

Editorial:

Children and social cohesion

For this second issue of *Social Cohesion: Developments*, we have decided to focus on children. The reason for this is that the Council of Europe finds itself at a turning-point in its work on children: the Programme for Children, which started in 1998, has just finished and a follow-up programme, called *Focus on Children and Families*, is about to begin as part of the Organisation's Social Cohesion Strategy.

The Council of Europe's Social Cohesion Strategy (briefly presented in *Social Cohesion: Developments No. 1*) describes the family as "the place where social cohesion is experienced and built" and says that particular attention will be given to the more vulnerable members of families, notably children.

But families are coming under increasing pressure in the modern world. Excessive demands of working life on parents, conflict in the home and breakdown in relationships, coupled often with all the deprivations implied by poverty, mean that many children have to grow up in an environment that is far from ideal. Some are taken into care; others choose to leave home at an early age in order to escape from intolerable domestic situations. In some countries, far too many children are living in residential homes, often in deplorable conditions. Finally, many children, especially those growing up in socially deprived districts, are at risk from violence on the streets

and from other dangers such as prostitution rackets and easily available drugs.

This issue describes what the Council of Europe has been doing through its Programme for Children to ensure better protection of children in contemporary European society. The Organisation draws up legal instruments to strengthen children's rights; it identifies examples of good practice and promotes networking between governments and all other actors involved in improving the practical situation of children and it assists central and eastern European countries in developing new laws and policies. The results of the Programme for Children were brought together at a conference in Nicosia last in November 2000 and this issue also includes an article giving impressions of that event (see page 3).

Planning is now very much under way for the next phase of the work. This will be directed by the new Forum for Children and Families, which will hold its first meeting on 9 and 10 April 2001. The Forum is a rather special body. It is not just a traditional committee of government experts. It is more like a clearing-house, bringing together all the major international actors in the field of children's affairs: the relevant Council of Europe bodies, including representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, but also other international organisations, non-governmental organisations, and – above all – children and young people who are asked to give their views on all proposals.

Another high-profile event during the next few months will be the Conference

of European Ministers responsible for Family Affairs, which meets in Slovenia on 21 and 22 June 2001 and will be devoted to the question of reconciling working life and family life..

The inspiration for all our work lies in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In September of this year, at a Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, world attention will be focussed on children. The Council of Europe will be present on this occasion and is preparing to make an active contribution on the basis of the experience it has build up during the past ten years.

All this is enough to show that the time is ripe to make children the centrepiece of this issue of *Social Cohesion: Developments*. But of course work goes on in many other areas of social cohesion as well and this issue contains updates on all the main current activities of the European Committee for Social Cohesion as well as relevant work by other Council of Europe bodies. We hope that readers will find this issue a useful guide to what is going on in the social cohesion field in the wider Europe.

Please feel free to pass this bulletin on to others who may be interested, and don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you want more information, or if you want to let us have your views on the matters discussed in these pages.

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INTERVIEW WITH MR CONSTANTINOS PILAVACHI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SOCIAL COHESION AT THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

At the end of April, Constantinos Pilavachi, Director General of Social Cohesion at the Council of Europe, will lock the door of his office at the Strasbourg headquarters for the last time before taking retirement from 1 May 2001.

Leaving his home island of Cyprus to study law in London as a young man, Mr Pilavachi was called to the bar at the age of 21 and practised law in London for four years, before returning home to Cyprus where he continued for a while to work as a lawyer.

A longing for travel drew him into the diplomatic service just after Cyprus became independent, and he found himself Cypriot chargé d'affaires in Bonn. From 1961 to 1970, he was the permanent representative of Cyprus to the Council of Europe – at a time when ambassadors were stationed in their capitals, travelling to Strasbourg for deputies' meetings. In 1968, he chaired the meetings when Cyprus took the presidency.

His first permanent post at the Council was as Head of External Relations. He was later appointed as Director of the Partial Agreement and Representative of the Secretary General to the Social Development Fund – as it was then called. With his nomination as Director General of Social Cohesion he brought the now Council of Europe Development Bank into the heart of the newly created DGIII - Social Cohesion.

“When I joined the Council of Europe, it had 17 members. So the work was different – the Deputies met once a month instead of once a week and the atmosphere was completely different – countries had similar problems, rather than nowadays, when the problems faced by different countries vary enormously. It was a very small family, and now it has become practically the United Nations of Europe,” says Mr Pilavachi.

“Ambassadors now see themselves as the ambassadors of their own countries to the Council of Europe only. This should not be the case – they should also be at the same time the ambassadors of the Council of Europe – they are here in their own house and should promote its interests. By promoting the Council's aims they serve their own countries' interests.”

As Mr Pilavachi looks back on his career, the newsletter asked him to answer some of the key points of recent years as Director General of Social Cohesion.

Newsletter: How has the area of social cohesion evolved over the past few years?

CP: Quite substantially. The Council's Second Summit and the Wise Persons Committee placed social cohesion amongst the main pillars of the Council's work and proposed a Directorate General – this was a big evolution. Restructuring brought together activities from three different sectors into a new committee which had to find new working methods, i.e. the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS).

It was not an easy thing, it took some time until it found its way, but I believe it is moving well and in the right direction. The outgoing president of the CDCS – who had great hesitations and doubts at the beginning – now believes like me that we are making great progress.

The activities carried out in our Directorate General are very ambitious – a challenge because of the sheer volume of work and the limited number of people to carry it out. Those activities are increasing day by day – not only because of the rise in membership, but because of the changing nature of the problems themselves.

Newsletter: What is the importance given to social affairs in the Organisation and how should it evolve in the future?

CP: Social Cohesion is right at the centre of the Council of Europe's aims, and at the centre of government policy. Governments are realising more and more that without social cohesion you cannot have social peace and sustainable development, and how can you talk of human rights if you don't have social peace and development.

Maintaining and improving social cohesion is a permanent effort. The Council of Europe – and above all the Director General who has the contact with governments – has a duty to make governments understand that it must be their priority. Practically every government attaches great importance to social cohesion, and the atmosphere now is positive. But one should never take governments' attitudes for granted. They change more quickly than you would think, and the support that was there one day may disappear the next. So it is a permanent effort on our part to maintain social cohesion as a priority.

Newsletter: How would you describe the relationship between the Council of Europe and its Development Bank?

CP: The Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) is the oldest partial agreement,

dating from 1956. It grants loans to finance projects in the social field in its member states. The lending volume is about 1.5 to 2 billion Euro annually. Each project is examined by the Secretariat of the Partial Agreement in Strasbourg, which prepares the Secretary General's opinion from the social and political points of view, signed by the Secretary General's Representative. The small Strasbourg team, which belongs to the Council of Europe's Secretariat General, also includes the Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretary of the Bank's Organs (Governing Board, Administrative Council and its Executive Committee, Auditing Board). The Bank's operational services in Paris, about 110 staff placed under the authority of the Governor, carry out the day-to-day banking operations (in particular, funding operations, the examination of projects from the technical and financial points of view, and the follow-up of projects).

The Bank's priorities are aid to refugees and migrants and to victims of natural disasters, but it can also finance projects to create jobs in small and medium-sized enterprises, social infrastructures in the fields of health, education, rural development, urban rehabilitation, social housing, and the protection and rehabilitation of the historical heritage. These fields of activity are fixed by the Committee of Ministers, but it is up to member states to submit the individual projects they wish to see financed by the Bank, according to their own priorities. This is a point the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers should keep in mind when they invite the Bank to increase its lending in one field of activity or geographical region or the other.

The CEB and the Council of Europe have entered into a cooperation agreement to implement joint projects in favour of social cohesion. The CEB has consented a contribution of 1.5 million Euro used to identify and accompany projects of particularly high social value that can be financed by CEB loans. A successful example is a Roma housing project in the Czech Republic, and a few more projects are in the pipeline. This agreement is serving a good purpose and I hope it will expand further.

The Bank and the Council are complementary – but working methods and communication need to be improved if they are to produce optimum synergies. The Bank's operational services are in Paris and colleagues do not always understand fully how each institution works. We must put the accent on complementarities and improve communication – otherwise the co-operation agreement could be put at risk.

Children's Conference brings innovation to the fore

Best practice from all over Europe was on show at the Council of Europe Children's Conference in Nicosia, Cyprus just before the end of last year.

"Children at the dawn of a new millennium" earmarked innovative projects that could act as models for future childhood policy throughout the Council's member states. The choice of 30 projects from an initial 200 put forward by governments was made over the past few years by experts from different countries gathered together in three focus groups: "Children and their environment", "Children and child day care" and "Social support systems for children who are at risk, or have been victims of abuse, violence and sexual exploitation."

Schemes from Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom were chosen after visits by focus group members. They were looking for examples of excellence that showed mutual respect between children and adults, links to the public structures and local communities and efforts to support a multidisciplinary approach in order to meet children's needs.

Rita Pantazi of Cyprus, Conference organiser and co-ordinator of the focus group on child day care explained: "It was impossible to find the 'ideal' day care centres. Different methods adapt to different countries, and what might work well in one context could be a dismal failure in another country or even another region. Instead we concentrated on areas of good practice that could be transferable."

The grassroots projects presented at the conference included:

- A Norwegian city council where children are elected and work on an equal footing with adult councillors
- Schools in Stockholm and the United Kingdom where pupils are consulted about teacher appointments
- Reforms in Romania where huge, inhumane industrial orphanages are being gradually replaced by smaller family-sized units (*the new Romanian strategy for children is explained in more detail on page 11*)
- Cooperation between the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to wipe out child sexual exploitation.

Amongst highlights were recent Council of Europe projects, including work to help the

children of Kosovo after the war, and a current project with the Russian authorities to change attitudes in youth prisons from a harsh regime to one which tried to understand the forces that make young children turn to crime, and help re-integrate young offenders into the community.

Also on show were many projects from different countries, brought together in a "fair of ideas". Stalls and video shows helped delegates share experience and take away ideas for their own future work.

The conference was a milestone in the Council's Programme for Children. Set up in 1998 by a decision of the Committee of Ministers, the Programme followed on from the 1997 Strasbourg Summit, when heads of state and government from the 41 member countries put social cohesion and action for children amongst the Council's top priorities. The Nicosia event set out a blueprint for future work with children. The next key event is scheduled for Slovenia in June, when ministers will tackle the theme of reconciling work and family life.

When the Council of Europe first set up the programme for children in 1998, it brought in young people right from the start. The idea was to take the letter of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - the right to participation - and to make it work. To actually let children participate, rather than just paying lip service.

In terms of organisation, this meant getting kids to join in the work of the Forum for Children and the Conference so that their words had weight with adult delegates, and so that their voices were heard - and acted on.

But the stuffy, bureaucratic setting of the classic conference doesn't make sense to children and young people (and is often counter-productive for adults as well). So if the Council is serious about getting them involved, it would mean changing style in a radical manner.

Young people had been involved in Council conferences before - in Madrid and Leipzig in the mid 90s. The programme for children extended this idea, bringing in young people from 11 to 18 on a regular basis. Coming from different countries and different backgrounds, they gelled into a dynamic group, feeding ideas into the meetings, and reminding adults constantly of their right to participate.

At Nicosia, twenty four children from thirteen different countries joined in; from Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Their timetable was different from the adults. They arrived earlier, preparing their contribution in working groups with adults there to

guide them. On the conference floor, they shared time, with sections set aside for them to give their point of view, and spaces for them in each working group.

Their final report highlights two main concerns: participation of children and children at risk.

Participation was a human right, they said. Children did not have the opportunity to participate in their own lives: "Why is it presumed that adults know best what problems children face, what our needs are, how we think the best way to solve such problems are?" they said. Family, school and community were the main focus for participation, and it was there that change should start.

Turning to children at risk, the group pinpointed war, alcohol and drug abuse, discrimination, violence and crime, abuse, sexually transmitted disease and teenage pregnancies, and poverty as risk factors. Governments had a duty to tackle these problems, and to listen to children at risk.

Adult delegates were asked to get out pens to note down the recommendations. The key issues were the need for accurate and easy information, for peer group learning, and for adult policy makers to have regular and frequent contact with children and young people. A clear message: let us make our own mistakes - but be there for us when we want support.

A final pledge from the adult delegate came in the form of a promise that the children's group would stay firmly at the core of the future programme for children. The next rendez-vous will be the first meeting of the new Forum for Children and Families in Strasbourg in spring.

Children can speak... so listen!

"Childhood has its special ways of seeing, thinking and feeling and nothing is less sensible than trying to replace them with our own ways."

"The problem is not that kids do not have the capacity to participate, we know they do, but the problem is often the capacity of adults and organisations to respond"

"Children should be seen and listened to!"

"There are seven year old who have got a wise head and 70 year olds who should not be allowed to vote in a million years."

"We learn to walk, then we learn to talk, then we get to school and they tell us to SIT DOWN and SHUT UP!"

Access to Social Rights:

Promoting access to social rights

In 1999, the Council of Europe initiated a series of programmes on the promotion of access to social rights for all and set up a Committee of Experts on the Promotion of Access to Employment (CS-EM) as well as Groups of Specialists on Access to Social Protection (CS-PS) and Housing (CS-LO).

The most recent meetings of the three Committees took place on 19-20 October (CS-EM), 6-8 December (CS-PS) and 11-13 December 2000 (CS-LO).

At the 3rd meeting of the CS-EM, the Committee, with the help of its consultant, further developed its draft guidelines on local employment initiatives, under the following headings: partnership, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship, education, training and lifelong learning, and monitoring and evaluation.

At its 4th meeting, the CS-PS also drew up a preliminary list of guidelines on access to social protection under the following headings: improving communication and information about rights, benefits and services; improving the management and organisation of benefits and services, and partnership.

At the 4th meeting of the CS-LO, the main agenda item was the preliminary analysis of the questionnaire on "Access to Housing for vulnerable categories of persons". Replies have been received from national ministries, local and regional authorities and NGOs of more than 30 countries. The complete analysis will be presented by the consultant, Mr Iván Tosics (Metropolitan Research Institute, Budapest) at the next meeting. Moreover, the CS-LO held an exchange of views on priority themes for the policy guidelines that will form part of the Group's final report.

The three Groups of Specialists will finalise their work during 2001 and then present the results of their work. As a next stage, it is foreseen to bring together the guidelines drawn up by the three separate activities. This work is likely to result in the compilation of a report on

access to social rights, the drafting of a recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states and the possible organisation of a conference in 2002.

At their last meetings, each of the three "Access" Committees has already looked into the inter-linkages between their respective themes. It emerged from these brainstorming sessions that important transversal issues include the opportunities and risks of labour mobility for vulnerable categories of persons, the employment creation potential of social protection and housing policies, the need for integrated policies, particularly for categories of persons who suffer from multiple exclusion, and the role of partnerships in improving access to social rights.

A co-ordination meeting with the Chairpersons of the three "Access Committees", the consultants, selected members of the committees, and a limited number of observers will be held on 23 March 2001, formally marking the beginning of preparations for a joint project. The Committee of experts on the adaptation of health care services to the demand for health care and health care services of people in marginal situations (SP-SPM) and the Council of Europe's Education Directorate will also contribute to the co-ordination meeting.

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Assistance programmes

The programme of assistance activities in the field of social cohesion for 2001 was adopted by the Committee of Ministers at the end of last year. In addition to many regional and multilateral activities, the programme provides bilateral technical co-operation and assistance in the form of expert missions, training workshops, pilot projects, and seminars to 18 countries.

The programme includes activities in the fields of health, migration, community relations and problems related to drug abuse. Technical expertise on legislative reforms in the field of social security is an important part of the programme.

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe

What is the CLRAE ?

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE), set up in 1994, is one of three statutory organs of the Council of Europe, alongside the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly.

The CLRAE, comprising the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions, has 301 elected members and 301 substitute members, representing over 200,000 local and regional authorities in the 43 Council of Europe member states. The Congress is the "voice" of the regions and municipalities of Europe. As a prime forum for dialogue, it offers delegates an opportunity to discuss common problems, compare experiences and put their views across to governments. It advises the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on all matters pertaining to local and regional policies and co-operates closely with national and international organisations representing local authorities.

The Congress's activities in the social field were initially entrusted to specific working groups, but since mid-2000 they have come under one of the four new statutory committees of the Congress: the Committee on Social Cohesion. This committee was set up in response to the Congress's wish to implement, at local and regional authority level, the new Council of Europe strategy for social cohesion, which sets out an ambitious programme for social development in Europe. In recent times, there has been a tendency for the towns, cities and regions of Europe to be given greater responsibilities in the social field; they also often have to bear the brunt of dealing with the immediate consequences of social exclusion.

In this context, the CLRAE's Committee on Social Cohesion was given specific terms of reference by the Bureau of the Congress, to be shared between the full committee, the Chamber of Local Authorities committee and the Chamber of Regions committee.

Programme of assistance activities 2001 in the field of social security

Many central and eastern European member and observer states of the Council of Europe are currently reforming their social security systems. The Council of Europe's social security standard setting instruments - the European Code of Social Security, its Protocol and the European Code of Social Security (revised) - lay down the European standards in this field.

The programme of assistance in the field of social security has a flexible approach to take account of the different needs for assistance in the various countries.

Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia

In order to provide basic information on modern social security thinking in conformity with the norms of the Council of Europe to a broad public, and help develop social security terminology in the national languages, the Council of Europe will help prepare introductions to the basic concepts of social security in the national languages of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. This work will be carried out in co-operation with the national authorities and university collaborators.

Furthermore, the Council of Europe will seek to help develop an approach in the field of social security adapted to regional realities. Draft model provisions to show how a social security system adapted to regional realities conforms to the norms of the Council of Europe will be drafted on the basis of data and information provided by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and the Council of Europe's publication "Model provisions in the field of social security".

Key experts and officials directly involved in the reform process in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia will be brought together at a regional seminar to discuss the conceptual framework of social security on the basis of the introductions to the basic concepts of social security and the regional model provisions.

Activities in other central and eastern European member states

Reports containing studies on the conformity of current and planned social se-

curity legislation with the social security standard setting instruments of the Council of Europe and advice on ways of bringing the legislation into line with the instruments were finalised for Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, and Moldova in 2000. Similar studies, begun in 2000, for the Russian Federation, Slovakia and the Ukraine and should be finalised in 2001.

Technical legal assistance will be provided in 2001 for Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland to assist the national authorities in preparing for early signatures and/or ratifications of the European Code of Social Security.

The statistical data needed to assess the compatibility of national legislation with the social security standard setting instruments are lacking in some countries. Key personnel working in the national administrations need to be trained to prepare the necessary statistical data. The Council of Europe aims to carry out this activity on a regional basis in co-operation with the International Labour Office.

The Council of Europe also aims to carry out analyses of the financial implications linked to the ratification of the European Code of Social Security in several countries in co-operation with the International Labour Office.

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Migration and community relations

Seminar in the field of migration, community relations and minorities (4-5 December 2000)

The above mentioned seminar was organised by the Council of Europe for representatives of the newly created Ministry of the Affairs of the Federation and Nationality and Migration Policy of the Russian Federation as well as representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Its aim was to familiarise the attending high officials with the legal instruments of

The full committee was assigned responsibility for aspects relating to the towns, cities and regions of Europe. These are:

1. **Citizen participation in local and regional public life** (in particular through implementation of the recommendations in Resolution 91, adopted by the Congress at its plenary session in May 2000);
2. **Equality between men and women and promoting the participation of women in local and regional political life**, including during voting procedures. Following observation of the local elections in the "former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", the committee organised a round-table discussion in Ohrid in December 2000 to look at women's individual voting rights, which are not guaranteed in all regions in Europe at present and which are the basic form of women's participation in public and political life.
3. **The role of local and regional authorities in access to employment**, and in particular access to employment for the most disadvantaged sections of the population. The Committee on Social Cohesion is preparing, by spring 2000, a detailed report on the employment of vulnerable social groups, including an inventory of a number of examples of good practices in several European countries. The report will also attempt to set out guidelines in this field. *Any relevant information or experience of interest can be forwarded to the Committee secretariat at the address given below;*
4. **Protection of minorities**, in particular from the standpoint of social cohesion (with analysis of relations between minorities and social services and of transborder co-operation to improve the situation of minorities).

The Chamber of Local Authorities committee has been entrusted with continuing the work carried out over the last few years by the Congress on crime and urban insecurity as factors adversely affecting social cohesion in inner-city areas. After four conferences looking

the Council of Europe and relevant activities in the fields concerned. Participants were given the opportunity to exchange views with Council of Europe experts on detailed points of relevant legislation, which is currently being amended.

Another aim of the Seminar was to provide assistance to the Russian Federation in the current process of ratification of the (Revised) European Social Charter.

It was agreed with the head of the delegation, Deputy Minister Valery Kirpichnikov, to set up a task force consisting of two Russian and two Council of Europe legal experts in 2001. These experts should analyse the five draft laws relating to the legal status of aliens and to the integration of immigrants currently pending before the Duma and examine their compatibility with relevant legal instruments of the Council of Europe. The relevant laws should be transmitted as soon as possible to the Secretariat and translated into the official languages of the Council of Europe. A timetable for the task force operations should be drawn up early in 2001.

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COMING NEXT...

A major conference on irregular migration flows will take place in October 2001 in Athens, Greece.

For the first time representatives from countries from south and the east of the Mediterranean will be associated to the work of the CDMG.

It will start a dialog with these countries on various questions such as: launching an awareness campaign on the dangers of moonlighting or labour trafficking; and also questions on the efficiency of border controls as well as on the conditions of forced returns in the eye of human dignity.

The results of this conference will be used during the Migration Ministers Conference taking place in Finland in 2002.

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PLEASE NOTE:

In May 2001, a special issue of our newsletter will be entirely dedicated to migration and community relations.

Population

Restructuring the Council of Europe's population activities

From 1 January 2001, an ad-hoc intergovernmental committee – the European Population Committee (CAHP) – replaces the CDPO.

In the year 2000, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted a series of measures to consolidate the political role of the Organisation and to improve the management of staff and financial resources. In the Population sector, this strategy has led to a restructuring of the European Population Committee (CDPO), a 41-member intergovernmental steering committee.

The newly created CAHP consist of 15-members with a rotating membership system. In addition, a new structure – the European Population Network (EPN) – with representatives from all member states has been set up. The EPN will have full insight into CAHP's activities and shall provide the CAHP with opinions and advice regarding issues falling under CAHP's responsibilities. It will function using the Internet as the main channel of communication.

Although the restructuring of the Council of Europe's population activities is significant, the population activities are still given high priority.

The CAHP will supervise the completion of all ongoing activities initiated by the CDPO and its Groups of Specialists; it is also responsible for defining a new work programme on population issues, in close co-operation with the European Social Cohesion Committee, the European Migration Committee, and other Council of Europe bodies where a demographic input can contribute to better policy recommendations.

at the causes of and possible solutions to crime and insecurity in towns and cities, a *Handbook on Crime and Urban Insecurity* has been drafted and will be submitted for adoption to the next plenary session of the Congress on 29 May 2001. In addition, a conference closing this cycle of meetings will be held in Enschede (Netherlands) from 20 to 22 September 2001 and will be looking at the role of local authorities and their response to transborder crime in Europe.

Another major theme of interest for the Chamber of Local Authorities committee is **the role of local authorities in provision of social services**. This will be addressed by follow-up to Resolution 87 adopted by the Congress in March 2000 and in the spirit of the 12th conference of European ministers responsible for local authorities on 6 and 7 April 2000. In this context, the Chamber of Local Authorities committee is seeking to identify and focus its attention on those social services which are top priorities for local authorities, such as health, assistance to families and individuals, social housing and services providing assistance for vocational training.

The Chamber of Regions committee will be responsible for promoting transborder co-operation in Europe for social cohesion and democratic stability, continuing the work begun in Timisoara in 1999 at the 7th European Conference of Border Regions, organised jointly with the Parliamentary Assembly. This question in particular will be looked at in the context of the Stability Pact. The Chamber of Regions committee is also responsible for following up the **Economic Forums of the Regions of Europe**, which have been organised by the Congress since 1996 and which deal with different aspects of regional economic development. During the 2001 plenary session the committee will also be considering the **impact of globalisation on social cohesion in regions**.

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DG III - SOCIAL COHESION : PROGRESS OF THE PROGRAMMES

ELSEWHERE AT THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Key activities, formerly handled by the CDPO, such as the annual publication "Recent demographic developments in Europe" and the "Population Studies Series" will continue to be at the centre of the CAHP's activities. The design and implementation of technical assistance activities on population issues and data collection, particularly in the Caucasus and in south east Europe, will become more important. The new committee will rely more on small research teams composed of committee members and leading consultants; the working methods will be less meeting intensive, and more responsive to demands with short deadlines. The CAHP, with the support of the EPN, will carry out specific population policy research activities of relevance to the political role of the Organisation.

mittee will be called upon to transmit its knowledge to other bodies and committees of the Council of Europe, rendering it relevant for policy making. Whenever possible, it will be responsive to the demands of other committees and bodies regarding information on issues related to demographic and population developments that are relevant for their activities. When defining its activities, it will take into account the wider implications of demographic developments and population changes for some of the key objectives of the Organization, addressing such issues as social cohesion, exclusion, migration, local and regional differences, and social rights.

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As repository of a wealth of knowledge and data on demographic issues, the com-

The European Social Charter : monitors review social rights in 15 countries

The European Social Charter is not being fully respected by countries in Europe, according to the **European Committee of Social Rights**.

Thirteen countries came under criticism for failing to respect certain provisions of the Social Charter after the Committee studied reports from 15 countries.

The monitoring exercise - part of regular procedures carried out to make sure that countries respect the Social Charter - highlighted problems in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland (its first report), Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The Committee also awarded top marks to France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal for putting right problems that it has criticised in the past, and found only slight technical faults or no problems at all in Austria and Iceland.

Amongst problems highlighted by the Committee figured:

- **Belgium:** first year apprentices only earn 17% of the legal minimum adult wage - a figure that is too low to be considered fair; vaccination programmes against diphtheria, measles and polio are not sufficient to ensure that the population is properly protected.
- **Denmark:** there is no compulsory six weeks post natal maternity leave; rules covering work permits for foreigners are not flexible enough.
- **Finland:** women who are unlawfully dismissed during their pregnancy leave are rarely reinstated by court order. Compensation payable by employers who have unlawfully dismissed female employees is not regarded as a sufficient deterrent

DG III - SOCIAL COHESION : STUDIES, ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH

Comparative Analysis

Fighting discrimination against persons with disabilities

Despite constant achievements in the field of integration, many persons with disabilities in today's Europe are still discriminated against, directly or indirectly, on an ad hoc or regular basis. Therefore, many countries strive towards equal opportunity policies. Governments follow different approaches to tackle that complex issue. In view of that diversity, a Working Group of the Council of Europe Partial Agreement in the Social and Public Health Field has studied the various strategies and instruments used to combat discrimination.

The findings of the Working Group are published in the report "Legislation to counter discrimination against persons with disabilities". This comparative analysis takes stock of existing legislation, covering all areas of life, such as education, mobility, accessibility, vocational guidance and training, employment, sports,

leisure and culture, income, medical care, information, etc.

Based on contributions from governments, non-governmental organisations of and for people with disabilities as well as employers' associations and trade unions, the report identifies three main approaches currently used in the member states to achieve equality of opportunity: anti-discrimination legislation, preferential treatment, and compensatory measures. In practice, many governments use a combination of these approaches.

In the light of these conclusions, governments are recommended to apply a balanced "policy mix" of legislative and other measures to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of disability and achieve full citizenship of persons with disabilities, consisting of:

- legislation to ban discrimination either through general or specific legislation;
- preferential treatment aimed at eliminating obstacles to full participation of persons with disabilities in society, either through mainstreaming or compensatory measures;
- public awareness raising.

The principle of equality of opportunity for people with disabilities should not only win widespread public acceptance, it should also be perceived as self-evident. A legal ban on discrimination would constitute a landmark measure, therefore changing attitudes in this respect.

The report *Legislation to counter discrimination against persons with disabilities* was published on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights (4 November 2000).

It is available in English and French from Council of Europe Publishing, F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 27 80, E-mail: publishing@coe.int

Contact: Thorsten Afflerbach, Administrator, Tel.: + 33 (0)3 88 41 28 23, Fax: + 33 (0) 3 88 41 27 32, E-mail: thorsten.afflerbach@coe.int, Internet: http://www.coe.fr/soc-sp/default_eng.htm

Strategic Review

Making south-eastern Europe a region of social cohesion

The South-East Europe Strategic Review on Social Cohesion is an important element of the Council of Europe programme of assistance activities for 2001 and an integral part of the various country-specific activities in the region.

It represents an opportunity to apply the work of the Social Cohesion Strategy with the specific context of South East Europe – in particular the work on standard-setting and access to social rights. It is also part of the contribution of the Council of Europe to the Stability Pact for south-east Europe.

Through a series of thematic networks, the Strategic Review will assist the ministries responsible for social cohesion to improve their processes of policy development and target areas for priority action. The thematic networks will cover housing, employment, social protection and health. The work of these networks will be supplemented by a cross-sectorial task force on institutional capacity building to improve service delivery.

Participation in the Strategic Review is open to all countries in the region. Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” are already actively participating. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will also be invited to participate, together with Bosnia and Herzegovina (This project is subject to funding).

Housing problems in south-eastern Europe

The first meeting of the thematic network on “Housing problems in South-Eastern Europe” took place at the Hotel Continental, Skopje, “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, 27-28 November 2000. It was the first meeting of a series of thematic networks launched within the Strategic Review project “Making South-Eastern Europe a region of social cohesion” which is part of the contribution of the Council of Europe to the Stability Pact (Working Table II). Government representatives from Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” participated in the meeting.

The objective of the meeting was to contribute to a better understanding of the housing problems in the region, to design the lines for future appropriate policy actions, and to create regional network dynamics. After the opening speech given by Mr. Risto Georgev, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy, “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Ms. Michèle Meunier, Director at the Council of Europe Development Bank, presented the activities of the Bank in the south-eastern European region. She emphasized that housing is one of the priorities of the Bank and represents an important part of its activities.

The consultants, Mr. Iván Tosics and Mr. József Hegedüs (Metropolitan Research Institute, Budapest, Hungary), presented an Issues Paper on housing problems in south-eastern Europe. They highlighted a set of main housing issues in the region that should be at the heart of the policy debate. In the discussion, Mr. Tosics questioned the relevance of the high priority given to the construction of new housing units in housing policy.

He emphasised the problems of:
a. affordability of new units,

for the employer or as sufficient compensation for the employee.

- **France:** children under the age of 16 can work in family businesses (agriculture excepted). Succession rights for certain children born out of wedlock are still discriminatory.
- **Greece:** Not enough action against smoking; rules covering work permits for foreigners are not flexible enough.
- **Italy:** A substantial number of children are illegally employed.
- **Netherlands:** some categories of employees do not have the right to maternity leave.
- **Norway:** school children can work for most of their school holiday, jeopardizing the benefits of their education
- **Poland:** too short notice period for fixed-term contracts (two weeks).
- **Portugal:** a number of children are illegally employed.
- **Spain:** children under the age of 16 can work in family businesses.
- **Sweden:** no compulsory six weeks post natal maternity leave.
- **United Kingdom :** poor maternity pay and no compulsory six weeks post-natal maternity leave.

The Committee welcomed improvements in Austria, France, Greece and Sweden - where bans on child labour below 15 have been extended; in Italy - where domestic workers can no longer be sacked during maternity leave; in the Netherlands - where women enjoy breastfeeding breaks without loss of pay; and in Portugal - which has stepped up sanctions against child labour and extended the compulsory maternity leave to six weeks.

The Committee is now examining reports from Cyprus, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovakia and will publish its findings before June 2001.

PLEASE NOTE :

The Committee of Social Rights, composed of independent experts, is the first phase of the monitoring process carried out to make sure countries respect their Social Charter commitments. A full explanation of the process is available at the website below, or from the press service.

The text of the conclusions and a summary of the situation in each country is available on the Internet site: <http://www.humanrights.coe.int/cseweb>

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- b. increasing cost of rental housing and energy for households,
- c. and poor housing maintenance by low-income owners.

An appropriate fiscal policy and subsidies system associated with housing allowances would probably be less costly and more effective than the construction by the state of social housing.

The four national contributions available – i.e. contributions from Bulgaria; Croatia, Romania and “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” - were presented and discussed by the participants. The Albanian representative presented orally some preliminary results. At the end of the meeting, there was agreement among the participants that additional information is required for enabling the Thematic Network to prepare a set of priorities for policies to improve the housing situation in south eastern Europe. The two consultants have been asked to prepare a summary paper taking into account the relevant country information resulting from both the national contributions and the discussions at the meeting. A next meeting will be organized in the first half of 2001.

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[Developing social cohesion through research activities](#)

Analysing trends in social cohesion: four projects for the year 2001

In order to pursue its action in analysing trends of social cohesion and developing measures to combat poverty and social exclusion, the Social Cohesion Development Division has set up its programme of activities for the year 2001. The four main projects presented below have been retained.

A Guide to using social indicators

A guide to using social indicators will be compiled as a means of developing an analytical tool on the various types of indicators that are offered by international or national bodies. The Guide should essentially act as a methodological tool to inform decisions regarding the assessment of social policies.

This work will also promote the building of bridges between researchers, bodies responsible for compiling such indicators, international organisations and policy-makers. This activity has been developed primarily in such ways mainly thanks to a voluntary contribution from Switzerland.

Researchers' Network

A Network of social policies researchers will be set up in order to stimulate the debate on how to improve policy-making through a greater understanding of the results of ongoing research programmes in the field of social exclusion. The project is concerned with both practical measurements and with analysis for the implementation of quality social policies.

Thus, the network's task will be to define the criteria for monitoring and assessing the efficiency of social policies, as well as to emphasise the need for an assessment of the coherence of the entire institutional architecture in the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

Forum on good governance

A Forum on “New social demands and good governance” will be set up. It will offer the opportunity for policy-makers, researchers and civil society to discuss the following questions:

- How can new social demands be detected?
- Are existing institutions able to find solutions to new demands? Or, would new institutions be necessary?

- What is the role of the private sector concerning social demands?
- How important are partnerships between the public and the private sector and different levels of administration for improving the capacity to handle new social demands?

Thanks to the complementary work that will be done in the framework of the network of social policies researchers and the Forum proposals for new co-ordinated research subjects should be brought to light and launched in 2002.

Strategy for combating poverty in the Caucasus

As two other countries of the Caucasus (Azerbaijan and Armenia) recently became members states of the Council of Europe and thanks to a voluntary financial contribution from Japan, the Organisation will organise a first conference called “Dialog on access to social rights” that will take place in July 2001 in one of the three countries of the region.

This first conference will constitute the starting point that will lead to the identification of specific problems linked to access to social rights, the identification of the population and the regions concerned as well as the establishment of priorities for direct public action.

In the future, local pilot projects destined to solve the identified problems will be set up. This could be accompanied by a training element for key-actors that will inform them of good practices that have been developed elsewhere in similar situations. Finally, the whole should result in the setting up of new measures for combating poverty.

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United Kingdom

Integrated approaches to social cohesion in the United Kingdom

At the last meeting of the European Committee on Social Cohesion in November 2000, members heard from Janice Shersby of the Department of Social Security in London about integrated approaches in the United Kingdom to problems of social exclusion and poverty. She explained that UK government approach was geared to phases of the life-cycle: childhood, working-age adults and older people rather than at specific groups. It was also a multi-dimensional approach, which encompassed issues including levels of income, employment, education, health, housing and area based initiatives. The key principles in this approach were creating opportunities for all, prioritising the prevention of poverty and social exclusion (tackling the causes and not just the symptoms) and partnership (between for example national government and local government, the voluntary sector and charities).

The new devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland also had responsibility for major aspects of social cohesion policy. Such policies in the different parts of the UK also took account of regional and local differences. In the UK approaches to deal with the problems of poverty and social exclusion included breaking down institutional boundaries, activating programmes and budgets, cutting across traditional departmental boundaries, setting joint targets and working together to achieve them. Using local initiatives to pilot new ideas was particularly important. Nonetheless problems were complex and inter-linked, for example, the transmission of poverty from generation to generation. Children in low income families tended to be more likely to have poor employment records in adult life, and therefore find it difficult to save adequately for retirement. Tackling these problems requires solutions which are both multi-faceted and sophisticated.

Ms Shersby stressed the emphasis placed by the UK Government on creating opportunities for people to fulfil their potential through work and education. Being without work is the single major

cause of poverty in the UK and although jobs taken by unemployed people may not necessarily always be highly paid, a job can be a foundation or a stepping-stone to acquiring new skills and better employment. The longer one is unemployed, the more difficult it is to find a job. The UK has introduced a National Minimum Wage, and tax credit reforms for working families and disabled people were designed to ensure that those working 16 hours a week or more were better off in work than staying unemployed.

Ms Shersby also discussed the work and the functions of the Social Exclusion Unit set up by British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, in 1998 in which there was considerable interest. The Unit had focused on specific problem areas such as rough sleeping, truancy, teenage pregnancy and neighbourhood renewal, and had produced reports and recommendations on each of them. The Unit, which is located within the Cabinet Office, was composed of staff on secondment from different Government Departments and from public authorities, sometimes recruited for a specific project. However, implementation of the recommendations was overseen by nominated Ministers within Government Departments concerned.

The Unit acted as a strong catalyst for change, cutting across traditional departmental boundaries.

In addition to the activities of the Unit, the Department of Social Security publishes an annual report on behalf of the government on progress being made in the fight against poverty using over 30 indicators. These covered issues such as family income, provision for early years' development, levels of educational achievement, reduction of numbers of working-age people living in workless households, and support to vulnerable groups such as rough sleepers. Homelessness in England was showing a reduction (down 36% over the last year) and evaluations suggested that the New Deal programme was beginning to be successful in helping people to break the cycle of poverty and move into employment.

In conclusion, there is a strong focus on ensuring access to opportunities and good quality services and on delivery of targets. Programmes were flexible and adapted to identified needs. The piloting

Policies to fight child labour exploitation in Europe

(1-3 February 2001, Lisbon, Portugal)

This Conference, organised by the Portuguese Government in cooperation with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), took place in Lisbon from 1 to 3 February 2001.

It had four aims:

- a. to identify the different forms of child labour in Europe today;
- b. to reflect on the causes and consequences of child labour;
- c. to review action taken by governments and other social actors to combat the exploitation of child labour;
- d. to make plans for concerted action to prevent and eliminate child labour exploitation in European countries.

As an indication of the political importance attached to the problem of child labour exploitation, several distinguished speakers took part in the opening session, including: Jorge Sampaio, President of Portugal; Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues, Portuguese Minister of Labour and Solidarity; Kari Tapiola, Executive Director responsible for Standards and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (ILO); and Hans-Christian Krüger, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

Portugal had earlier been the subject of international criticism for its failure to tackle child labour exploitation effectively enough. Thus, through the supervisory procedures of the European Social Charter, Portugal had been found to be in breach of its obligations under Article 7 on the right of children and young persons to protection. This finding led to a Recommendation addressed to Portugal by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers. The Portuguese authorities responded by taking a whole series of measures designed above all to make the legislative provisions against child labour exploitation more effective in practice.

of innovative new programmes was a keystone of the UK approach, for example to enable the unemployed to deal with one Government agency for all the benefits whether unemployment, social security or housing benefits to which they were entitled.

Contact: Department of Social Security (DSS), Correspondence Unit, Room 540, The Adelphi, 1-11 John Adam Street, London, WC2N 6HT, Internet: <http://www.dss.gov.uk/>

Romania:

New strategy for protecting vulnerable children

Domestic and international perceptions of the Romanian child protection system, the commitments entered into as part of the European Union accession procedure, inconsistencies in legislation and problems at local level prompted Romania to make this issue a priority of its government programme. Accordingly, the system for protecting vulnerable children or children at risk is now co-ordinated by the Romanian government, through the **National Authority for Child Protection and Adoption**, a specialist public authority set up recently further to the restructuring of the National Child Protection Agency.

The authority co-ordinates, at national level, the implementation of policies on reforming the system of services and institutions for the promotion of children's rights, the provision of care and the protection of vulnerable and disabled children. It has been given the task of consolidating the existing system through a new strategy.

The new strategy for protecting vulnerable children, in accordance with the government programme adopted for 2001-2004, is effective as of 25 February 2001.

Its aims are:

- to reduce the number of children in residential institutions;
- to prevent children from being placed in institutions;
- to restructure placement centres;
- to reform the relevant legislation.

The main urgent measures to be taken in order to reform the system for protecting vulnerable children are:

- developing and diversifying alternative services into an integrated system of community services, particularly with regard to preventing and reducing the abandonment of children and their placement in residential institutions;
- converting forty residential institutions into family housing and developing schemes to encourage the integration of institutionalised children into their natural or foster families;
- setting up a network of social workers in the local community, and providing special training programmes for those involved;
- establishing quality standards for all alternative child-protection services;
- examining adoption procedures with a view to encouraging greater use of alternative measures and treating national and international adoption as a last resort.

The government programme also lays down other strategic objectives for protecting children, such as:

- creating a single legal framework governing the protection of children's rights, juvenile justice and the responsibilities of non-governmental organisations working in this field;
- reforming the legal system and introducing a child-protection system;
- tightening up measures against organised crime, in particular trafficking in children;
- devising and promoting a national public-awareness programme focusing on family responsibilities;
- devising and promoting a programme on children's health.

Contact: National Authority for Child Protection and Adoption – Ms Ioana Predescu Brandusa, State Secretary, Chair of the National Committee for Adoption; Mr Florin Doran, Deputy Secretary; Ms Gabriela Coman, Secretary General, tel.: + 40 1 310 07 89; 310 07 90; Fax: + 40 1 312 73 63; 312 74 74

Participants were interested to hear in detail about these measures, which provide a good example of how determined action can have a major impact on a problem that had been relatively neglected in the past. Everyone was impressed by the evident personal commitment of the staff of the Programme for the Elimination of Exploitation of Child Labour. The programme had a solid foundation of research carried out with the help of the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and one key to success has been the active involvement of the NGO sector and the social partners.

Concerning child labour in Europe in general, it became clear that the problem is very often closely associated with poverty. In many countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the transition to a market economy has led to a drastic reduction in the income of many families and to the growth of an informal economic sector which is open to all kinds of exploitative practices such as child labour. There is concern, indeed, that there is a growth in the most serious forms of child labour exploitation such as the trafficking of children for purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. The key to fighting such developments lies in fighting the poverty that they reflect, so it will be important to place action against child labour exploitation within the broader context of national anti-poverty strategies.

It should not be thought, however, that child labour exploitation is confined to the transition countries. Trafficking of children affects the more affluent countries too, in addition to which the pressures of modern marketing may lead teenagers to put their schoolwork in jeopardy by working excessive hours so as to earn money to buy consumer goods.

The Conference made it clear that much could be gained by intensifying the exchange of information and experience among European countries. For example, consultations will now be held between the ILO/IPEC and the Council of Europe in order to see how the two bodies could cooperate to assist European countries in fighting child labour exploitation with renewed vigour.

International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), Tel: +41.22.799.8181, Fax: +41.22.799.8771 or E-mail: ipec@ilo.org Internet: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/>

Social NGOs elect chair of grouping and adopt medium term work programme

The international non-governmental organisations active in the social field and having consultative status with the Council of Europe elected on 25th January 2001 during their last meeting in Strasbourg, the chair for the NGO Grouping "Social Rights, European Social Charter, Work and Social Policy". Dirk Jarré, the representative and former president of the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), will go on assuming this responsibility.

The NGO grouping also adopted its medium term work programme. The ongoing activities of the grouping include the follow-up to "Copenhagen + 5", the monitoring of developments in the area of the Revised European Social Charter and the additional protocol on collective complaints, as well as, the follow-up to the proclamation of the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights, i.e. the post Nice process. The main new initiatives on the agenda of the Grouping "Social Rights, European Social Charter, Work and Social Policy" focus on social exclusion, users of the social services and the challenges of an ageing society.

In particular, expert work will be done on new risks in the rapidly changing European society, especially new forms of social and economic exclusion resulting, for example, from altered patterns of working lives, information technologies, higher degree of mobility and other fundamental current changes. The grouping's work will help to identify and analyse such factors on the basis of the experience of social NGOs and will propose measures capable of preventing exclusion processes and strengthening social cohesion.

The grouping will also address access to social services and the participation of their users. There is evidence that easy and equal access to needed services is not always guaranteed, particularly for the most vulnerable members of society. New ways of looking at social services and concepts of good governance also suggest that users should be more involved in the designing, delivery and evaluation of such services. Knowledge on ways and means of doing this and on best practice will be compiled and shared as a basis for policy action and strategic planning.

The process of the preparation for the UN Second World Assembly on Ageing, taking place in Madrid in April 2002, along with the revision of the International Plan of Action on Ageing "Towards a Society of All Ages" will constitute another area of intensive cooperation among the NGOs. Their contributions will peak with the preparation of the Ministerial Conference on Ageing of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) to be held in Berlin in September 2002, on a European implementation strategy of the priorities for policy action as decided in Madrid. Civil society involvement will be particularly important in this process.

The NGO Grouping "Social Rights, European Social Charter, Work and Social Policy" will promote close co-operation on substance with the other NGO groupings of the Council of Europe like the ones concerned with human rights, extreme poverty and social integration, or gender equality. Furthermore it will give substantial input into relevant commissions and committees of the Council of Europe, particularly the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS), in which it is represented as one of the four civil society observers.

Contact: Mr. Dirk Jarré (responsible for this grouping), Deutscher Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge, Am Stockborn 1-3, D - 60439 Frankfurt am Main, Tel.: + 49 69 958 07 135, Fax: + 49 69 958 07 161, E-mail: jarre@deutscher-verein.de

Some NGOs that have attended the Council of Europe Forum for Children

International Save the Children Alliance

Founded on 19th May 1919, Save the Children is the largest independent movement for children. Believing that all children have a right to a happy, healthy and secure start in life, it is working in over 100 countries across the globe and comprising 30 organisations.

Save the Children is leading the fight towards making a reality of a world, which respects and values each child, which listens to children and learns and where all children have hope and opportunity.

Save the Children sees children and young people as partners who participate in the

projects they are to benefit from. Save the Children members are exploring ways to increase the input of children and young people in all aspects of their activities.

International Save the Children Alliance, 275 - 281 King Street, London, W6 9LZ, UK, Tel: +44 20 8748 2554, Fax: +44 20 8237 8000, E-mail: info@save-children-alliance.org, Internet: http://www.savethechildren.org.uk

The European Forum for Child Welfare (EFCW)

The European Forum for Child Welfare (EFCW) is a network of NGOs concerned with child welfare across Europe. EFCW is itself part of a wider network, the International Forum for Child Welfare. To-date, members come from 20 countries, including Central and Eastern Europe

EFCW activities include:

- Monitoring and influencing legislation and the development of policy issues at EU level;
- Supplying members with information on EU policies and funding programmes;
- Bringing organisations into contact with each other and supporting the development of partnership projects;
- Disseminating models of good practices;
- Organising conferences, seminars and expert meetings;
- Developing studies, position papers and publications on various topics;
- Publishing a bi-monthly newsletter and a quarterly calendar of events.

European Forum for Child Welfare, 53 rue de la Concorde, B-1050 Brussels, Belgium, Tel.: + 32 2 511 70 83, Fax: + 32 2 511 72 98, E-mail: info@efcw.org, Internet: http://www.efcw.org

The Centre for Europe's Children

The Centre for Europe's Children aims at promoting Children's Rights in Europe by developing an information base, promoting of good practice and policies, stimulating research and evaluation, and developing networks of policy makers and interested parties to share ideas and information.

Its main objective is to service the information needs of policy makers, civil servants, academics, experts and others responsible for child related activities.

Centre for Europe's Children, Lilybank House, Bute Gardens, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, G12 8RT, Scotland, Tel.: + 44 141-330 3710, Fax: + 44 141-330 48 56, E-mail: cec-web@glg.ac.uk, Internet: http://www.eurochild.gla.ac.uk

ADOPTED TEXTS

Recommendations:

- Recommendation Rec.(2001)I of the Committee of Ministers on **Social workers** (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 17 January 2001)
- Recommendation 1489 (2001) of the Parliamentary Assembly on **Transit migration in central and eastern Europe** (adopted on 22 January 2001)
- Recommendation 1496 (2001) of the Parliamentary Assembly on **Improving the status and role of volunteers in society**: a contribution to the International Year of Volunteers 2001 (adopted on 24 January 2001)
- Recommendation 1501 (2001) of the Parliamentary Assembly on **Parents' and teachers' responsibilities in children's education** (adopted on 26 January 2001)

Resolutions:

- Resolution ResAP (2001) I of the Committee of Ministers (Partial Agreement in the Social and Public Health Field) on the introduction of the principles of **Universal Design** into the curricula of all occupations working on the built environment (adopted on 15 February 2001 by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers), Internet: <http://cm..coe.int/ta/res/resAP/2001/2001xp1.htm>

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The European Convention of Human Rights has been published in Braille. It is available (free of charge) in English and French from the Council of Europe Directorate General of Human Rights or Point I, fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 27 45, E-mail: point_1@coe.int

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
- The *Newsletter Pompidou Group* (Co-operation Group to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking in drugs) available on Internet: <http://www.pompidou.coe.int/English/framnewsletter/framnewsletter.html> or from Catherine Lahmek, Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 27 85, E-mail: catherine.lahmek@coe.int
- The Newsletter on the European Social Charter *Social Rights = Human Rights*, available on Internet: <http://www.socialcharter.int>

Reports:

- *2000 Demographic Yearbook "Recent Demographic Developments in Europe"*, Council of Europe Publishing, December 2000, ISBN 92-871-4464-8
- *Legislation to counter discrimination against persons with disabilities*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, October 2000, 74 p., ISBN 92-871-4422-2
- *Guide to the preparation, use and quality of blood components - 7th edition* (2001), Blood transfusion and histocompatibility, 256 pages, ISBN : 92-871-4548-2

CALENDAR FROM MARCH 2001 TO JUNE 2001

Conferences:

- 21 - 22 June: XXVIIth Session of European Ministers responsible for Family Affairs (Portorož, Slovenia)

Seminars:

- 9 - 10 April: Seminar on improving access to social protection "*Common problems and solutions*" (Penza, Russian Federation)

Meetings:

- 9 - 10 April: Forum for children and families
- 23 - 24 April: 5th meeting of the Group of Specialists on Access to Housing
- 3 - 4 May: 4th meeting of the Committee of Experts on promoting Access to Employment
- **9 - 10 May: 6th meeting of the European Committee for Social Cohesion**
- 14 - 16 May: 5th meeting of the Group of Specialists on Improving the Quality of Life of dependent Elderly Persons
- 30 - 31 May: Group of Specialists on Access to Social Protection

"*Social Cohesion: Developments*" is the DG III - Social Cohesion Directorate's electronic newsletter - **Publication:** issued three times a year - **Members of the editorial committee:** **Gilda Farrell** (responsible editor), Head of the Social Cohesion Development Division - Maria Ochoa-Llido, Head of the Migration and Roma/Gypsies Division - Cathie Burton, Press Officer - John Murray, Head of the Social Policy Department - **Françoise Zahn** (writing, co-ordination and layout), Tel.: + 33 (0)3 90 21 47 94, E-mail: francoise.zahn@coe.int