October 2000 at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg for the European Conference against racism *All different all equal: from principle to practice*, which constituted Europe's contribution to the UN World Conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The World Conference takes place in Durban, South Africa in 2001.

Preceded by a one-day Forum for Non-Governmental Organisations, the European Conference against racism covered four main themes: legal protection; policies and practices; education and awareness-raising; and information, communication and media. Participants, including senior government officials, Council of Europe, European Union and United Nations bodies, and non-governmental organisations, discussed the problems and challenges currently facing Europe and put forward good practice to follow in Europe and elsewhere. These discussions are reflected in detailed General Conclusions adopted by all participants. Ministers of Council of Europe member States also adopted a Political Declaration, committing themselves to a number of legal, policy and educational measures.

The General Conclusions emphasise the need to mainstream the fight against racism and involve those persons most affected by racist and xenophobic acts in the elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of policy. They advocate a number of measures States could adopt to promote policies in the employment and social sphere which seek to improve the prospects of such persons.

The Political Declaration also commits Council of Europe member States to counter social exclusion and marginalisation, in particular by providing equal access to education, employment and housing.

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### Strategic Review

#### **Making South-Eastern Europe a region of social cohesion**

**In the framework of its contribution to the Stability Pact, the Council of Europe has designed a strategic review on issues linked to social cohesion in South-East Europe.**

The review "Making South-Eastern Europe a region of social cohesion" will examine the possibilities for current and future sustainable social development in the region and will outline a social agenda necessary for achieving long-term stability and sustainable development (strategy-building component).

It is designed in such a way as to create regional network dynamics whereby Thematic Networks made up of experts from all countries of the region will initiate and maintain a regional dialogue on specific social cohesion issues: social protection, labour market and employment, health, housing, issues linked to internally displaced persons, Roma/Gypsies, and how to enhance institutional capacity to deliver social cohesion policies.

The Strategic Review is an open-ended initiative in terms of participation. It was launched on 12 July 2000. Several Council of Europe member states from the region have already indicated their interest and willingness to fully participate in the Review: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYROM and Romania.

The review will rely on the countries of the region as full and equal partners in elaborating a strategy for regional social development and for appropriate investments in the social field. As the process goes on, appropriate synergies will be established with other Stability Pact related initiatives (i.e. the World Bank Social Development initiative) intending to address different aspects of social development as well as with international organisations playing an important role in South-East Europe.

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### Demographic study

#### **Report on Population and the labour market**

**A Council of Europe report on "Europe's Population and Labour Market beyond 2000" predicts that the population of working age in Europe will peak in the next ten years before declining by around a quarter up to 2050.**

Edited by Aidan Punch and David L. Pearce, this document examines likely demographic and labour market developments in Europe during the course of the coming decades and assesses how these will impact on policy formulation.

The main findings of the report are:

- Europe's share of the world population of working age will fall from its current level of 14% to 6% by 2050. Fifty years ago Europe accounted for 25% of persons of working age in the world.
- Past declines in fertility will see the net intake of persons of working age in Europe decline from 34 million (1981-1995) to 8 million (1996-2010).
- Europe's labour force is likely to grow by about 7 million between 1995 and 2010, compared with an increase of 23 million in the previous fifteen year period.
- The number of women in the European labour force will increase by over 7 million between 1995 and 2010 while the male labour force will decline marginally.
- The link between female labour force participation and fertility is not clear-cut. Declining fertility has facilitated greater labour force participation, although on the contrary increased female labour force participation may have impacted negatively on fertility.
- A decline in productivity gains is not necessarily the consequence of an ageing European labour force. Older workers may sometimes be more flexible than their younger counterparts. In any event, rapid technological change calls for training and upskilling initiatives on an ongoing basis for all workers regardless of age.
- While the share of older persons in the population will continue to increase, this need not imply a com-

## **The Dual Challenges of Globalisation and Transition**

**On 23 – 24 June 2000, the Secretariat of the Council of Europe Global Solidarity Campaign, organised in Geneva, in co-operation with the North-South Centre an international conference on "The Dual Challenge of Globalisation and Transition: the Role of Civil Society in Fostering Social Cohesion in Central and Eastern Europe".**

This high-level international conference gathered together researchers and specialists in the field of social policies, local and European NGOs dealing with issues of poverty eradication, representatives of local and national authorities, parliamentarians, representatives from the private sector as well as representatives from multilateral organisations which are active in Central and Eastern Europe.

The conference also aimed at reinforcing the voice and the role of the civil society of transition countries in the discussions and the implementation of policies which promote social cohesion. Moreover, the conference also focused on the strengthening of a regional network for poverty eradication as it was proposed at the South-East European Regional Forum for Poverty Eradication in December 1999.

The Campaign was set in the general context of efforts that are made to combat poverty and social exclusion, with a special emphasis put on the impact of globalisation on social cohesion in Europe. "Globalisation without Poverty", the message of the Campaign, reflects very well the necessity of encouraging all efforts linked to the world in a whole and particularly oriented towards Europe. The main objectives of the Campaign were the following: broadening public support throughout Europe for policies of solidarity in an interdependent world, especially to eradicate poverty and social exclusion; bringing all of Europe and all Europeans – govern-

*(Continued on page 11)*

mensurate increase in the pension burden. The scope for employment gains through higher educational attainment and greater equality of opportunity for women will help to mitigate future pension imbalances.

- While in theory increased immigration has the potential to "solve" declining population levels and ageing in Europe, in practice this may not find favour in periods of labour market pressure. At an aggregate level it is unlikely that Europe will face a labour shortage in the immediate future given existing unemployment levels and recent productivity gains. However, labour market difficulties may arise in specific local areas.

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### Exchange of views:

#### **Brainstorming on social indicators: their creation, relevance and utilisation**

**On 14 and 15 September 2000, the Council of Europe's Social Cohesion Development Division, with the support of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, organised a brainstorming session on social indicators. The purpose of the session was to have representatives of international bodies, governments and public and private research institutes set out their point of view on the basis of work under way in the field of social indicators.**

Apart from taking stock of the current situation regarding the use of social indicators, another purpose of the brainstorming session was to identify what the Council of Europe's role might be in this area. A number of preliminary conclusions were drawn after two days of valuable work.

As a result of economic and social processes starting in the 80s and 90s, the political partners want to achieve real improvement in the social environment. Thus, the national and international partners have embarked upon a search for priority solutions to social problems on the basis of political strategies (for example, strategies for

combating poverty). To be more effective and monitor the impact of measures taken, a growing demand was expressed for proper policy assessment instruments. One of the instruments most discussed was the creation of social indicators, whether at national or international level, this is an area that has seen substantial growth in recent years. For example, following the Lisbon Summit, the European Union designed a "battery" of 27 structural indicators to review progress in four key areas of the political strategy presented by the 15 member states: employment, innovation and research, economic reform and social cohesion (cf. COM (2000) 2594 final - structural indicators, European Commission Communication, 27/09/00).

While the work in this field has progressed substantially, problems of method, comparability, and relevance must still be resolved with regard to the creation and application of indicators. From a methodological point of view, three problem areas have been pinpointed:

**Indicator validity:** although the member states encounter similar social problems, there are also enormous differences in economic and social terms. One of the consequences of such differences is that the validity of an indicator at national level changes considerably when the indicator is used for comparison at the international level.

**The temporal dimension:** this refers to the sustainability of an indicator over time. Although the objective is to use social indicators to monitor social change, it is impossible to employ data from a particular point in time to draw conclusions. Trends become "readable" only after continuous monitoring over at least three years.

**Causality:** this has to do with using indicators to measure the impact of policies in national contexts, where problems and desired results have been clearly defined. A comparison with other countries thus becomes possible and meaningful if countries with shared problems choose strategies aimed at the same measurable objectives.

As for the comparability of indicators, most indicators allow for comparisons of performance between countries,

since they are mostly "macro measures", as in the case of the *human development indicator* used by the United Nations. Consequently, there is considerable material to enable everyone concerned to find out about national trends in terms of the distribution of income, poverty, employment, education etc. In several cases, these figures can be used to compare countries, for example when differences in poverty are considered at the macro level.

One of the interesting conclusions of the brainstorming session was that most work on social indicators is almost exclusively contingent upon the availability of statistics. However, the search for social indicators can, and perhaps must, also be based on conceptual approaches. In general, the explanatory model behind the choice of social indicators for addressing a given problem, strategy or target group is not contained in the presentation of "batteries" of indicators. Thus, the use of indicators is often confined to a description of particular situations rather than the assessment of policy measures.

With regard to the future commitment of the Council of Europe's Social Cohesion Development Division, the main conclusion is that all international bodies are elaborating indicators in a variety of areas and that most of these indicators can be used to compare and measure impact at the "macro level". The added value of the Council of Europe's work can be seen at the micro level. Comparisons of the implementation of integrated strategies (to combat poverty) and indicators to assess their impact can therefore be produced. In so doing, it will be possible to verify processes of social change and innovation and assess the efficiency of social policy.

By stressing the problem of integrating policies in a strategy, the creation of indicators will help focus on the question of innovation effectiveness. This approach might well be of interest to many countries facing the problem of making their social policies as consistent as possible.

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In 1999, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the Governor of the Development Bank signed an agreement instituting their joint Programme.

This co-operation programme is intended to explore new avenues for seeking practical solutions in order to strengthen social cohesion in the member states. Its goal is to identify and promote projects funded by the Bank through its usual machinery for populations excluded from economic development in Europe that do not have direct and ready access to conventional bank financing.

Several projects are in preparation.

### Integrated projects:

#### **City of Brno: a project to help improve the quality of life for Roma/Gypsy population groups**

On 24 May 2000, the Administrative Council of the Council of Europe's Development Bank unanimously approved a loan application from the City of Brno (Czech Republic) for Roma minorities.

This loan of CZK 32.5 million (Euro 896,151) is to fund a pilot project drawn up under the Council of Europe/Development Bank joint co-operation programme by the Brno municipal authorities and the Romany organisation DROM. The Czech authorities have given their full support to this scheme by guaranteeing the Bank's loan and ensuring, through the Ministry of Regional Development, the financ-

ing of the remainder of the operation for a total of CZK 33.452 million (Euro 919,919).

Under this "integrated" project, two dilapidated blocks of municipal flats will be rehabilitated and current financial disputes settled, thereby helping to improve the quality of life of the Roma population groups. To promote the integration of this minority in the local population, accompanying measures are planned thanks to two Roma NGOs present in the area, including training, assistance (medical, legal etc.) and recreational provision, as well as support for fledgling economic activities that generate income.

The main objectives of the project are: helping to reduce tensions between ethnic minorities and the local population and to integrate Roma population groups in the town socially and economically through effective involvement in the project and sharing of responsibilities, as well as creating reproducible "models" of good practice which can generate similar applications for loans in other member countries of the Development Bank.

For the Bank, project priority is comparable with that of projects for refugees and victims of natural disasters. Accordingly, the Administrative Council has planned to grant the project a 50 basis-point interest rebate, financed by the Selective Trust Account and equivalent to a subsidy of Euro 35,840 (for a 10-year loan with a five-year grace period).

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ment agencies, local and regional authorities, NGOs, the media, the corporate sector and others, at both national and international level – together for common reflection and action on issues of global concern; promoting educational initiatives which ensure that values based on "global citizenship" prevail over xenophobia and euro-egoism; and achieving globalisation without poverty and social exclusion.

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## World Summit for Social Development

**The United Nations held the 24th Special Session of the General Assembly from 26-30 June in Geneva, in order to review and appraise the implementation of the Declaration of the 1995 Copenhagen Summit. The title of this session was "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalising world".**

After the evaluation of the progress made since 1995, the General Assembly adopted a document entitled "Further initiatives for social development" in which the Heads of State and government reaffirmed their "will and commitment to implement the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, including the strategies and agreed targets contained therein". They recognised, however, the fact that further actions are needed for the full implementation of the 1995 decisions. The General Assembly therefore recommends taking initiatives at the local, national, regional and international levels for the further implementation of the 10 commitments adopted at the World Summit.

**Recalling the commitments of Copenhagen :** (See Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995, Chap. I, resolution 1, annex I)

- To create an economic, political, social,

## AT NATIONAL LEVEL ...

### Republic of Slovenia:

#### **National Programme on the Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion**

(Genovefa Ružič, Adviser to the Government, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs)

**The Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted a special Programme on the Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion on 3 February 2000.**

The purpose of this Programme is to overcome the fragmentation of action to solve this multidimensional problem by appropriate interconnection, harmonisation and expansion of the existing measures and programmes. This document presents the urgent need for measures to alleviate social exclusion. It is important to reduce poverty and social exclusion by means of permanent activities and specific action and to prevent the long-term exclusion of individuals and their families. Such action requires the concerted efforts of all ministries responsible for particular domains (employment, education, housing, social assistance etc.), local

communities, public services and non-governmental organisations.

Since the fight against poverty and social exclusion requires integrated action in several fields, disadvantage may be successfully combated only when this goal is identified as a clear priority of governmental policy. Considering the extensive analyses made by individual ministries in preparation for this programme it is therefore necessary to take additional measures mainly in the following areas:

1. giving a majority of the population an opportunity for employment, which will provide them with social security;
2. decreasing the drop-out trend in schools and increasing the number of people with adequate professional qualifications;
3. broadening the availability of subsidised (social) and non-profit apartments and introducing subsidies for those unable to pay the rent;
4. raising the level of social assistance for those who are unable to support themselves, and taking additional steps aimed at keeping such benefits short-term and temporary (limited to the time needed for return to independence).

The above-mentioned measures represent the basis for achievement of two major goals set by the Slovene Government, namely to aid those who are faced with poverty and social exclusion and to prevent poverty and social exclusion of those groups of population who find themselves on the verge of slipping into this situation.

One has to be aware of the fact that the modern world is increasingly challenged by the welfare of people on one hand and severe poverty on the other hand. Therefore, the measures already taken by the state as well as the quest for new solutions to correct the present situation, have to be seen as a matter of utmost importance.

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### France

#### Employment, Income and Social Cohesion Council (CERC)

The Employment, Income and Social Cohesion Council (CERC) was created by a *Conseil d'Etat* decree of 7 April 2000. Its scope is broader than that of the body it replaces, the High Council of Employment, Income and Costs (CSERC). The purpose of the

CERC is to help in understanding income, social inequalities and links between employment, income and social cohesion. It is responsible for studying relations between employment and income, taking stock of social inequalities and redistribution machinery and drawing the attention of the government and the public to desirable developments.

In a decree of 23 May 2000, the Prime Minister appointed the Chair and members of the Employment, Income and Social Cohesion Council, viz:

- Chair: Mr Jacques Delors
- Members : Mr Paul Champsaur, Director General of the National Institute of Statistics and Economics; Mr Xavier Emmanuelli, former minister, President of the SAMU Social International, the SAMU Social de Paris and the High Committee for housing disadvantaged persons; Mr Pierre Faurre, President and General Manager of the SAGEM group; Ms Marie-Thérèse Join-Lambert, President of the National Poverty Monitoring Centre; Mr Jean Lapeyre, Assistant Secretary General of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC); Ms Jeanne-Marie Parly, Professor of Economics at University IX Dauphine, Paris.

Thus, the CERC is a council of renowned independent personalities from a variety of professional backgrounds.

A team of rapporteurs assists the Council in tapping the study and research potential of existing bodies and taking action in cooperation with them.

The CERC is responsible for producing a periodical consolidated report dealing with developments in the area of employment, income and social cohesion and special reports on subjects within its scope on the initiative of the Council or at the request of the Prime Minister. The CERC's reports are forwarded to the Prime Minister and the presiding officers of the National Assembly, the Senate and the Economic and Social Council and are made public by the Council.

Together with the National Institute of Statistics and Economics, the *Commissariat Général au Plan* and the University of Évry Val d'Essonne, the CERC held a colloquy on 29 May and 27 October 2000 on "The working poor in France", the proceedings of which are available on request.

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*cultural and legal environment that will enable people to achieve social development;*

- *To eradicate poverty in the world, through decisive national actions and international cooperation, as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind;*
- *To promote the goal of full employment as a basic priority of our economic and social policies, and to enable all men and women to attain secure and sustainable livelihoods through freely chosen productive employment and work;*
- *To promote social integration by fostering societies that are stable, safe and just and that are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons;*
- *To promote full respect for human dignity and to achieve equality and equity between women and men and to recognize and enhance the participation and leadership roles of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life and in development;*
- *To promote and attain the goals of universal and equitable access to quality education, the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and the access of all to primary health care, making particular efforts to rectify inequalities relating to social conditions, without distinction as to race, national origin, gender, age or disability, respecting and promoting our common and particular cultures, striving to strengthen the role of culture in development, preserving the essential bases of people-centred sustainable development, and contributing to the full development of human resources and to social development, with the purpose of eradicating poverty, promoting full and productive employment and fostering social integration;*
- *To accelerate the economic, social and human resource development of Africa and the least developed countries;*
- *To ensure that when structural adjustment programmes are agreed to they include social development goals, in particular eradicating poverty, promoting full and productive employment and enhancing social integration;*
- *To increase significantly and/or utilize more efficiently the resources allocated to social development in order to achieve the goals of the Summit through national action and regional and international cooperation;*
- *To promote an improved and strengthened framework for international, regional and sub regional cooperation for social development, in a spirit of partnership, through the United Nations and other multilateral institutions.*

**NGOs enjoying consultative status at the Council of Europe have set up specialist groups within their own organisational structure. These groupings are set up at the initiative of the NGOs themselves which share an interest in a particular area of activity and wish to pool their ideas and energies in the context of the Council of Europe's policies. This system of groupings facilitates co-operation with the Organisation's other bodies. There are currently 10 such groupings amongst which two are active in the social field.**

### Grouping on "Social rights, European Social Charter, work and social policy"

This grouping attracts the attention of a large number of NGOs because it focuses on a broad range of socio-economic issues and value-oriented aspects of European society. These aspects, i.e. the scope and the effective implementation of social and economic rights, as well as ways and means of promoting and strengthening social cohesion in European society, are at the heart of civil society's concerns and action.

In particular, the grouping works on specific aspects of the effective application and monitoring of the European Social Charter. It identifies new - or previously neglected - social needs, and proposes adequate measures to address them, and initiatives to enhance social development (follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen in 1995, and Geneva in 2000).

The grouping works in co-operation with the European Social Charter Section in Directorate General II - Human Rights, and with Directorate General III - Social Cohesion of the Council of Europe. It is represented in the European Committee for Social Cohesion and seeks dialogue with other social policy oriented commissions and committees in the framework of the Council of Europe.

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### Grouping "Extreme poverty and social cohesion"

The Grouping "Extreme poverty and social cohesion" is made up of some 60 non-governmental organisations (NGOs), many of

which have long been working on a day-to-day basis with destitute and deprived persons.

Its priority goal is to combat extreme poverty by all existing means, using all Council of Europe legal instruments.

The Grouping's overall approach stresses dialogue and giving those most affected a say in order to have a better understanding of their situation and the responses needed.

Its unique nature makes it an eminently qualified partner of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (ECSC) and its subordinate committees for such topics as access to social protection, housing and employment and better quality of life for dependent persons. The Grouping has observer status in the CDCS and actively participates in its work, in particular by informing it of examples of good practice concerning social cohesion and the fight against exclusion.

At the last meeting of the CDCS, held from 10 to 12 May 2000, the Grouping made a co-operation proposal through the intermediary of Annelise Oeschger (*ATD fourth World*), which will take the form of a contribution incorporating the social cohesion vision and strategies for implementation by those who have no voice or power. But such persons have specific contributions of real interest in choosing approaches, because any policy which does not seek to listen to their point of view will be doomed to fail and hence deficient and a dead end.

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#### Some priority areas of the work :

- following the work on social cohesion within the CDCS and its sub-committees;
- developments in the area of the Revised European Social Charter and the additional protocol on collective complaints;
- follow-up to the process "Copenhagen + 5";
- Multidimensional aspects of poverty and measures against poverty;
- contributing to the UN programme "Decade for the eradication of poverty 1997-2006";
- International Year of Volunteering, 2001.

### The Council of Europe contribution at the Geneva Session :

The Council of Europe made a major effort to contribute to the Special Session. Several documents were prepared by Council of Europe bodies : a political message from the Committee of Ministers sitting at Foreign Minister level; a written contribution prepared by the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS); the Summing-Up of the European Conference on Social Development; the Final Declaration of the NGO Forum organised in Dublin on the eve of the European Conference on Social Development; and a written contribution by the NGO's enjoying consultative status with the Council of Europe.

The Political Message of the Committee of Ministers, accompanied by a covering letter from the Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs, under whose Presidency it was adopted, was one of the official documents of the Geneva Session (*See page 2 of this newsletter*).

Mr Constantinos N. Pilavachi, Director General of Social Cohesion, spoke on behalf of the Council of Europe in the plenary Assembly.

Immediately before the Special Session itself, on 23-24 June 2000, the Council of Europe's Globalisation without Poverty campaign organised an International Conference on "*The Dual Challenge of Globalisation and Transition : the role of civil society in fostering social cohesion in Central and Eastern Europe*". This major event, which attracted a lot of attention, was financed by a voluntary contribution from Norway (*See page 9 of this newsletter*).

Overall, it can be said that the Special Session and the preparation for it gave a valuable opportunity for the Council of Europe to make its new commitment to social cohesion visible on the international scene.

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## ADOPTED TEXTS

- **Strategy for social cohesion (CDCS (2000) 43)**

### Recommendations:

- Recommendation Rec. (2000) 15 of the Committee of Ministers to member states concerning the **security of residence of long-term migrants** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 September 2000 at the 720<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)
- Recommendation 1475 (2000) of the Parliamentary Assembly concerning **Arrival of asylum seekers at European airports** (adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly on 26 September 2000; it urges the States to harmonise their national policies at European level in order to put an end to often incoherent or improperly long procedures that might lead to violations of the asylum seekers' fundamental rights)

### Resolutions:

- Resolution 87 (2000) of the Standing Committee of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe on **the role of Local and Regional Authorities in the provision of social services** (adopted, on 2 mars 2000, at the 6th Plenary Session of the Congress)

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### Newsletters:

- The newsletter *Activities on Roma/Gypsies* (Migration and Roma/Gypsies Division) available on Internet : <http://www.coe.fr/dase/en/cohesion/action/archives.htm> or from Judith Butler, Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 27 31, E-mail: [judith.butler@coe.int](mailto:judith.butler@coe.int)
- The *Newsletter Pampidou Group* (Co-operation Group to combat Drug Abuse and illicit Trafficking in Drugs) available on Internet: <http://www.pampidou.coe.int/English/framnewsletter/framnewsletter.html> or from Catherine Lahmek, Fax: + 33 (0) 3 88 41 27 85, E-mail: [catherine.lahmek@coe.int](mailto:catherine.lahmek@coe.int)
- The Newsletter on the European Social Charter *Social Rights = Human Rights*, available on Internet: <http://www.socialcharter.int>

### Reports:

- *Diversity and Cohesion : new challenges for the integration of immigrants and minorities*, Jan Niessen, Council of Europe Editing, ISBN 92-871-4345-5
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- *Europe's population and labour market beyond 2000 Vol. 1: An assessment of trends and policy issues*, by Aidan Punch and David L. Pearce, Population studies No. 33, Council of Europe Editing, ISBN 92-871-4273-4
- *Legislation to counter discrimination against persons with disabilities*, report elaborated by the Working Group on legislation against discrimination of persons with disabilities, Council of Europe Editing, ISBN 92-871-4422-2

## CALENDAR FROM NOVEMBER 2000 TO FEBRUARY 2001

### Conferences:

- 27-29 November 2000: Final Conference of the Programme for Children - Cyprus

### Seminars:

- 28-29. November 2000: Seminar on the Project on Promoting Access to Employment Opportunities (Pskov, Russia) - Strasbourg
- 14-15 December 2000: Training Seminar on "Children living in institutions"- Kiev

### Meetings:

- 8-10 November 2000: 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the European Committee for Social Cohesion
- 27-28 November 2000: Project on *Making South-Eastern Europe a Region of Social Cohesion* - First meeting of the Thematic Network on Housing in South-Eastern Europe - Skopje, FYROM
- 6- 8 December 2000: Group of specialists on Access to Social Protection - Strasbourg
- 11-13 December 2000: 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Group of specialists on access to housing - Strasbourg
- 20-21 December 2000: Russian experts and Council of Europe meeting: beginning of the compatibility exercise on relevant Russian legislation with the European Code of Social Security - Moscow
- 18-19 January 2001: 2<sup>nd</sup> preparatory meeting of the Committee of Liaison Officers for the XXVII<sup>th</sup> Session of European Ministers responsible for Family Affairs - Slovenia

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