

Editorial

The new challenges of a social Europe

As Europe is experiencing many changes, Directorate General III - Social Cohesion is endeavouring to find ways of responding to the new challenges and to the questions arising in the social sphere. With this in mind, three events have recently been organised.

The conference on "Irregular Migration and Dignity of Migrants: Co-operation in the Mediterranean Region", organised on 3-4 October 2001 in Athens by the European Committee on Migration in co-operation with the Council of Europe's North-South Centre, brought together representatives of the countries of northern Africa, from which a significant proportion of migrants come, and representatives of EU countries, which are the host/receiving countries. A discussion took place of the need for North-South political dialogue and the need for specific commitments. These include the setting up of pilot networks of (receiving) towns and cities with a view to studying new developments in legislation relating to the integration of irregular migrants. Such action, in co-operation with the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, will give a role to local authorities, the parties closest to the problem and therefore the bodies most frequently called upon to find solutions relating to integration, to working in an intercultural context and to the acceptance of diversity.

The Forum on "New Social Demands and Governance", held on 18-19 October 2001 in Strasbourg with the support of the Nordic Council of Ministers, was attended by policy-makers, representatives of national governments of Council of Europe member

states, research workers, representatives of civil society and representatives of both sides of industry. The Forum looked at the issues of changing roles and developing greater synergy between the various institutional, social and economic players who influence Europe's social and economic models.

In her opening address, Ms Gabriella Battaini-Draconi, Director General of Social Cohesion, pointed out that the nineties had been marked by growing concern among governments and populations about the social consequences of the processes of economic globalisation. She reiterated that it was impossible for an organisation like the Council of Europe, which upheld fundamental rights, to remain indifferent to the future of the European social model or to fail to meet the expectations of European citizens.

Among the matters of concern to DG III to which the Forum gave attention was the issue of the institutional innovations required to guarantee that economic growth is accompanied by social progress. Social development and the upholding of social rights - of which the state has to be the guarantor - are crucial during the search for sustainable growth and democratic stability. The ideas and recommendations put forward at the Forum will be discussed as we develop a social cohesion strategy appropriate to the challenges brought forth by globalisation.

Thus the Forum played its part at a significant stage of the discussion about the introduction of new institutional frameworks and new kinds of social dialogue and partnerships smoothing the interface between new social expectations, public debates and the political responses made.

The third event was the Conference on "The Role of Social Services in Sustainable Social Development", organised on 25-26

October 2001 in Berlin by the Council of Europe and the German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Making the opening address, Mr Walter Schwimmer, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, emphasised that "social services are a basic right in European societies and they also have an important part to play in sustaining the social cohesion that goes with a strong economy". At the same time, all the countries of Europe, east and west, face the need to review and reform their social services to enable them to meet the new expectations of a rapidly changing society.

Social services are a key part of the European social model. Developed by the state, by voluntary organisations or by the market, they meet a growing demand from the population, especially from older people and children. There are some schools of thought which would prefer them to be subjected to the same competition rules as commercial services, but how could those rules promote the development of social services which are responsible for both monitoring population distribution and satisfying specific needs? The great challenge of "social Europe" is that of introducing innovative arrangements for service provision while striving to generate possible synergies and complementary ways of working.

It was through these three events that DG III wished to answer this year some of the new questions relating to social cohesion that are emerging in our society. The renewal of the Strategy for Social Cohesion and of all its constituent parts is certainly important to the Directorate General of Social Cohesion so that the strategy becomes a vital instrument.

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Ms Maija Perho has been the Finnish Minister of Social Affairs and Health since 1999. Upon completion of an MA in 1974 in Social Sciences at the Faculty of Social Sciences in the University of Turku, she became more involved and active in Finnish politics, especially in the National Coalition Party. Maija Perho became a Member of Parliament in 1991 and was elected as Party Secretary to the National Coalition Party. A few years later she became Minister of Social Affairs and Health.

Newsletter: What are the orientations of your government and your Ministry in the field of social policy?

I think the most important thing is to decrease unemployment, especially long-term unemployment. We are raising the average age of retirement which is quite low in Finland (59 years). This is very important because people belonging to the so-called "baby boom" generations are going to retire in the next ten years and after that we will have a shortage of labour force, particularly well-educated and highly trained people. It is with this in mind that we are looking at work capacity, health care and well-being in working life, etc.

If we succeed in improving working conditions we can have an impact on people's well-being and thereby encourage people to retire later. Of course, this also has its impact on the financial sustainability of the social services, social security and pensions.

These issues are the main priorities of our Ministry. In such matters we of course co-operate with the Ministry of Labour, especially on issues of unemployment. We initiate programmes for the unemployed, particularly the long-term unemployed, to support them to get back their working capacity and their skills. Many people of middle age have become unemployed because of the closure of certain industrial sectors. For these people re-education and life-long learning are very important. It is indeed a challenge to combine both trying to pull people back into the labour market and to keep them in it for longer at the same time.

Newsletter: Could we have a short description of the main guidelines of the "New social policy strategy for 2010"?

It contains some issues that I have already mentioned. But I would like to put an emphasis on its four main goals:

- Promoting health and functional capacity;
- Making work more attractive, which means promoting well-being at work;
- Preventing and combating social exclusion and poverty;
- Providing efficient services and income security.

Newsletter: Could you explain further how vulnerable groups of populations are dealt with within this strategy?

As I have mentioned, one marginal group we are concentrating on are the long-term unemployed who suffer from a lack of self-confidence and who maybe have social problems or problems with alcohol. We have developed many special projects and also new legislation, which came into force in September 2001, that gives responsibilities to different actors in the health care, labour sector and social sectors. These sectors should co-operate together to provide support for the unemployed who may need special services (training, rehabilitation, working practice). It also expects social workers to work more efficiently with their "clients", to listen to their hopes and expectations and to help them not be dependent on the basic income benefit for so long.

Newsletter: Do you believe there is a real co-operation between the Nordic countries in the social policy field?

We have a long tradition of co-operation within the framework of the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers. Nowadays, with Finland, Sweden and Denmark being members of the European Union, this co-operation has changed a little in its nature. But we still do have many kinds of co-operation in the field of social policy. It is mostly information exchange, benchmarking and leading research projects together. There is also a new five-year programme in the field of health and social policy. We try to promote mobility of workers between our countries and we have a specific social security agreement between our countries. The most important aspect is that we have this common idea of welfare society and that means that every citizen has equal rights to certain basic services and basic social security. It corresponds to the so-called "universal principle" of providing these services.

Newsletter: The basis of Nordic co-operation is the universal principle, but on a practical level you mentioned the fact that not all members of the Nordic Council are members of the European Union: does this make co-operation more difficult?

It is certainly the case that membership in the European Union is very demanding. For example, we recently developed the new EU action plans against poverty and social exclusion. Maybe this leaves us less time to co-operate and design common projects at other co-operation levels. But nonetheless, we still have such co-operation. In addition, there is the co-operation with our neighbouring areas in Russia and with the Baltic countries. We have for example set up projects to help the Baltic

States develop their service systems. We train specialists in the field of public health and social welfare. We have co-operation projects on prevention of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis and we have joint projects in the field of child and youth welfare. Thus there is both internal co-operation between Nordic countries and external co-operation with other countries.

Another framework of co-operation between the Nordic countries is the co-operation between big cities. For example my home-town, Turku, has "friendship-cities" in every Nordic country and they exchange delegations regularly. There is also a framework for bilateral exchanges. As you can see, there is a combination of bilateral and multilateral co-operation at different levels.

Newsletter: How do you think the Council of Europe's social cohesion strategy should help member states in their policy making?

I think it is a very important basic document because it stresses the importance of social cohesion. It helps promote democracy as inequalities and lack of social cohesion pose a threat to democracy. One can consider actions to promote social cohesion as taking the preventative approach.

As there are different members and different states present in the democratic development process, it is very important for those countries, which are in democratic transition, to understand the value and importance of social cohesion. Social cohesion implies not having too great a difference between the rich and the poor; the more poor people there are, the less social cohesion there is.

Newsletter: So, do you think we are touching here on the social aspect of human rights in general?

Yes, it is indeed a matter of human rights. Social rights are a very important part of human rights.

Newsletter: Do you consider globalisation is a threat to social policy? How does it affect it?

There are many hopes and also many fears. Of course, globalisation means agreements in different sectors, for example agreements concerning conditions in the labour market and environmental issues. If these can be concluded then we can look into the future with optimism. But there are also threats, for example delocalisation of production. There are many things we should be aware of. For example, during the WTO process the social dimension should be put on the agenda and discussed further. In this way we could use globalisation to improve social standards rather than to lower them. We should not accept social dumping.

The forum on "New Social Demands and Governance" held in Strasbourg on 18 and 19 October 2001 and organised by the Division for the Development of Social Cohesion (DG III – Directorate-General of Social Cohesion, Council of Europe) and the Nordic Council of Ministers, raised a number of major questions in terms of the present and future challenges in the field of social policies. These questions, which need to be addressed in depth, are all related to the central issue of social responsibility. What does social responsibility consist of today? How exactly does it apply to the operators involved? What are the rights and obligations of such operators in terms of social responsibility? Throughout the forum there were calls for a greater sense of social responsibility on the part of citizens, central government, mayors and other local stakeholders, the media, NGOs, businesses, networks, political parties etc. Furthermore, there was a clear expectation of "shared social responsibility". It therefore seems essential to state that delegating social responsibility to a single structure or authority is no longer appropriate in the complex world of today.

Does the term "social responsibility" now have a different meaning than in the past? Previously, social responsibility was a matter for central government in its role as guarantor of the welfare state. This social responsibility of the State, which came into being as a result of industrialisation, corresponded to the need to provide a minimum level of socio-economic security and equal treatment. This responsibility was a measure to comply with a right of all citizens and not a gesture of charity. It led to a separation between work relations and family relations with central government regulating the interaction between the two. It reflected a monolithic concept of the state, the labour market and the family.

Today, the complexity of situations and operators shifts and fragments the various roles both in the public and private field. A multitude of facilities has developed to meet the various social demands and shoulder responsibility: NGOs, churches, asso-

ciations, networks, businesses, etc. This fragmentation has given rise to a diverse awareness among citizens. Nonetheless, they continue to expect the state to play its role, particularly as regards access to social and health services and the redistribution of revenue. A number of questions are also asked about the choices made, quality, priorities, participation, consultation, channels of expression, and the roles of other operators. Furthermore, changes in the structure of the labour market and the role of the family have led to new attitudes to mobility, unemployment, employment conditions, women's rights etc.

What organisational changes to the welfare state have to be made in order to take account of this new awareness? What responsibilities have to be shared and with whom? What are the rules of the game in such a sharing of responsibilities? What is the best way of responding to social demands submitted via unconventional or non-institutionalised channels? These are questions currently being looked at in the "old" institutions.

Questions are also being asked about the relative "loss of state power". Is this a loss in favour of supranational entities or local authorities or is it rather a loss of the room for manoeuvre as a result of citizens' reactions? Or rather, are traditional management methods no longer appropriate? The White Paper on Governance presented by the European Commission underscores the interaction with local and regional operators and recognition of the concepts developed by the new networks of operators such as tools for renewing methods of governance.

As far as public institutions are concerned, does the relative "loss of state power" mean that it is becoming acceptable to sacrifice social rights in favour of an approach centred on financial considerations? Ms Majja PERHO, Finnish Minister for Social and Health Affairs, who attended the forum, argued that it was possible to make reforms while preserving the social rights of all citizens. In certain cases, however, one

came up against acquired privileges which created resistance to change. How should these new tensions be managed, particularly when they bring into opposition demands to maintain social rights and the rationale of the market system? This is even more relevant at a time when a "fundamentalist" view of the freedom of the market is gaining ground – as denounced by Joseph Stiglitz (the most recent winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics). Further, how can the countries in transition deal with such tension while at the same time being subject to severe financial constraints?

There was also reference to a certain loss of momentum by the political parties, the traditional "interpreters" of social demands within democracies. This led to the question of the extent to which the democratic system is able to renew relations between citizens and political decisions. Will it be necessary to bring about new forums for public debate? And if so, how?

These questions raised at the forum led to some thought being given to the role of international institutions in further developing the question of social responsibility. How can institutional change be brought about on the bases of monitoring and results evaluation? What are the good practices to be analysed? What is the best way to deal with instances of institutional inertia which can work against the desire – even though it may be unconscious – for change? In addition, the changes brought about by globalisation raise other questions in international organisations, such as how to deal with the uncontrolled movement of populations and how to co-ordinate national policies towards irregular migration?

In conclusion, the forum brought to the fore the challenges related to the social responsibility of all public and private operators in a changing environment.

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Access to health for all: “No poor medicine for poor people”

The health status of people living in marginal situations and in insecure conditions is often regarded as a global indicator of success of social policies and protection of human rights. The programme of the European Health Committee (CDSP) is largely inspired by the consideration that health care is a basic human right and as such an important element in the maintenance of social cohesion and democratic stability.

With this in mind, on 11 October 2001, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted two important recommendations on health policy aimed at the governments of the 43 member states of the organisation:

The Recommendation Rec (2001) 12 on the “*adaptation of health care services to the demand for health care and health care services of people in marginal situations*” crowns the series of the recommendations on vulnerable populations (people in detention, the elderly in homes, single-parent families, the chronically ill). The recommendation proposes a multi-sectoral approach to develop preventive action, to create supportive environments for social re-integration, to avoid stigmatisation and to increase knowledge bases. Measures adopted to improve access for the vulnerable also serve the general population, without creating “poor medicine for poor people”.

This recommendation and the accompanying working papers served as a background for the activity of the Health Network, paving the way to the “Dubrovnik Pledge” and the other projects within the framework of the initiative of the South East Europe Strategic Review on Social Cohesion (see article on page 7-8 “Strategic review: making South East Europe a region of social cohesion”).

The Council of Europe is well suited not only to lay down rules but equally to show how they are best applied - this means translating the best available evidence into the best medical practice and the harmonisation of national and international methodologies.

The Recommendation Rec (2001) 13 on “*developing a methodology for drawing up*

guidelines on best medical practices” proposes a coherent and comprehensive national policy framework for the production, appraisal, updating and active dissemination of evidence-based clinical practice guidelines. The main aim is to support and promote good clinical practice in the best interest of the patient and to improve the quality and effectiveness of health care. The Austrian, German and Swiss delegations have asked that the latter recommendation be translated into German.

This link between evidence and practice has been furthered for years through the publication of the “*Guide to the preparation, use and quality assurance of blood components*” (8th edition to be adopted soon), now complemented by the “*Guide on safety and quality assurance for organs, tissues and cells*”. It has been completed following public consultations. If adopted by the CDSP at its December 2001 meeting it will be the first international text on the subject.

In 2001 the following draft recommendations are being prepared by the expert committees:

- the organisation of palliative care;
- the impact of information technologies on health care “Patient and the Internet”;
- the role of the media in health matters and its impact on health measures and policies.

Among the legally binding instruments, Article 11 of the European Social Charter (the right to the protection of health) is particularly significant. A committee of experts started reviewing it in order to make proposals on the rights and obligations arising out of this Article and to render them enforceable in law.

The ever-increasing demand from the member states leads to the growing programme of assistance activities. Worth mentioning here is the first project on health undertaken in the Russian Federation. In March 2001, a training course was drawn up by Council of Europe and Russian experts, introducing human rights and social cohesion concepts as part of the tuberculosis control strategy. Health Administrators from 25 Oblast took part and suggested continuing this activity throughout Russia.

At the June 2001 meeting of the CDSP, a significant event on the European health scene took place: Mr Sauer (European Commission), Dr Danzon (WHO EURO)

Equal access to Education

The Council of Europe’s Education Committee devoted the forum that it holds at each of its plenary meetings to the theme of “Equal access to education”.

The forums involve general discussion by the committee of a major policy issue on the basis of introductory presentations by a number of high-level experts.

This particular forum took place on the occasion of the committee’s 24th meeting in Strasbourg on 2 October 2001. The experts’ contributions and the conclusions by the committee Chair, Dominique Barthélémy, will be published in the coming weeks.

The forum was an initial contribution by the Education Committee to the work of the European Committee for Social Cohesion and will also serve as the basis for in-depth activities during 2002.

The following experts took part: Mr Iván Bajomi (Hungary), Prof. Jan De Groof (Commissioner of the Flemish government to Antwerp University (ELA) and Director of the European Association for Education, Law and Policy, Belgium), Jan Koucky (Director of the Education Policy Centre, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic), Mr Alain Michel (Inspector General, Education Ministry, France) and Ms Gunilla Zackari (Special Adviser, Ministry for Education and Science, Sweden).

The experts were unanimous in underlining the topical relevance of the issue. Whereas in the seventies it was thought that the progress made with democratising education had opened up access to education to wider sections of the population, a number of socio-economic developments that have occurred since then throw this optimistic interpretation into question and have in some cases introduced new factors that could result in growing inequality in access to education.

Examples of issues raised in this connection include the following:

- the widening social divide in many member states, which is increasing

and Mrs Battaini-Dragoni (Council of Europe, DG III – Social Cohesion) exchanged letters on behalf of their respective health departments setting out their commitment to co-operation and specifying the areas of co-operation. After years of talking about “rapprochement” a solid framework for cooperation between the three major health actors has been established.

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The European Population Committee

This year the European Population Committee has reformed its meeting procedures and working methods to, among other things, establish faster procedures between the initiating and the finalizing of its activities in the demographic field. The new working methods will be fully operational from the beginning of next year when the committee launches four new studies:

- *The economically active population in Europe;*
- *Very low fertility;*
- *Active ageing in Europe;*
- *Contraceptive behaviour of young Europeans.*

In the meantime, work is currently underway on three projects:

Demographic implications of social exclusion

New forms of poverty are emerging across Europe. The risk of becoming poor, as well as being poor, is affecting demographic behaviour. The aim of this project is to identify, in each country, the population sub-groups exposed to the risk of social exclusion in terms of access to social rights and access to financial and social resources, and carry out an analysis of how these sub-group's living arrangements, couple formation and dissolution, and fertility and mortality patterns differ from other groups.

Demographic characteristics of immigrant populations

Demographic characteristics and behaviour of immigrant populations often differ from the native populations. Furthermore, immigration is becoming the most important counteracting factor to the

natural population decrease that many European countries are experiencing today. By carrying out comparative analyses on the basis of the most recent available information, this project seeks to address questions such as: the demographic and social impact of migration; convergence or divergence in the demographic behaviour of migrants with respect to the rest of the population; and methodologies for the comparative analysis of migrant populations, including the use of different definitions of migrants.

Demographic consequences of economic transition in countries of central and eastern Europe

The impact of the economic transition taking place in countries of central and eastern Europe is by no means easily assessed. This study aims to collect and assess available information on the links between the demographic changes that are visible in this region and the social and economic conditions resulting from the transition process. The main demographic processes (mortality, fertility, nuptiality, divorce, abortion, births outside marriage, natural increase, international migration, population growth and demographic ageing) are being analysed from the point of view of transitional effects.

All three projects come to an end during the latter half of 2001. The European Population Committee will proceed by making the final reports available to a wider audience within the committee's “Population Studies” series.

Finally, the European Population Committee continues to publish its popular annual Europe-wide demographic review “Recent Demographic Developments in Europe”. This year's edition will be released in early December. At the same time the committee will release two new volumes in the “Population Studies” series: N° 35 “Fertility and new types of households and family formation in Europe” and N° 36 “Trends in mortality and differential mortality”. Information about these and other demographic publications, as well as general information about the European Population Committees work, can be found on the committee's web site http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social_Cohesion/Population/

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inequality of access between the (economically and culturally) better-off sections of the population, who benefit to a large extent from easy access to the entire education system, and less well-off groups, who seem to be benefiting less and less from it;

- the increasing importance on the labour market, contrary to popular belief, of possessing qualifications of an ever-higher level for access to employment, at a time when 20% of the school population leave school without certificates or qualifications;
- the development of new information and communication technologies. Their importance both at school and at work has created a new type of inequality (the digital gap), which further increases the inequality between groups who have access to these technologies and those who do not;
- although they are actually sources of dynamism and creativity, the increasing cultural diversity of European societies and the growing importance of the question of linguistic and cultural minorities have created new difficulties in most member states, to which the education system is not yet always ready to respond;
- in legal terms, although the right to education is enshrined in most countries' constitutions or basic laws, the development in some countries of a private sector (that is often commercially oriented) has in some cases produced serious shortcomings in terms of real equality of access to quality education.

In the exchange of views that followed the experts' presentations, the participants looked more closely at these issues, which will be covered in the committee's future work on education and social cohesion. In particular, it is planned to hold an expert seminar in 2002 to continue the discussions and make a number of proposals and recommendations for action.

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SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

“Trends and Developments in Old Age Pension and Health Care Financing During the 1990’s” by Jason NICKLESS

The Strategy for Social Cohesion adopted by the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) states that “Any (...) strategy must (...) have as a main aim the strengthening of social security systems, especially at a time when many questions are posed about their future development and financing.” The Committee of Experts on Standard Setting Instruments in the field of Social Security (CS-CO) observes pan-European trends and developments in the social security field and prepares, for the attention of the CDCS, information on current issues and best practices.

The following is a summary of the report “Trends and Developments in Old Age Pension and Health Care Financing in Europe during the 1990’s” prepared by Mr Jason Nickless and presented at the third meeting of the CS-CO on the 19th September 2001.

Common Concepts in Old Age Pension and Health Care Financing During the 1990’s

Despite the great divergence in the organisation and administration of old age pension schemes and social health care schemes across the Council of Europe, the social protection systems in every one its member States had to face a series of similar challenges. These were principally concerned with the pressures of an ageing population. For old age pensions this placed a serious burden on traditional Pay As You Go financing mechanisms and for health care this resulted in increased demand for increasingly expensive medical treatment. As all these countries faced similar challenges they also developed similar solutions, allowing the isolation of various trends and developments in social security policy in both the old age pension and the health care fields. These “common concepts” of the 1990’s are described below.

Improved efficiency

Developing more efficient methods of administration was seen as a means by which to avoid waste and reduce costs. In the pension field this resulted in the development of databases and intra-governmental co-operation in order to improve contribution collection and reduce fraud. In the health care area governments aimed to improve administration by greater standard setting and monitoring.

Competition, choice and the private market

The increased role of market forces is closely linked with the concept of improved efficiency. Increased competition was obvious in the health care sector where many

states contracted out social services to private providers and competition was encouraged between social health care insurers. Some states considerably increased the patient’s choice of hospitals or doctors in the hope that this would encourage more efficient allocation of resources and improve the quality of service. In the old age pension field states attempted to place greater reliance on private and supplementary insurance, which they actively encouraged through tax exemptions. The administration of ‘first pillar’ statutory compulsory pension schemes in several member States was contracted-out in order to improve service and reduce costs.

Quality of service

During the 1990’s the recipients of social security evolved from “claimants” into “clients”. Extensive efforts to improve the quality of both health and pension services were made during this decade. Single contact points were set up to enable people to organise all their social security needs from one office, the training of staff became a focus point and new standards were publicised to tell clients exactly what they could expect from the system.

Increased responsibility

A great deal of effort was also made to increase the awareness of the public as regards their responsibility to the social protection system. In old age pension schemes this involved encouraging people to defer claiming their pension by working beyond the normal pensionable age. Attempts were also made to deter people from claiming early pensions. Patients were encouraged to be more careful in their use of health care; this involved the introduction and development of co-payments or other forms of patient participation. Although there was a discernible trend in some member States to reduce patient participation during the final years of the 1990’s. Doctors, institutions and administrators were also encouraged to use resources more responsibly, this was often achieved by increased monitoring and supervision.

Sustainability

This concept describes a situation where systems function not just in the short-term but the long-term as well. Issues of sustainability were of particular importance in the old age pension schemes, where fears about the long-term future of Pay As You Go systems led to the development of funded systems whereby people save for their own pensions rather than simply financing the pensions of the inactive population. Funded elements were introduced into the statutory compulsory pension schemes in several Cen-

tral and Eastern European states and started to feature in schemes in the west. Fears for the sustainability of the statutory old age pension schemes also led to the creation of pension fund reserves and greater reliance on alternative financing mechanisms. The sustainability of health care financing focused on the urgent need to gain tighter control of escalating health care budgets. This was achieved by cost containment mechanisms such as reducing the number of beds or restricting funding for specific types of treatments or institutions.

Harmonisation

Reducing the difference between various schemes for different regions or different professions occurred within both pension and health care schemes. However, the motivations for harmonisation differed between these two areas. The aim of greater harmonisation in health care was to ensure greater equality of treatment and a more efficient service. One of the aims of increased harmonisation in the pension field was to remove some of the costly privileges given to special groups such as civil servants or airline pilots.

Increased personal scope

The goal of universal coverage for the risks of old age and health care stems from international and, more pressingly, national political pressure. Efforts were made in both the fields of pensions and health care to expand the availability of social protection to groups of people who were previously excluded. This led to the increased scope of both compulsory and voluntary social insurance.

Increasing revenue and decreasing expenditure

States reduced their expenditure by reducing benefits, sometimes this involved blatant reductions in the amount or range of benefits whereas in others it involved subtle changes to the calculation method or formulae. Steps were also taken to improve revenue, through the introduction or increase of patient co-payments or the enthusiastic battle against fraud.

The concepts listed above had an appreciable impact on social protection financing and philosophy during the 1990’s. They came from common solutions directed at common problems and there is little doubt that they have also gone a long way in shaping the social security systems of the new millennium.

Jason NICKLESS

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Guidelines on the use of Social Indicators

One of the present activities of the Council of Europe Social Cohesion Development Division (DG III – Social Cohesion) is to produce Guidelines on the use of social indicators as means of assessing the impact of social policies, with a special focus on discrimination and inequities.

Many international organisations and individual governments have devised differing sets of indicators to address social issues from different perspectives. The World Health Organisation's use of indicators to assess the health situation in different countries is a well-known example, which also makes it possible to make cross-country comparisons regarding health.

In the field of social cohesion, organisations like the OECD and the European Union have shown an increased interest in recent years on what is called "social indicators". This interest is due to the fact that economic progress and stability cannot be reached if the degree of social cohesion is not sufficient in the society. In fact, social cohesion and social inclusion are prerequisites for economic growth and prosperity.

The Council of Europe shares this conception. But it also focuses very much on the human rights aspects of social cohesion. The Organisation's purpose is to safeguard the individual's rights as well as the rights of the minorities or different vulnerable groups in the society. In order to do so, there is a need – to some extent – for a specific choice of social indicators, which can be used for this particular purpose.

The activities of the Council of Europe span over many different areas; sometimes focusing on individuals, sometimes on families or vulnerable groups in the society, but also on different societal actions in general such as health, housing etc.

Irrespective of that, the all-embracing goals for the Council of Europe – within the area of social cohesion – are to ensure that all members of the society have equal access to basic needs, legal rights, progress and dignity and social trust.

These are the four "Domains" that create the foundation of the Council of Europe's activities in this context. Within each of these domains different "Sub-domains" can be identified, such as Health, Education, Housing, Employment, etc., where discrimination or inequity may occur.

Equally important as sub-domains, however, is the Council of Europe's strive to focus on vulnerable groups in society that are at risk for social exclusion or unfair discrimination. Through the years the Council of Europe has had several activities in order to highlight for instance migrants, children, people with disabilities and elderly. The Guidelines will of course also pay attention to several of these "Sub-groups".

The characteristics of different indicators will be dealt with in the Guidelines, and also the usefulness of them in this context and possible breakdowns that are necessary in order to make them operative.

The Guide strives to use indicators that can be found or produced in all member states. The future use of the indicators will of course be voluntary. The intention is primarily not to make cross-country comparisons, even if that is to some extent possible. The main purpose is instead to supply the member states with a "toolbox" that can be used if the question of discrimination or inequity is raised.

A report on Guidelines for the use of social indicators will be presented to the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) in Spring 2002. After approval, the actual "Guidebook on social indicators" could be printed and introduced in May-June 2002.

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Strategic Review: Making South-East Europe a Region of Social Cohesion

The South-East Europe Strategic Review on Social Cohesion is an important element of the Council of Europe's programme of assistance activities for 2001-2002 and a contribution of the Organisation to the Stability Pact for South-East Europe. It represents an opportunity to apply the work of the Social Cohesion

European Social Charter: 40 years of existence

On 18 October 2001, the European Social Charter celebrated its 40th anniversary, in Strasbourg.

On this occasion, Armenia, Azerbaijan and San Marino signed the revised Charter which was opened for signature to States in 1996.

These three new signatures bring the number to 43 member States who have either signed the European Social Charter or the revised Charter.

The States having ratified the European Social Charter :

Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Those who have ratified the revised Charter:

Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Romania, Slovenia and Sweden.

The States who signed either the 1961 Charter or the revised Charter but have not yet ratified it:

Albania, Andorra, Croatia, Georgia, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, San Marino, Switzerland, "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and Ukraine.

The revised Charter, which was opened for signature in 1996 and entered into force on 1st July 1999, is destined to progressively replace the European Social Charter of 1961. It guarantees and amends the rights that are embodied in both the Charter and the Additional Protocol of 1988 and also adds new rights, in particular the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion.

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Strategy within the specific context of South-East Europe – in particular the work on standard-setting and access to social rights.

The activity has three specific goals:

- strengthen the role of the ministries with responsibilities to promote social cohesion by, in particular, improving their processes of policy development and priority-setting;
- foster regional co-operation through the development and exchange of information, experience and good practice; and
- upgrade the legislative and policy framework of the participating states in line with mainstream European standards.

The initiative is open to all countries in South-East Europe (both member states and non-members). At present, Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and Moldova are actively involved.

How is the Review implemented?

The Strategic Review is being implemented through thematic networks in the field of housing, employment, health, and social protection composed of national experts from the relevant specialised ministries, partner international organizations (such as WHO and ILO), social partners and NGOs. The objective of each network is, from an initial review of the current situation, to identify priority areas for policy development at both regional and national level, and to formulate relevant policy proposals. This work is then used to elaborate concrete project proposals for submission to international financial institutions and donor countries through the structures of the Stability Pact.

The Thematic Networks' activities (2001-2002)

The Health Network

The first meeting was held in Sofia on 5-7 April 2001 and jointly organized by the Council of Europe and World Health Organisation. The participants from Ministries of Health and research institutions of seven South-East European countries were invited to discuss their current methodologies and practices in identify-

ing the problems of access to health care for vulnerable and marginalized persons. The network agreed on a framework for a regional survey aimed at improving the procedures for policy analysis in this area. The reports were discussed during a second meeting of the network that took place in Bucharest on 25-27 June 2001 with the assistance of a consultant, Prof. Jeffrey Levett (National School of Health, Athens) who presented an issue report on the theme. It described, from a comparative perspective, the principal problems of access to health care for vulnerable groups and provided recommendations to improve national systems of data collection, analysis and policy development. This work paved the way for the third meeting of the Network held in Dubrovnik at the end of August 2001 in coordination with the South-East Europe Health Ministers' Forum. The meeting brought together seven health ministers who signed a “pledge”, committing to health and health care in the region, with specific attention to the most vulnerable populations. During the forum, network countries successfully presented a series of regional integrated projects in the health field to be submitted for funding to a number of international organisations and donor countries (Stability Pact Regional Conference, October 2001). A network meeting is scheduled in 2002 to review the status of the projects' implementation.

The Employment Network

The Employment Network met twice in 2001, thanks to a contribution from the Belgian Ministry of Employment and Labour. During the first pre-network meeting, participants from Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs of six South-East European countries and social partners held a detailed exchange of views on the choice of theme for the proposed review to be undertaken by the network. They agreed that the review should examine the problems of access to employment.

During the 2nd meeting that took place in Sofia on 24-26 October 2001, the participants discussed their current methodologies and practices in identifying problems of access to employment, in analysing these problems and in developing appropriate remedial policy actions. The seminar drew upon the findings of the expert's issue paper prepared by Mrs Irena Zareva (Bulgarian Academy of Science, Sofia) which reviewed the major prob-

Illegal migration and migrants' dignity

At the invitation of the Greek authorities, the European Committee on Migration held a conference on “*Irregular migration and dignity of migrants: Co-operation in the Mediterranean region*” in Athens on 3 and 4 October 2001. Ms V. Papandreou, Minister of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralisation, was one of the many Greek ministers who attended.

The hundred or so participants included government representatives from Council of Europe member states, as well as Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt, national and local elected representatives, delegates from other international organisations working in this field, and civil society representatives (workers', employers' and immigrants' associations).

In his opening speech, Mr Walter Schwimmer, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, insisted on the heavy cost in human lives of illegal immigration, and urged the participants to find ways of preventing this, and putting a stop to trafficking in human beings.

The conference themes were:

- Assessment of the present situation and analysis of the political and economic problems of the countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. The main causes of illegal migration were discussed, and the role played by low levels of economic and social development in emigration countries was emphasised;
- Preservation of illegal migrants' dignity. This gave the participants an opportunity to discuss preventive and control measures, including forced return and its human rights implications, and also deportation procedures consistent with human rights and with migrants' safety and dignity;
- Consideration of the legal status of these migrants raised the question of whether their human dignity was respected in host countries. Discussion of the next subject - trafficking

blems of labour supply and demand in the region. Themes discussed during the meeting included:

- the transformations of the labour market;
- identifying vulnerable groups and their labour market needs; and
- policy responses to improve access to employment.

The Employment Network will meet again in 2002 to further identify the needs (in terms of training, methodological tools, knowledge of successful experience, etc.) of the countries involved in order to improve access to employment for the whole population. The possibility of organising in 2002 a high-level tripartite conference involving ministers at which the results of the work would be presented and priorities identified for more precisely targeted follow-up projects will be considered.

The "Housing Network"

After a first meeting held in November 2000 in Skopje, where access to housing in South-East Europe was discussed, the Housing Network will meet again in December 2001 in Zagreb. The goal is to review current housing priorities in the

region and present an issue paper on "housing finance" – a key element of the housing policy in the region as identified by the Social Cohesion Initiative of the South-East Europe Stability Pact. The paper, prepared by Mr. Hegedus (Metropolitan Research Institute, Budapest) will analyse in details a number of topics, including a review of:

- finance and investment needs in the different countries of South-East Europe;
- successful financial instruments in housing finance; and
- success and failures of the housing financing system.

On the policy development side, the paper will help draft recommendations on suitable financial instruments for South-East Europe (country specific and regional). The Council of Europe, in collaboration with the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), plans to publish the outcome of the network's activities in 2002.

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in human beings and sexual exploitation as a modern form of slavery - showed that it was not.

- Discussion of migration management strategy allowed the participants to look to the future, assessing the utility and effectiveness of multilateral and bilateral co-operation structures to prevent illegal immigration, and exploring ways of stepping up co-operation between emigration and immigration countries with the help of concerted, practical measures.

The speakers' contributions, acknowledged as being of very high quality by all the participants, generated lively discussion. The conclusions outlined by the rapporteurs at the various sessions showed clearly that the key to the problem lay in partnership with illegal migrants' countries of origin, and in joint development.

Mr Schwimmer made a number of proposals based on these conclusions. Specifically, he called for more dialogue with countries of origin, starting with those represented at the conference. One practical follow-up measure might be a regional round table, attended on an equal footing by all the countries of the Mediterranean basin.

The conference proceedings will be published shortly and will be available from the Council of Europe's Migration and Roma/Gypsies Department. Details will be given in the next issue of the Newsletter.

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The Role of Social Services in Sustainable Social Development

The German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, in co-operation with the Council of Europe and in particular its European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS), organised a European conference on "The Role of Social Services in Sustainable Social Development" on 25

AT NATIONAL LEVEL...

Bulgaria

Integration of Roma/Gypsy children in the education system

One of the priorities of Bulgarian foreign policy is the country's admission to the European Union. Among the political criteria for membership is the social integration on an equal footing of the country's minorities, especially the Roma/Gypsies, who formed 4.6% of the Bulgarian population at the last census and are particularly deprived and vulnerable.

While it considers itself to be a very tolerant society, Bulgaria is not unfamiliar with the problems of intolerance and discrimination. For the most part, these attitudes affect the Roma/Gypsy community, which is subjected fairly frequently to ill treatment at the hands of the police and discrimination in all fields, including education and employment.

However, in recent years the situation has improved as regards official recognition for minority religions and the freedom given to such groups to practise their beliefs. In addition, Bulgarian legislation and practice have been brought into line with European standards.

In 1999, the Bulgarian government elected two years previously demonstrated its will to address issues of discrimination by adopting a "framework programme for the fair integration of Roma into Bulgarian society". A Roma/Gypsy initiative, the programme was prepared in consultation with representatives of every Roma association in the country. It consists of strategies designed to achieve equality for Bulgarian Roma and contains a broad range of major proposals which the government has undertaken to implement over a ten-year period. Priority is given to a number of basic proposals, such as

the creation of a specialised body to combat racism and discrimination. There are also plans to organise regional programmes around the national programme.

In the months following the document's adoption the authorities gradually introduced a number of measures in connection with the programme, but the process is still ongoing.

In the education field, the practice of segregating Roma children persisted for a long time; a policy of eliminating so-called "Gypsy" or "special" schools was not introduced until 2001. As a rule, the standard of education in these schools has been lower than in other establishments. There are several reasons for this situation. The first is the low level of interest among teaching staff. Since the majority of children are bilingual, the teachers, most of whom do not understand the Roma tongue, find their work much more difficult, especially as they are paid the same as their colleagues elsewhere and thus lack financial motivation. In Sofia, for example, around 120,000 Roma are grouped in outlying city districts. 98% of pupils in the local schools are Roma, yet nearly the same proportion of teachers are Bulgarian. The language barrier and isolation therefore combine to have a negative impact on the learning process. A further fairly widespread practice is to assign the least well-qualified teachers to "Gypsy" schools.

Specific measures introduced by the Bulgarian authorities to improve the situation of Roma in education include a drive to recruit qualified teachers, among them ethnic Roma, and provide additional Bulgarian language classes for pupils with a different mother tongue (Roma or Turkish). The practical upshot is that preparatory classes in Bulgarian for Roma nursery-school pupils have existed for more than three years, while for the past two years Roma language courses have been organised for teachers of the smallest classes (the only teacher-training programme of its kind in Europe).

As a separate measure, in order to combat prejudice and racism in the education system the Bulgarian Ministry of Education has set up training

programmes for teachers of Roma/Gypsy history and culture.

Bulgarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are heavily involved and extremely active in projects to improve Roma living conditions and education. A key organisation is the "Open Society" Foundation in Sofia, which, in addition to running its own numerous activities for the cultural and social integration of the Roma population, provides funding for several Roma organisations and projects which they have set up around the country. To take one such project as an example: during the 2000-2001 academic year, the Foundation helped the organisation "DROM", which is based in the city of Vidin, to purchase two coaches with which to transport Roma children from isolated districts to two schools within the city. The organisation also provided several schoolbooks and snacks for these pupils. Not only did all the children registered on the programme complete the year; twice as many applications have been received for the 2001-2001 academic year. On the down side, the State made no financial contribution to the project, although its support would have been welcome given the many obstacles to the scheme's success. Firstly, teachers in "Gypsy" schools fear that they will lose their jobs; secondly, the communist-era prejudice that schools accepting Roma pupils will lose their good reputation persists; and lastly, even some Roma parents are opposed to the scheme because sending their children to a more prestigious school is more expensive and demands greater parental responsibility.

The complex nature of the present situation regarding the social integration of the Bulgarian Roma/Gypsy minority requires determined co-operation on the part of all concerned, both public authorities and Roma NGOs. Worldwide, educational desegregation is being shown to be a very effective means of improving the lives of Roma, and the new Bulgarian government will certainly continue its efforts to achieve this objective.

By Venatta BONEVA

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and 26 October 2001 in Berlin. The "Observatory for the Development of Social Services in Europe", represented by the Institute of Social Work and Social Education in Frankfurt am Main (Germany), was responsible for the organisation and preparation of the conference.

The main aim of this Conference was to promote the exchange of information and experience in the field of social services at a pan-European level, i. e. among the Member States of the Council of Europe. More than 130 participants represented governments, local authorities, NGOs and research bodies in the area of social services.

With a theme closely linked to the Strategy for Social Cohesion of the Council of Europe, the Conference supported the CDCS in pursuing its agenda and provided a number of interesting ideas for further debate and research.

The Conference was opened by Dr. Christine Bergmann, Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth of Germany, and Dr. Walter Schwimmer, Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Minister Bergmann stressed the significance of the concept of sustainability not only in the economic and environmental context, but also for social services and social policies in general. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe insisted that social services are more than just a necessary public service, but that they are a right for everyone, laid down in the European Social Charter.

Keynote speeches were delivered by Prof. Dr. Igor Tomes, Charles University, Prague (Czech Republic), and Prof. Brian Munday, European Institute of Social Services, University of Kent (UK).

The afternoon of the first day of the Conference and the morning of the second day were devoted to three workshops. The first workshop on "Structures, Actors and Responsibilities in the Provision of Social Services" dealt mainly with structural aspects in the area of social services as well as with the respective roles of the different actors who provide them. Issues



ATD Fourth World International Movement: Europe's poorest citizens take part in the fight against poverty

The ATD Fourth World Movement¹⁾ was set up in 1957 to combat poverty and social exclusion. In its work with the poorest individuals and families in Western Europe, it strives to enable them to turn their experience of the daily battle against poverty to good account and make the most of their aspirations and ideas. This close and continuing co-operation gives rise to appeals and policy proposals which ATD Fourth World promotes at national and international level, often in conjunction with other NGOs.

The "Objectives in the fight against poverty and social exclusion" adopted by the European Union at the Nice Summit in December 2000 were largely based on contributions from Europe's poorest citizens. In June 2001, EU member states then presented their national action plans for social inclusion (2001-2003).

ATD Fourth World has conducted an initial analysis²⁾ of these plans with a view to ascertaining how the planned policies can really offer opportunities for the most disadvantaged individuals and families, while also drawing attention to the risks posed by certain policies. Sweden has made a crucial point in stating that, although we are not familiar enough with the living conditions of the most disadvantaged groups, the indications are that they have deteriorated in several respects. This tallies with something the most disadvantaged have been saying for a long time: "If people really

knew how we lived, a lot of things might change."

Real understanding of their situation can only be achieved through genuine partnership between researchers and decision-makers on the one hand and people living in extreme poverty and those standing by them on the other. However, the methods and means needed for achieving this objective of participation by the groups concerned rarely appear in the national action plans. Several countries do provide for analysis of the impact of the various government policies on poverty (Ireland refers to "poverty proofing", for instance). This is an important aspect of the mainstreaming included in the objectives.

We believe that it is very important for all European countries - whether or not they are EU members or applicants - to take part in work on the strategies for combating poverty and social exclusion. We are told all too often that it is necessary to create wealth before combating poverty - and that the wealth created will be redistributed afterwards. However, developments in Europe's richest countries clearly show that poverty is not eradicated as a country's general prosperity or GNP increases.

The first requirement for the elimination of poverty is the existence of a clear political commitment at both national and international level. "*Extreme poverty, which is being taken with us towards this new society, won't disappear like a fairy tale. We have to eradicate it whilst creating such a society, otherwise it will again be encrusted in its walls.*" (Joseph Wresinski, founder of ATD Fourth World, 1987). The Council of Europe's European Committee for Social Cohesion seems to be one of the bodies most capable of taking up this huge challenge.

¹⁾ The ATD Fourth World Movement was granted consultative status with the Council of Europe in 1977.

²⁾ Available from ATD Fourth World, Delegation to the EU, Ave Victor Jacobs 12, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium (8 pages).

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addressed in the workshop included new trends such as a public/private mix in social service provision, financing, quality standards and their evaluation.

The second workshop looked into the "Concepts and Forms of the Provision of Social Services – practical experience". The discussion concentrated on "best practice" concerning methods and forms of social services, such as specialised and comprehensive services, the roles of professionals and volunteers, the role of preventive and "curative" measures, and effective management of services.

The third workshop on "The Role of Users in Social Services – Possibilities for Participation" discussed the importance of user involvement in social services and ways of promoting an active and participatory role of users.

The second and concluding Plenary Session included the reports by the Rapporteurs of the three workshops (Mr. Jean-Michel Bloch-Lainé, Prof. Brian Munday, Mr. Henri Braakenburg) and the report by the General Rapporteur, Prof. Dr. Helmut K. Anheier. The Closing speech by Rev. Jürgen Gohde, Chairman of the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freien Wohlfahrtspflege, focused on the future of social services in Europe.

Finally, Mr. John Murray, Executive Secretary of the CDSCS, outlined some of the issues which the CDSCS might consider taking up in its future work programme. The Conference had demonstrated a clear need to continue to promote networking and exchange of good practice among social services professionals. It might also be possible to draw up a European Code of Ethics for Social Workers as a way of raising the status of the social work profession. Moreover, given the current emphasis on the consultation and participation of users, a Charter of Users' Rights and Responsibilities might also play an important part in disseminating best practice.

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Women's struggle for equality - St-Petersburg

The question of equal rights and opportunities for women and men is a topical issue in Russian society. Although women make up more than half of the population, very few of them hold managerial positions. At the same time, unemployment is higher among women than among men. These various facts and the available statistics reveal the existence of prejudice towards women and of unequal opportunities between women and men in Russian society.

It was with a view to combating these inequalities that Ms Elena Kalinina and her team set up the Women and Management International Institute in St-Petersburg in 1992 with the support of the State Technical University. The institute's goals are to improve women's situation in society, to campaign for their rights and equal opportunities, to foster competitiveness among women and to contribute to their professional and social development.

The institute runs training programmes in marketing, accounting and business management, etc. It also offers retraining courses at all levels and language courses and placements abroad (in particular in Sweden and Germany). These programmes take account of women's needs and expectations. Western teaching methods are adapted to the local situation.

In addition, the institute and its European partners, including the Danish Education Ministry, the University of Stockholm, the Finnish Employment Ministry and the German organisation, European Women in Mathematics, organise international conferences and forums aimed at promoting gender equality in Europe.

One example here is an initiative to bring about full participation by women in political, economic, social and cultural life. This involves a "Women's Project" international conference held in St-Petersburg every year. The latest conference took place on 8-9 October 2001 on the theme of "Equal rights and

opportunities for women and men", with the support of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the St-Petersburg Government and the Federal Employment Department in St-Petersburg. The main aim of the conference was to draw up a joint social strategy for achieving gender equality in all areas and, more particularly, in politics. A further aim was to combine the efforts of all non-governmental social institutions and government bodies at all levels.

The experience of the Nordic countries in terms of the struggle for gender equality came under scrutiny at the conference, especially since their policies have been extremely successful on the ground.

Over 200 women from different European countries took part in the conference and shared their experiences of management activities. They included many women who have built successful careers in leading socio-economic sectors. The promotion of women's role in decision-making was one of the key issues discussed. The issue of violence against women was also debated, and the participants deplored the inadequacy of the measures taken by the authorities to deal with the problem.

After eight years in existence and thanks to forums of this kind, the Women and Management Institute is now gaining increased recognition from government bodies. There can be no doubt that the institute's activities and training programmes make a major contribution to the battle for gender equality. Its efforts are also bringing the issue to the attention of the mass media and society in general.

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Final Conference on Lifelong learning for Equity and Social Cohesion

From 15 to 17 November 2001 the Sorbonne University will welcome the final Conference of the multiannual project of the Council of Europe on "Lifelong learning for equity and social cohesion: a new challenge to higher education". The meeting is organised at the invitation of the French Authorities and will be held under the auspices of French Education Minister Jack Lang and Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine.

The conference will gather some 150 participants from the Council of Europe's 43 member states and a number of international organisations.

The project pursues political aims in a crucial field for the future of the academic community in Europe: the challenge of lifelong learning and the knowledge society, while reflecting the Council of Europe's specific concern with social cohesion and fairness as building blocks of stable democracy it also addresses one of the main areas of concern in the development of a European Higher Education Area by 2010 (Bologna Process).

The Council of Europe's project on "Lifelong learning for equity and social cohesion" highlights the challenges faced by governments and higher education institutions in implementing lifelong learning. The development of rational and operational lifelong learning strategies for national higher education systems will require a major effort and joint action with clearly defined responsibilities, and the role of the University remains essential.

Based on the project's results and the Final Conference's response, a major policy recommendation on the role of Higher Education on Lifelong Learning will be addressed to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

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PRESENTATION OF THE BOOK : "Social Quality: a vision for Europe" by Laurent J.G. van der Maesen (European Foundation on Social Quality)



Edited by
Wolfgang Beck, Laurent J.G. van der Maesen, Fleur Thomese and Alan Walker.
Published by:
Kluwer Law International,
The Hague/
London/
Boston, December 2000
(ISBN 90-411-1523-4)

This volume of the European Foundation on Social Quality in Amsterdam represents the outcome of two years intensive debate about the future of Europe (see website: www.socialquality.nl). It aims to provide the European Union with a vision: one that will unite all of its citizens and help to create the democratic legitimacy that the EU currently lacks. It builds on the Foundation's first book on social quality, 'The Social Quality of Europe' (published by Kluwer Law International in 1997 and Policy Press in Bristol, 1998) which introduced the concept of social quality and which has been enthusiastically received by both the scientific and policy-making communities.

The book develops three crucial elements of social quality: the theoretical validity of the concept, its practical application, and its identity or genetic code. It establishes an independent identity for social quality, with a unique focus on the quality of the social and it proposes ways in which it can act as the rationale of economic, social and cultural policies thereby providing an escape route from the dominance of narrow economic thinking in policy making.

According to the President of the European Commission, Mr Romano Prodi, the concept of quality is, in essence, a democratic concept, based on partnership between the European institutions, the Member States, regional and local authorities and civil society. Quality conveys the sense of excellence that characterises the European social model. According to Mr Prodi, the great merit of this book is that it places social issues at the very core of the concept of quality. It promotes an approach that goes beyond production, economic growth, employment and so-

cial protection and gives self-fulfilment for individual citizens a major role in the formation of collective identities. This makes the book an important and original contribution for the shaping of a new Europe.

According to Mrs Anna Diamantopoulou, member of the European Commission, the Foundation's first book has been widely welcomed by European policy makers as well as scientists across Europe. It played an influential role in the development of the New Social Policy Agenda which emphasises the promotion of quality with regard to social policy, work and industrial relations. A key message is that economic growth is not an end in itself but essentially a means to achieve a better standard of living for all. According to Diamantopoulou, extending the notion of quality to the whole of the economy and society will facilitate the improvements in the inter-relationships between economic and social policies that are so vital for the future success of Europe. According to her, the idea of social quality captures perfectly what Europe has achieved and continues to aspire to. It also allows the everyday concerns of citizens to be reflected in the highest policy circles. This book extends and deepens our understanding of social quality, and will be an invaluable resource in both the implementation of the New Social Policy Agenda and in the modernization of the European social mode.

In Part I eight contributors analyse the Foundation's first book from the perspective of different disciplines (Goran Therborn, Antonio Ojeda-Aviles, Denis Bouget etc). In Part 2 nine contributors present essential tendencies in Europe and their implications for a social quality approach (Ota de Leonardis, Georg Vobruba, Guy Standing etc). In Part 3 the editors present a new perspective of social quality: its theory and its applicability. Using as their basis the contributions to this book, the findings of the 1997 conference on social quality, a number of workshops in Europe, the special conference on social quality organized by the European Parliament in February 2000, and many commentaries, the editors provide a framework that will enable the concept to be used as a starting point of policy-making and research. They criticise the proposition of social protection as a productive fac-

tor, which stems from viewing social policy as a handmaiden of economic policy. Instead of competitiveness and economic growth, social quality emphasises interaction. Rather than market mechanisms, it is governed by principles of cooperation, partnership and mutual dependency. Government for social quality would not only produce beneficial results for citizens but would also increase the legitimacy of government itself, whether at EU, national, regional or local levels. The Epilogue is written by Gyorgy Konrad and 'the Amsterdam Declaration on social Quality' is presented in the Appendix. This declaration was published in 1997 and signed by 900 European scientists.

A contributing motive in seeking to stimulate the co-operation of scientists from different disciplines all over Europe in addressing the question of social quality in the daily life of citizens relates to the supposed lack of a vision of social quality at European level. Certainly, the absence of a strategy to transform the European project into a democratic one demonstrates this lack. The key developments at European level are taking place without reference to the concrete positions of citizens in daily life, and these positions are changing in major ways. The United Nations development programme shows, in its 1999 document, that in the 1960s 20% of the world's population in the richest countries had 30 times the income of the poorest 20%, but by 1997 this had increased to 74 times. Not only inequalities all over the world – as well as in Europe – are growing, but new forms of human communication by internet will drastically change production relations, the nature of social cohesion and, therefore, social relations, subjective interpretations of daily reality, and cultural symbols and rituals. Without new answers these changes may undermine the local basis of political structures, because the recent deterritorialisation of many economic interests will steer these new forms in a specific way. The social quality approach paves the way for developing a new vision addressing these important transformations.

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ADOPTED TEXTS

Recommendations:

- Recommendation Rec (2001) 12 of the Committee of Ministers on the **adaptation of health care services to the demand for health care and health care services of people in marginal situations** (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 October 2001)
- Recommendation Rec (2001) 13 of the Committee of Ministers on **developing a methodology for drawing up guidelines on best medical practices** (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 October 2001)
- Recommendation Rec (2001) 16 of the Committee of Ministers on the **protection of children against sexual exploitation** (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 31 October 2001)

Resolutions:

- Resolution ResAP(2001)3 of the Committee of Ministers **“towards full citizenship of persons with disabilities through inclusive new technologies”** (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 24 October 2001)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Newsletters:

- The newsletter *Activities on Roma/Gypsies* (Migration and Roma/Gypsies Division) available on Internet : http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social_Cohesion/Roma_Gypsies/ or from Judith Butler, Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 27 31, E-mail: judy.butler@coe.int
- The *Newsletter on activities within the Project “Roma under the Stability Pact”*, Issues Nbr 1 and 2, also available from Judith Butler, Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 27 31, E-mail: judy.butler@coe.int
- The Newsletter on the European Social Charter *Social Rights = Human Rights*, available on Internet: <http://www.humanrights.coe.int/cseweb/GB/index.htm>
- *The Pompidou Group Newsletter n° 2* (mid-October 2001), will be available on Internet www.pompidou.coe.int or from Catherine Lahmek, Tel: + 33 (0)3 88 41 29 87 or E-mail: catherine.lahmek@coe.int

CALENDAR FROM NOVEMBER 2001 TO DECEMBER 2001

20 November: Children's Rights Day (Strasbourg)

10 December: Human Rights Day (Strasbourg)

Conferences:

- 13 - 15 Dec.: Symposium on the theme: "Youth - actor of social challenge" at the European Youth Centre (Strasbourg)

Seminar:

- 22 - 23 Nov.: Regional seminar in the South-Caucasus : “Access to social rights in anti-poverty strategies: social partnerships as a factor for development” (Tbilissi, Georgia)

Meetings:

- 29 - 30 Nov.: 2nd Forum for children and families (Strasbourg)
- 3 - 4 Dec.: Group of Specialists on the demographic consequences of economic transition in countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Strasbourg)
- 5 - 6 Dec.: European Population Committee (Strasbourg)
- 6 - 7 Dec. Committee of experts on integration and community relations (Strasbourg)
- 10 - 12 Dec.: 6th meeting of the Group of Specialists on Improving the Quality of Life of Dependent Elderly Persons (Strasbourg)
- 12 - 13 Dec.: Editorial Group on Access to Social Rights (Strasbourg)
- 11 - 14 Dec.: Plenary Meeting of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (Strasbourg)
- 13 - 14 Dec: 2nd meeting of the drafting group on child day-care Recommendation (Strasbourg)

“*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