

Editorial

Sustainable development - the contribution of the Social Cohesion Strategy

In 2002, there will be a great deal of discussion on sustainable development, particularly in connection with the United Nations Summit to be held in Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September 2002. This event will be a rare and outstanding opportunity to reconsider a number of fundamental concepts.

There are a number of reasons why we think that our social cohesion strategy can make a positive contribution to the debate. It is based on human rights, it addresses social issues from the angle of social, economic and cultural rights and it raises the fundamental question of the status of these rights in the context of sustainable development.

The strategy, which is based on the assumption that there is a strong link between social and economic development, notes that "sound economic policies, while crucial in establishing stable conditions for growth, cannot be directed solely by market mechanisms without risking damaging social consequences". It also says that "economic development without accompanying social development will result in serious problems sooner or later" and that social cohesion must be seen "as a preventive strategy designed to reduce the risk of future social and political disruption". In other words, it is up to us to build sustainable societies.

The CDCS will play a major part in preparing the Council of Europe's contribution to the discussion. It is already planning a debate to be held in autumn on the link between human rights and sustainable development during which Ms Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights, will be invited to speak.

Of course, in all sustainable development strategies a substantial role is played by the family because it is the starting point for the construction of social cohesion in the private sphere. As a result, two other United Nations meetings will have a major impact on our future discussions, namely the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid from 8 to 12 April 2002 and the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on children to be held in New York from 8 to 10 May 2002. Bearing in mind recent demographic trends and upheavals in the organisation of families, the position of children and elderly people in contemporary societies has taken on increased significance because they need to be fully integrated into this process of change. This issue of "Social Cohesion Developments" includes descriptions of two activities concerning these population groups carried out by DG III - Social Cohesion (see pages 4 and 6).

In addition to families, there is also the question of getting other partners involved, such as governments, businesses, NGOs, employers' organisations and trade unions. This alerted us to the need to think about the social role that these partners should be playing in the current context in view of their new responsibilities, a question that will be discussed at a conference scheduled for autumn on

"Social responsibility in a globalised world: the role of the State, the market and civil society?" (see page 9).

The debate on sustainable development and its links with social cohesion will inevitably have an impact on the fundamental work conducted by the CDCS in the area of access to social rights. Ms Mary Daly – professor at the School of Sociology and Social Policy of the Queen's University, Belfast (Northern Ireland) and Council of Europe consultant – is currently preparing a report on access to social rights in Europe in five key areas: social protection, housing, employment, education and health (see page 4). This report will have to take account of the debate on the social consequences of globalisation and their impact on the effective enjoyment of fundamental rights. It will be officially presented at the Conference on Access to social rights to be held by the CDCS in Malta on 14 and 15 November 2002.

The same applies to the other two ministerial events scheduled for 2002, namely the 8th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Social Security to be held in Bratislava on 22 and 23 May 2002 and the 7th Conference of Ministers responsible for Migration Affairs to be held in Helsinki on 16 and 17 September 2002. These events will go to the heart of the key questions raised by globalisation: labour market flexibility, mobility of labour and the modernisation of social protection systems through analysis of the movements of migrant workers and recognition of their social rights.

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INTERVIEW WITH DR CHRISTINE BERGMANN - GERMAN FEDERAL MINISTER FOR FAMILY AFFAIRS, SENIOR CITIZENS, WOMEN AND YOUTH

Newsletter: What do you think were the main achievements of the Berlin Conference on Social Services for sustainable Social Development?

Social development over the last few decades has been remarkable in many Member States of the Council of Europe. Today, the transition countries have made much progress in building up social security systems, while western European countries need to modernise their systems. The traditional division between East and West no longer covers the whole picture. We have to recognise that countries that formerly were perceived as lagging behind, have now adopted pioneering reforms in certain sectors of their social systems.

It was against this background that the Berlin Conference gave the signal that social services are a crucial element of social development for all Member States of the Council of Europe. Children, young persons, families, older persons and other people with special needs particularly require social services. The latter therefore have major importance for the daily lives of broad sectors of the population as well as for economic productivity and quality of life in a modern society.

Within the area of responsibility of my Ministry, namely family affairs, senior citizens, women and youth, progress is not possible without the extension and modernisation of social services. There is a lot to learn from other Member States of the Council of Europe in this respect. The pan-European dialogue on social services which started at the Berlin Conference now needs to be extended in order to facilitate modernisation of these services and to achieve progress in important social policy areas. The Council of Europe can play an important part in raising awareness for social services as a crucial policy instrument and a key way of promoting sustainable social and economic development.

Newsletter: What are the roles of the State, the market and civil society in maintaining and enhancing quality in social services?

Across member States of the Council of Europe we have numerous forms of what can be called the "welfare mix". The situation is constantly changing and social services are no longer provided by state monopolies or only on a for profit basis. There are many different types of organisations providing social services within different legal and fi-

nancial frameworks. Not-for-profit organisations are involved as service providers in all member states. These organisations are tending to gain importance in many member states but we also see a growing number of for-profit actors.

Growing competition between different providers and the increasing reliance on user fees raises concerns about quality issues. We should therefore leave no doubt that public authorities must play an essential role in setting standards for the quality of services. Not-for-profit providers should, however, be consulted by governments in setting and developing standards for services since they have excellent record of developing services that are adapted to the needs of users.

In order to enhance the quality of services it needs to be clearly laid down that all providers have to comply with high quality standards. We need to guarantee equal access for all people to high quality services. I do not believe that exclusively financial considerations or a competition-centred approach would provide adequate guarantees of quality-oriented service provision. Social services are in themselves a social policy instrument for fostering social cohesion. They cannot just be regarded as market products.

For me it is also quite clear that the need for greater professionalisation, the current lack of co-ordination of services and the special role that social services play in promoting social inclusion of all people all make it essential to provide a regulatory framework to set standards.

Newsletter: When people talk about sustainable development they are usually thinking about the protection of the environment. Why do you think it is important to bring in social development too?

The idea of sustainability originated from the area of the protection of the environment but soon it became obvious that it needs to be applied to the area of social development of our societies as well. My impression is that there is still a need to raise awareness for this fact.

Sustainable social development involves providing social protection systems that meet the needs of people across their entire life-course. Social security and social service systems are a major economic asset and there is an important link between social and economic development. The current debate on sustainable development in Europe focuses

on growth, competitiveness, and employment. In my view, progress in these areas is impossible without making the key components of our social protection systems fit to face future challenges.

Investing in social cohesion is an asset and an important policy instrument in order to reach sustainable development goals. However, one has to strike a balance between available resources and the expenditure on social protection. If the budget is overstretched, this may have consequences for economic development. It is important to note that there is a variety of actors providing resources for social development such as the state, volunteers and business. These resources have to be co-ordinated well in order to make use of their full potential. It is equally important for sustainable social development that we define policy goals for social development and set up clear priorities.

Newsletter: Let's take family policy as an example. How does the concept of sustainability affect policies for the family?

While there exist various concepts of the family in different social, cultural and political systems, families are basic to the structure and development of societies in all countries of the Council of Europe. We have to recognise that societal change is also affecting families in Germany and in all other Member States. Plural societies go hand in hand with the plurality of living arrangements and family living patterns in modern societies.

At a time when families are exposed to a multitude of social and economic changes, the German government, the Federal States and local authorities are committed to offering them a wide variety of family-related benefits, programmes and services. These include child allowances, child care, counselling, social services, parental leave and income maintenance, all of which help families perform their societal and developmental functions.

A sustainable policy approach that aims at improving the situation of families needs to be comprehensive. In order to promote a favourable environment for families, governments need to analyse the impact on families of a range of policies and programmes including those related to education, health, social security, macroeconomic stability. We have to make a particular effort to attract public attention to the needs of young families with limited means.

In addition to mainstreaming family issues

into all relevant policies we have to take measures that address the needs and changing roles of individual family members and strengthen intergenerational solidarity. For example, the German government has taken a number of measures to improve the situation of women in the family recognising that women make a great contribution to the welfare of the family and to the development of society. Promoting equal rights and opportunities, and equal sharing of responsibilities for the family by men and women, are critical to the well-being of all.

Newsletter: You are also the Minister with responsibility for questions related to population ageing and this year we have the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid and then the European follow-up conference that you are hosting in Berlin. What do you see as the key issues for European countries in this field?

The demographic challenge is linked to a number of social and economic developments and has to be addressed in that context. There are two driving forces behind the ageing of the population: constantly low birth rates and a fall in mortality. The response to the associated challenges needs to focus on the improvement of the situation of all socio-economic groups but should also take into account the development of society as a whole. We need to adapt our social security, health and education systems to the demographic, social and economic change.

The ministerial conference in Berlin, being organised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), will focus on a large number of issues related to the demographic change. The UNECE is engaged in a process that will ensure adequate regional follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing. At Berlin we will adopt commitments and objectives that will assist policy-makers and other stakeholders in the region to focus on the key priorities associated with individual and population ageing. I do hope that the Council of Europe will be active in the process of implementation of what is going to be adopted at the Berlin conference.

About 180 officials, practitioners and experts came to Berlin last October for a Conference on the role of social services in sustainable social development. The event was organised by the Frankfurt-based Observatory for the Development of Social Services in Europe on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, and in cooperation with the Council of Europe's Directorate General for Social Cohesion.

The German authorities felt that the time had come for a wide-ranging discussion of the numerous changes affecting social services in many countries, and in order to give this event a pan-European dimension they decided to ask the Council of Europe to participate as co-organiser.

Secretary General of the Council of Europe pointed out in the opening session that social services are for everyone. They clearly have a key role to play in helping people with severe problems escape from social exclusion. In addition to this they are available to help everyone cope with the demands of the different stages of the life cycle, in particular bringing up children and growing old. For the Council of Europe, social services are more than just a necessary public service; they are a right and one which is enshrined in Article 14 of the European Social Charter. The Secretary General appealed to people to get away from thinking of social services primarily as a *cost*, an economic burden. They should be seen as an *investment* for a healthy society: "social services have an essential part to play in sustaining the social cohesion that goes with a strong economy".

Dr Christine Bergmann, the German Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth explained why she wanted to look at social services in the context of *sustainable development*. For her, "the core element of sustainability is that young people must be allowed at least the same opportunities as previous generations". Social services have a key part to play in helping people adjust to the increasing rate of change in society and in the economy. The Minister was clear that if we try to pursue economic efficiency and competitiveness to the exclusion of human and social considerations, we shall end up with a society that is not sustainable in the long term.

Two keynote speakers, Professor Brian Munday of the University of Kent and Professor Igor Tomes of Charles University in Prague, presented the main issues facing European countries today in the field of social services. Central and Eastern European countries are faced with having to create social services of a new kind. But in Western Europe fundamental questions are also being asked about the future of social services. This means that the time is clearly ripe for moving the debate to the pan-European level.

Much of the subsequent discussion focussed on changes in the way in which social services are organised in different countries. Despite very different traditions and origins of social services in different countries, there is a tendency every-

where for the State to reduce its direct involvement in the provision of social services. A growing range of non-governmental bodies are taking on responsibility for the delivery of social services. While there is widespread agreement that non-governmental actors can often provide services more cheaply and efficiently than government bureaucracies, and indeed no-one questions the long-established role of not-for-profit providers, opinions differ as to whether or how far social services can satisfactorily be provided by the profit-making sector. Whatever the outcome of this debate, it is clear that there is going to be a wider range of providers in the future. In the view of the Conference, while this clearly modifies the role of government, it does not make it any less important. Government now has to take on an enhanced regulatory role so as to make sure that quality social services are available to all; if social services are to continue to make their essential contribution to social cohesion, it will be important to make sure that the more disadvantaged members of society enjoy full access to the services they need in order to improve their situation. It was suggested that the Council of Europe could pool experience and draw up guidelines for ensuring minimum standards in social service provision.

There was also much interest in the changing role of social service professionals, especially given the current stress on the rights of users of services. Users are no longer regarded as passive recipients of services delivered to them by professionals. Users now expect to be involved in the design and delivery of services and this creates new expectations and a need to change attitudes. The possibility was mentioned of drawing up, on the basis of existing documents, a European code of professional ethics for social workers or a Charter of rights and responsibilities of users.

There was a clear expectation among participants that this should be not just another conference, but the starting-point for ongoing debate and action at the European level. Already, in response to the issues highlighted at the Conference, the European Committee for Social Cohesion has proposed to launch a new intergovernmental project on social services. Planning will take place in 2002 with a view to launching a well worked out project in 2003. The contacts and discussions that took place in Berlin will provide fertile ground for developing a project that will respond to the real needs of those involved in social services across Europe.

The proceedings of the Conference, including the summing-up by the general rapporteur, Professor Helmut Anheier of the London School of Economics and Political Science, will be published shortly; full details will be given in the next issue of *Social Cohesion: Developments*.

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Access to social rights

"Social Cohesion Developments" already reported in several issues on the work in the Council of Europe on promoting access to social rights and on programmes on access to employment (CS-EM), social protection (CS-PS) and housing (CS-LO). The committees concerned completed their work towards the end of 2001 and the resulting activity reports and the adopted guidelines will be available on the social cohesion part of the Council of Europe website shortly (http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social_Cohesion)

The work on access to social rights now enters its next stage. A consultant, Professor Mary Daly from Queen's University, Belfast in Northern Ireland, is now drafting an integrated report for the Council of Europe on social rights. Her task is first to identify common themes in the work on these three activities on Access to Social Rights and, in addition, the work on health care services for people in marginal situations (on which Recommendation Rec (2001) 12 has been adopted in October 2001 by the Committee of Ministers) and in the field of education in the Council of Europe with the purpose of assessing the extent to which social rights are a reality in Europe. On the basis of this, she will be making proposals to improve access to these rights and for future areas of work in this field. This work will take account of social indicators being developed by the Council of Europe.

The report is being written with the purpose of relaunching the debate on social rights in Europe. It will take account of developments over the last decade such as globalisation, privatisation and the transition to a market economy in many member States and other societal changes. The Report is likely to stress the importance of the integrated measures to tackle social exclusion and emphasise the role of civil society and the development of effective partnerships, particularly at local level.

The objective would be to develop a comprehensive framework, based on already existing social rights as well as on the identification of possible new social rights. It would seek to do this through establishing general principles (such as on gender equality, non-discrimination, etc.) based *inter alia* on principles drawn from the final activity reports on the housing, employment and social protection activities and the health care services recommendation. In addition, it would look at the issue of the exercise of rights from the particular perspectives of disadvantaged groups in society, such as people with disabilities. Moreover, it would take account of the provisions of the European Social Charter and particularly the Revised Social Charter's important provisions on the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion and the right to housing.

An Editorial group with 13 members, NGOs, researchers and governmental experts, has been set up to supervise the preparation of this report and to prepare a draft of a recommendation on access to social rights of the Committee of Ministers. The group met in December 2001 and will meet again on two occasions before May 2002.

The Report will be presented at a high profile conference on social rights to be held in Malta at the kind invitation of the Maltese Government in mid-November 2002. This is to be opened by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr Walter Schwimmer. Readers will be kept updated on progress on the report, on the recommendation on access to social rights and the Malta conference.

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Improving the quality of life of dependent elderly persons

Since it began to work on the Strategy for Social Cohesion, the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) has given particular attention to the problems of elderly persons in Europe. These problems are the result of rapid growth in the population of persons over 60 throughout Europe over the last 20 years.

The fact that the population is living longer is one of the greatest triumphs of the modern world. But it is also a challenge to decision makers, especially in the developed countries. Europe, a continent made up of highly industrialised and developed countries, has an unprecedented population of elderly, very elderly and even extremely elderly persons. In many Council of Europe member states, not only is the absolute number of elderly persons continuing to rise, the relative percentage is also increasing (in Spain, for example, 16% of the population is already over 65). The impact of this situation on the labour force, social protection systems and health-care needs is already being felt, and it will continue to grow stronger.

Just over three years ago, the CDCS set up a Group of Specialists on Improving the Quality of Life of Elderly Dependent Persons (CS-QV). It focused on dependent elderly persons because the most rapidly growing section of the population in Europe at present is persons of extreme old age. Extreme old age is often accompanied by the incapacity to carry out a large number of ordinary everyday activities. Dependence, sometimes linked with the various types of dementia, the risk increasing as people grow older, requires a range of forms of

Cultural Policy and Cultural Diversity

The Council of Europe's Project on Cultural Policy and Cultural Diversity was launched in 1999 with the participation of seven states: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Luxembourg, Switzerland, the United Kingdom. The overriding goal of the Project is to understand and support the development of democratic cultural policy in the context of culturally diverse societies. It focuses specifically on two facets of diversity: the forms of cultural diversity associated with the international movements of peoples, particularly post 1945; and forms of cultural differences that have resisted assimilation within dominant national cultures over extended periods.

Phase one of the activities (1999-2000) produced a substantial body of research and analysis, as well as seven National Reports and a commitment by all participants to continue the work. The final report of phase one was written by Tony Bennett, a leading scholar and practitioner in the field of cultural policy.

His report articulated a key theme of the work of the first phase of the Project, namely, the focus on the changing relationship between the citizen and the state in the context of globalisation. This changing relationship is bringing to the fore the concept of cultural citizenship and a body of entitlements associated with this status.

The Bennett report proposed follow-up work in a number of areas. In light of these proposals, and at the request of the member states involved, the focus of Phase Two (2001-2002) of the Project will be a series of workshops which will develop strategies, tools and case studies to assist member states in the development of a comprehensive approach to cultural policy for cultural diversity. It is hoped that they will also contribute to a greater social cohesion and intercultural harmony. The key objective of these workshops will be to identify principles which can begin to define the emerging meaning of cultural citizenship in the global age. These principles will be incorporated into recommendations and submitted to the Steering Committee for Culture (CDCULT).

Activities for Phase Two

Cultural entrepreneurship and diversity

The overall goal of this activity is to foster creativity and creative enterprise at the local level in culturally diverse societies. The activity which has begun as a pilot project in Bulgaria is concerned with the developing interface between cultural producers and

care and aid, often over long periods. Dependent elderly persons and their close families clearly expect, and are entitled to do so, that their needs be met in terms of health-care and social services. Furthermore, the quality of these services determines the health and well-being of elderly persons, fully-fledged members of society, as well as the members of their families who are not dependent and who wish to help vulnerable relatives in need while continuing to contribute actively to social and economic life.

The Group of Specialists has examined every aspect of dependent elderly persons' lives. It has always attached great importance to health-care systems (particularly for people suffering from dementia), including and involving dependent elderly persons in community life, and preventing and delaying dependence. The group's guidelines have been the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, especially respect for the autonomy, integrity, independence and dignity of every person, whatever the nature or degree of his or her dependence, and the philosophical framework of the Council of Europe, in particular Articles 11, 15 and 23 of the Revised European Social Charter.

A detailed report is currently being prepared for publication in the coming months, subject to the authorisation of the CDCS, to coincide with the 2nd World Assembly on Ageing (Madrid, April 2002) and/or the European Ministerial Conference following on the Madrid Summit (Berlin, September 2002). The report calls for integrated, multidisciplinary, equal, accessible social welfare provision focused on the individual and respecting his or her choices and preferences with a view to achieving intergenerational solidarity in families, the community and the state.

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Working to improve the economic situation of Roma/Gypsies in Europe

The first ever official text from an international institution to deal specifically with the economic situation of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe was adopted on 27 November 2001 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in the form of *Recommendation Rec(2001)17 on improving the economic and employment situation of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe*.

Since 1998-99, the Group of specialists on Roma/Gypsies (MG-S-ROM) has been looking into problems linked to the employment and

economic situation of Roma/Gypsy communities. Its terms of reference include preparing guidelines for member states wishing to improve their policies and programmes in a number of spheres of day-to-day life such as health, employment, housing, education, and measures to combat discrimination and racism. Having dealt with the question of education (the Committee of Ministers adopted a recommendation on this subject in 2000), it brought in experts, and individuals and organisations directly involved in Roma/Gypsy employment projects to help prepare a draft recommendation on means of improving their economic situation. The draft was submitted to the European Committee on Migration – which oversees the work of the MG-S-ROM – before being referred to the Committee of Ministers, who discussed and adopted it in November 2001.

Recommendation Rec(2001)17 is based on the observation that the problems encountered by Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in various spheres of everyday life are of course inter-linked and that solving their economic problems is the key to improving their situation in other areas such as education and health. The recommendation suggests that, in order to achieve this, states should adopt proactive policies to promote equal access to employment and economic resources. There is also a need for vigorous action to combat the discrimination encountered by Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in this field and others, giving them full access to their fundamental rights.

The recommendation also discusses other themes such as the need to promote income-generating activities and small businesses and introduce appropriate financial mechanisms so that Roma/Gypsies and Travellers who, like other poor sections of the population, do not have access to credit, can find sources of funding for their economic activities. Emphasis is also laid on the need to establish training and education institutions and information services for both the Roma/Gypsy and the majority population. The Committee of Ministers also stresses that we should not overlook the integration of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers into the labour market, particularly in the public services which should, after all, reflect the diversity of the community they serve.

This is an important text which reflects the authorities' increased awareness of the difficult situation of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe and enables the member states to reiterate their desire for them to become fully-fledged citizens in the countries in which they live, particularly through measures enabling them to enjoy their social and economic rights.

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electronically mediated markets and with the role that government can play in assisting new forms of cultural entrepreneurship that will create new markets and distribution routes for local, indigenous and diasporic cultural producers. Luxembourg has given strong moral and intellectual support to this project and will be financing the second phase of the pilot project in Bulgaria in 2002.

Intercultural communication and conflict prevention

This should concern the role that the promotion of cultural diversity can play as a means of fostering greater civic dialogue between the members of culturally diverse societies and so serve to promote social cohesion and reduce the prospect of conflict within such societies. Belgium will host a conference on this subject in 2002.

Culture, diversity and everyday life

The need here is for a closer examination of the implications of extending the traditional remit of cultural policy (encompassing arts, heritage and media policies) to embrace a wider definition of cultural resources and their relevance to cultural diversity objectives. A conference on this subject will be held in Canada (Ottawa/Hull) in 2002.

Diversity and mainstream public institutions

The essential issue which will be considered here will be the strategies and approaches which can ensure that mainstream cultural institutions are managed and administered in ways that truly reflect the diverse public which they serve. This will cover issues of democratic management of the public sphere as well as the objective of social cohesion. A conference on this subject will be held in London 21-22 February 2002.

Decentralisation and cultural planning approaches to diversity

This should focus on the creation of local, regional, municipal, and community structures and strategies for the development and implementation of cultural policies committed to the pursuit of cultural diversity objectives.

Phase Two of the Project will also see the engagement of five new states: Hungary, 'The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia', Mexico, Romania and Russia, in the Project of transversal reviews on cultural Policies and cultural Diversity. These states will develop national reports and country site visits will be undertaken, and they will also be invited to engage in the activities being planned for Phase Two.

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Even though many European countries have introduced policies aimed at making it easier to reconcile working and family life, many economic, social and psychological obstacles still bar the way. On 29 November 2001, during a discussion of the issue, the participants in the Council of Europe's Forum for Children and Families tried to identify these barriers more clearly while seeking new lines of inquiry for the future.



Reconciling working and family life in Europe: contrasting developments

In Norway, women do not have to choose between working and looking after their children and can do both at the same time. In presenting their country's social policy, researchers Trine Gjer-mundbo and Berger Hareide did indeed give a flattering report of the measures taken in Norway and the other Scandinavian countries, but nevertheless recognised that they were far from solving all the conflicts between working and family life. Exhaustion and stress were still part of Norwegians' everyday vocabulary, even though the situation was much better there than in many other countries. The central and eastern European countries in particular often had the impression that reconciling working and family life was more difficult today than it had been in the past, when large companies had given their employees more social benefits, including crèches and free time, and when unemployment had been almost unknown. Today, said Dr Irena Belohorska (Slovakia) on behalf of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, *people have to take their destinies into their own hands, but this is often detrimental to their family life*. Day-care centres for children, particularly crèches, were sometimes so expensive that families could not afford them, she went on, while her compatriot, Ms Erika Kvapilova was concerned to note that current maternity-leave systems *continued to feminise poverty* instead of fostering genuine economic equality between women and men.

Merely reducing working hours is not enough to improve the situation ...

Can a reduction in working hours, such as that currently being applied in France, help people to devote more time to the family? Alain Brugière, Director of Human Resources at Strasbourg University Hospital, noted that staff preferred to convert this reduction of working time into extra holidays rather than cut down on the length of the working day or week. The Danish representative to the Forum added laconically

that in Denmark, flexible working hours did not necessarily encourage employees, especially men, to spend more time with their families, but rather to do home improvement work or get an extra job.

Furthermore, as several members noted, including a teenage Swedish member of the Panel, the division of labour in families was still unequal, as too few men agreed to genuinely look after their children, especially for long periods. She suggested that in order to remedy this situation, campaigns to raise young people's awareness and educate them to share responsibilities more should be stepped up, even though it involved *changing attitudes*, which could take a long time.

Beyond the psychological and economic obstacles, work itself obviously had an effect on family life. Shorter working hours did not mean that work became less intensive, said Dr François Becker, occupational health doctor in Strasbourg, who considered that stress and the growing constraints of working life inevitably influenced personal and family life. *When working conditions are too hard, every aspect of a person's health is affected*, he said, *and therefore it was not surprising that the family suffered*.

Better working patterns and more flexible working hours could improve the quality of life of all employees, but it was important to be wary of *false good solutions*, warned Béatrice Hertogs on behalf of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC): working part time could certainly make more time available for the family, but too often it involved a reduction in income, which was a problem, especially for lone-parent families. Similarly, although working at home logically reduced the time away from home, it could turn out to be just as *dangerous* for the family's well-being, as many companies considered that their employees were *available* 24 hours a day, making them even more *dependent*. The system of *on-call time* at home also had many pitfalls: if employees could be called at home at any time, how could they truly organise their own lives?

Work flexibility therefore seemed to be a two-edged sword: it was beneficial to employees when freely accepted, but could become a burden when it entailed working late or at night, something to which employees were not necessarily suited. The young people invited to the Forum thought that although working late in a shop was a simple way of earning a little extra

cash, when it became a necessary part of the income of an older person with a dependent family, it could soon become a strain that was difficult to bear. In the same way, *outworking* at home, which was considered an attractive proposition by the youngest participants, could also generate constraints that had an adverse effect on family life.

Seeking new lines of inquiry for the future

At the end of the discussion however, several practical suggestions were made on how to better reconcile working and family life. First of all, the central and eastern European countries, many of whose social and occupational arrangements had been seriously disrupted by the changes that had taken place throughout the 1990s, hoped that other European countries and the Council of Europe would help them to seek ways of *restoring* patterns for reconciling work and family life that had sometimes been battered by the emergence of *every-man-for-himself* attitudes and free enterprise, in which employees had to yield to all their employers' demands, especially as regards working hours. Furthermore, the high levels of unemployment recorded in some countries, in themselves factors of stress, worsened job insecurity and working conditions, and employees often had to *give up everything* in order to keep or find jobs.

Another topic that was brought up by many of the young people at the Forum was household task-sharing, of which the young generations should be made more aware; parental leave and aid to young parents could also, in their view, be harmonised at European level. The participants then referred to their fears regarding the pitfalls of *false devices* for reconciling working and family life, which could become more restricting than traditional work, and called on trade unions to be vigilant in these areas. Finally, the issue of care facilities for young children was raised by most of the speakers, who considered them a concrete priority in need of expansion. It was extremely important to avoid reducing opening hours, or even closing crèches, at a time when certain countries or companies were admitting that they were finding it difficult to continue to fund them. Care centres remained a priority in any attempt to reconcile working and family life.

Nevertheless, all of the participants were aware that it was not enough to take legislative measures in order to improve family life. The general attitude to work, the perils of exaggerated competition, and incentives to individualism and consumption also had repercussions on the quality of family life. No doubt a general change in attitudes was also needed if the family was to be restored to its central position in the lives of Europeans. For all these reasons, the Forum hoped that by continuing its discussions, it might contribute to restoring this balance, pointing out that families, as well as the quality of work itself, would benefit as a result.



Denis Durand de Bousingen - Journalist

TWO COUNCIL OF EUROPE INTEGRATED PROJECTS

"Making democratic institutions work" and "Reponses to violence in everyday life in a democratic society"

In 2001, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe decided to launch at the beginning of 2002 two integrated projects for a duration of three years. Two themes were selected: "Making democratic institutions work" and "Reponses to violence in everyday life in a democratic society".

The Projects' functions were described as follows:

"First, the Integrated Projects concern areas of major interest to the member states where the Council of Europe has been working in a piecemeal way and where, despite a growing need, there has been an omission of comprehensive policy development, standard-setting and/or assistance. Secondly, they aim to maximise the impact of the Council of Europe's activities to ensure that the Organisation's work makes a difference in practice and, where necessary, to provide support in the implementation of its standards. Thirdly, they will identify obstacles to the full and efficient implementation of Council of Europe standards and principles and propose remedies. Fourthly, they will increase the visibility of the Organisation by widely disseminating their findings and results. Lastly, they will contribute to renew and decompartmentalise working methods within the Council of Europe."

The Project will reinforce the links between the work of different sectors that are implementing activities in related fields and pool their expertise, thereby creating synergies. It will improve the sharing of knowledge between sectors and contribute to increasing the impact and visibility of the Council of Europe's work in its member states. The Project teams will play a co-ordination and/or implementation role. Moreover, they will develop the capacity and tools for periodical reporting to the Committee of Ministers and Steering Committees and for periodical information updates for relevant Committees of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE), and external partners.

Integrated Project on "Making democratic institutions work"

In accordance with its Statute, the Council of Europe has been working for over 50 years on various aspects of the establishment and functioning of democratic institutions. However, despite a wealth of information, know how and standards developed over the years, no consolidated policy approach has been adopted.

The Integrated Project "Making Democratic Institutions work" will, *inter alia*, bring together the results of the many related, but

hitherto insufficiently inter-connected activities in this field, carried out by the different sectors of the Council of Europe. It will bring together and consolidate a set of common principles which should govern the setting-up and functioning of democratic institutions and electoral systems, the active participation of the population in democratic processes, the promotion of democratic culture and the development and implementation of civic education.

The Integrated Project will include different forms of specific assistance and support activities, some of which will be carried out via on-the-ground co-operation, in particular with NGOs and other external partners (international organisations, foundations, etc.).

Many of the activities that will be implemented by the Integrated Project will have an important social cohesion dimension. The existing and ongoing work of the Council of Europe in the field of social cohesion, particularly with regard to Access to social rights for disadvantaged persons and the Forum for children and family, provides very pertinent starting points.

To give but a few examples, the Integrated Project will look into ways of creating "arenas" of participation of different groups of society in democratic institutions and processes at all levels (European, national, regional and local) drawing on, in particular, expertise in the fields of social cohesion, youth, education, and NGOs. Under the heading "learning to participate", the role of civic education, civil society, media, and new technologies in encouraging participation in democratic processes will be analysed.

In addition, models of inclusion of vulnerable groups (e.g. minorities, migrants, disabled persons) into democratic decision making and of reducing tendencies of auto-exclusion of certain vulnerable groups will be brought to the fore.

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Integrated project on "Reponses to violence in everyday life in a democratic society"

Violence in everyday life is a complex issue, especially at the level of all Council of Europe member states. Since the aim of the project is to provide practical tools, it

will be necessary both to define the general principles for action and to adapt these principles so as to tackle concrete situations and problems in the field.

For this reason, three operational objectives have been set, in order to:

- identify common challenges and general policy guidelines;
- understand and act upon the major social phenomena present in every part of Europe (diversity, social exclusion, the traffic in human beings and the role of the media); and
- take action in specific places or in favour of specific groups (towns, families, sport, schools, young people and training for those involved in prevention).

The social dimension of violence in everyday life is clearly crucial, not only to an understanding of the root causes of violence, but also so that strategies for action in the field are securely based in reality.

Particular attention will be given to the themes of social exclusion, extreme poverty and other marginalising factors (such as drug addiction).

Social exclusion, which is itself a form of violence, also results in a situation in which everyday violence may emerge through mechanisms acknowledged to be complex. What is more, once violence becomes an everyday phenomenon it acts as yet another marginalising factor. It is this downward spiral that needs to be better understood and overcome.

The process of determining what action to take will depend on close co-operation between all departments concerned at the Council of Europe, among which the Directorate General of Social Cohesion will naturally play a leading role.

The three-year programme of action will be agreed in the coming weeks on the basis of work already completed or still under way and through consultation with the operational directorates. It is too early to say exactly what results will be sought, but they should consist of a coherent body of general policy recommendations or strategies for action in each context and will certainly include the need to raise awareness and offer training to those involved.

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Social Researchers Network : A new comparative research Programme

The Social Researchers Network on Social Exclusion, which was set up in 2000 by the Council of Europe Social Cohesion Development Division, is preparing a new comparative research for 2002 on "Activation policies, measures and actors at regional level in Russia and Romania: Main lessons".

The second meeting of the Network took place in The Hague on 29 October 2001. The meeting brought together a small number of European experts to discuss the notion of activation policies to fight social exclusion in Central and Eastern Europe - one of the crucial issues identified at the first meeting - and to design a draft project in that field. Two representatives from the Secretariat and Mr. Van Rienen from the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport also attended the meeting.

The experts agreed on the need for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to strengthen their analysis of :

- the adequacy of the concept of *activation* in the Central and Eastern European context;
- the nature of the policy and measures related to it that are emerging progressively in the region
- the actors – public authorities, social workers, NGOs, social partners – involved in activation programmes; and
- the way those different actors and initiatives interact.

The project should consider a broad definition of activation referring to active measures for social integration of disadvantaged individuals trapped in a multi-dimensional process of social exclusion. It should also put a strong emphasis on partnerships for effective activation institutional frameworks.

The project's proposal was approved at the November 2001 meeting of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) in Strasbourg as a possible new comparative research activity to be launched by the Social Cohesion Development Division in 2002. The Project will be based on two case studies of activation institutional frameworks in selected

regions in Russia and Romania. The Volga district in Russia has been selected and the Romanian region chosen will be finalised soon.

Included in the main issues to be investigated are: What are the obstacles and the needs in Central and Eastern European countries, especially at the local level, for the development of activation policies which would be customised and targeted to individual needs? What is being done in that field in some selected regions of Central and Eastern Europe? Who are the different actors involved in activation institutional frameworks? How effective is cooperation between these actors? What are the best ways of coordinating different types of actions – training, social assistance, psychological assistance, job and personal counselling – to facilitate social integration? What have we learnt in Western Europe about an individualised approach to fighting unemployment and poverty? What is the effectiveness of such measures?

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Regional seminar in the Southern Caucasus on "Social partnerships as a tool for development"

The regional seminar on "Access to Social Rights in Anti-Poverty Strategies: Social Partnerships as a Tool for Development", prepared by the Council of Europe with financial support from the Japanese Government and the European Commission, took place in Tbilisi (Georgia) from 21 to 23 November 2001.

The 45 participants from the three South Caucasian countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) showed great interest in the seminar topic and in the opportunity it afforded for discussion among themselves, ie among both representatives of different countries and representatives of the various players in social and economic development (local and national authorities, mayors, NGOs, trade unions, employers' associations and researchers). Drawing on their practical and professional experience, the six European ex-

The times they are a- changing

**"Youth – Actor of Social
Change?" a Symposium held at
the Strasbourg European
Youth Centre**

From 12-16 December 2001 the European Youth Centre welcomed almost 100 people from over 40 countries including Mexico, Brazil and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the Symposium "Youth – Actor of Social Change?". The Symposium represented a first for the Youth Directorate. The attempt was to bring together three usually distinct communities: representatives of youth NGOs, youth researchers in the academic sphere and policy makers at governmental level. The event aimed to address the questions of whether young people are involved in bringing about social change, how they do so and the obstacles that they meet in attempting to do so.

Whereas young people, students and the various movements they have given rise to in the latter half of the twentieth century have often been a cause of concern to those in power, it could be asked today whether the transformations undergone by European societies in recent times – times that are often labelled 'postmodern' – have engendered a wholly different type of young person: apathetic in the face of the traditional modes of political participation, enchanted by the allures of hyper-modern technologies and the pressure to spend and consume.

The answer to this question was a resounding 'no'. Participants working for youth organisations, constructing youth policy at local and national levels or conducting research on young people from a variety of perspectives responded to this question by stressing the ways in which youth participation has undergone considerable change. As Dr Rupa Huq, University of Manchester, expressed it, whereas the hippies and punks of yesteryear portrayed an idealism or a sense of the unattainable, epitomised by slogans such as 'Be Reasonable, Seek the Impossible', today's young people are more indirect, knowing and humorous. There is a sense that the 'Age of Innocence' has long left us. Young people are demanding to choose for themselves, are much more knowledgeable than

perts and the Japanese expert enabled a constructive dialogue to take place on the role of partnerships as a central factor in local and regional development. The seminar was preceded by a conference at Tbilisi University on 20 November 2001.

The three speakers opening the seminar – Mr Gamkrelidze (Deputy Minister for Social Affairs and acting Minister for Health and Social Policy), Mr Torben Holtze (Head of the European Commission Delegation to Tbilisi) and Ms Gilda Farrell (Head of the Division for the Development of Social Cohesion, Council of Europe) – stressed the importance of intensifying action against poverty and setting up partnerships aimed at social and economic development.

The good practices described by the experts (three mayors, a regional councillor and two network leaders) played a decisive part in the conduct of the seminar. The Hungarian case, for example, prompted many positive responses and stimulated the participants' initiative, demonstrating that local development was a real possibility when the various players were actively involved and local resources were put to good use.

Throughout the discussions the participants recognised that forming partnerships was a long, arduous, complex and fragile process and that it was essential to identify common interests, create opportunities for consultation and discussion between the different players in the development sphere, increase reliance on dialogue and develop participatory decision-making arrangements. A series of requirements for partnerships to function well were identified:

- openness and access to information: the participants insisted that the circulation of information at all levels was a prerequisite for partnership;
- boosting the capacities of the players involved in partnerships for local development and linking them up in networks;
- training in project management, negotiating techniques and participatory approaches to support the development of reliance on dialogue and negotiation;
- pooling of experience and good practice through networks, visits and ex-

pert seminars to awaken people's initiative and sense of responsibility.

Lastly, as the United Nations were launching International Year of Mountains 2002, the participants decided to take this opportunity to propose a Caucasus/European Union project for promoting social and economic development in the Caucasus mountain regions by developing income-generating activities, training and partnerships and reinforcing democratic practices. The idea emerged from the participants' discussions of local development problems common to the region

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Social responsibility in a globalised world: The role of the State, the market and civil society?

Each year, the Social Cohesion Development Division (in the Council of Europe's Directorate General of Social Cohesion – DG III) organises a forum which is open to representatives of governments, international organisations, researchers and NGOs.

The 2001 Forum, jointly organised with the Nordic Council of Ministers in Strasbourg on 18 and 19 October 2001, looked at "New social demands and governance". In 2002, the Division is planning, in conjunction with the European Parliament, to hold a conference on one of the most hotly debated issues in Europe today: social responsibility.

The aim will be to broaden the debate on social responsibility, a key aspect of governance, the future of the European social model and the developing links between Europe and the rest of the world. The conference will draw the attention of governments, policy-makers, citizens, the media and representatives of civil society and the private sector to the importance of clearly defining each player's share of social responsibility.

The preparations for the conference will focus on the overall concept of social responsibility, including the political

previous generations about a wide range of social, political, cultural and economic issues but that this high degree of knowledge may well lead to them to opt out of participation in the structures that older generations have established for them, such as the institutions of voting or the youth organisations of old.

In fact, young people are re-inventing their modes of participation. Of particular note is the power of the anti-globalisation movement and the ability that the issues it raises has to mobilise hundreds of thousands of mainly young people the world over. The workshop on Political and Associative Life welcomed an input from Mr Giacomo Filibeck of the Bureau of the European Youth Forum who came in his personal capacity to talk about his involvement in the Genoa Social Forum and to discuss the implications of these new political dynamics for the future of social movements.

The Symposium was also addressed by Bendik Rugaas, Director General for Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe and Joao Vale De Almeida, Director of Youth and Citizenship of the European Commission. Mr Vale De Almeida talked about the White Paper on Youth, published last month following a two-year consultation process with youth NGOs. It may be noted that, despite changing trends in youth participation, the spirit of protest was alive and well amongst several of the participants: a rap produced and sung by the members of the workshop on Culture and Lifestyle proclaimed that the "White Paper [was for] White People!" and that all they wanted was "More Rap".

The Symposium produced many challenging debates among participants, particularly thought-provoking due to the unique combination of these three groups of actors. The process embarked upon at the Symposium shall be carried through in the work of the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest where priority will be given bringing to the fore the issues determining the future of youth research, youth activism and policy-making in Europe and beyond.

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measures needed to improve the living and working conditions of the people living in the developing countries and transition economies.

Three main aspects will be discussed:

- Implementation: institutional frameworks and roles;
- Evaluation: tools and transparency;
- Adopting a global approach: respect for identities and reducing inequalities in the world.

The concept of social responsibility is now part of the new corporate thinking and new business practices, with social and environmental questions now supplementing traditional economic concerns. The European Commission's Green Paper on "Promoting a European Framework for Corporate Social Responsibility" has further focused attention on the issue.

While this corporate development is a step in the right direction and should be encouraged, it should not be forgotten that social responsibility goes far beyond the business sector and concerns the whole of society. Corporate social responsibility is no substitute for national and international legal frameworks, which continue to be an essential means of ensuring access by all to social rights. Nor can it replace industrial relations and consultations between management and trade unions. If the concept of social responsibility is to be a credible one, it has to be able to be assessed on the basis of criteria agreed upon via a process of consultation and consensus involving public authorities, political parties, non-governmental organisations, employers' and workers' associations and researchers.

There is therefore a real need for broad debate at European level on :

- (i) the new roles and responsibilities of central government, the market and civil society, and
- (ii) the framework within which social responsibility should operate.

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The chief aim of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which will take place in Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September 2002, will be to examine the results of the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) ten years after it was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

The UNCED ended with the adoption of Agenda 21, an ambitious action plan aimed at achieving sustainable development all over the world. The definition of the concept of sustainable development at the time was based mainly on a balance between three components: economic development, protection of the environment and social justice. Since then, sustainable development has had a special place on the international agenda. The principles adopted at the Rio Summit have provided the basis for several initiatives, which have made it possible to give a more operational and specific definition of the notion of sustainable management of the environment throughout the world.

Today, globalisation means that, at the various regional and sub-regional ministerial meetings being held in preparation for the Johannesburg Summit, the concept of sustainable development is having to be revised in the light of the economic integration process and its impact on the living conditions of the planet's inhabitants, particularly the most vulnerable. The link between the concept of sustainable development and the urgent need to eradicate poverty cannot be avoided. The concept highlights the link between poverty and quality, integrity and the productivity of resources accessible to individuals and rural and urban communities.

The preparatory discussions also show that the concept of sustainable development is now an integral part of the challenges facing our society (the availability of financial and technological resources, the impact on social cohesion, an ethical sense of governance and social responsibility at world level). Sustainable development has become a political concern, in other words, the concern of the world's inhabitants and not just of experts.

Implementation of Agenda 21 and other initiatives have generated ideas at local, regional and national levels in a number of countries and the very concept is understood differently according to different concerns and contexts.

At the Regional Roundtable for Europe and North America held in Vail (Colorado, USA) from 6 to 8 June 2001, the western countries focused on five key themes:

- the need for a new development model based economic, social and environmental integration;
- consumerism;
- resources depletion and waste;
- responses to the climate change challenge;
- the establishment of institutions to support sustainable development.

(For the proposals for action made on each of these

themes, see: http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/web_pages/vail_roundtable_report.htm)

For their part, the representatives of central and eastern European countries, meeting in Bucharest on 27 and 28 June 2001, recognised that past events in their countries had discouraged civil society from participating in the governance process, which was a disadvantage in terms of sustainable development. They had collectively recognised the need for more open government and greater accountability, and to work to bring about cultural changes to their ways of life and achieve sustainable management of resources. The link between the environment, poverty and development was highlighted and a series of recommendations was made on seven key issues:

- the need for a regional framework for sustainable development;
- the need for a better understanding of sustainable development at policy-making level and of its relationship to good governance;
- the promotion of a greater understanding of the participatory process;
- the coordinated exchange of good practice in education for sustainable development;
- the need to help to improve use of information;
- improvement of the use of technological developments and research in the region;
- the need to organise a donor-country discussion forum to make better use of contributions, in particular by identifying local community needs and promoting awareness of the role played by institutions and instruments in supporting sustainable development.

(See: www.johannesburgsummit.org/web_pages/ceec_outcome.htm)

For Europeans, the summit must therefore make concrete recommendations on improving dialogue, establishing partnerships and concluding global agreements on the following subjects:

- poverty eradication as the central thrust of the planet's sustainable development;
- sustainable management, use and conservation of natural resources to reverse current trends in unsustainable consumption;
- making globalisation work for sustainable development benefiting all people and especially the world's poor;
- improving governance and democratic processes at all levels and combating corruption as part of the necessary foundation for sustainable development in all countries;
- financing sustainable development;
- enhancing scientific knowledge and improving the processes of generating, sharing and using science for sustainable development both within the scientific community and among scientists, policy makers and the general public for more action-oriented interdisciplinary research with greater focus on the prevention and early identification of emerging problems and opportunities.

(See: UN Document ECE/AC 22/2001/2)

Gilda Farrell



terminated above all to press ahead with the very ambitious goal of full employment by 2010, to give people easier access to employment and training opportunities in other European countries and to encourage geographical mobility by improving the effectiveness of employment services. The themes of health and safety at work and the quality of employment are key elements of this policy.

Other areas of focus will include social protection issues (especially in relation to migrant workers), the viability of pension schemes and the ageing population. Spain is stressing the need to adjust social protection policy to the new requirements of family and working life and considers guarantees of safe and sustainable pensions which are adapted to the new forms of work organisation as the "mainstay of the European social model". In this context, it views social dialogue and international co-operation as essential instruments for European pension reform.

A further priority of the Spanish Presidency's social programme concerns progress towards full implementation of the principle of equality between women and men. Spain hopes to be successful in countering violence against women, both at home and in the workplace. It is emphasising the principle of mainstreaming in order to have equal opportunities for women and men recognised as a *sine qua non* in all policy areas.

The fight against social exclusion is yet another weighty item on the Presidency agenda, the aim being to make progress in those social policies that promote the integration of all people. To this end, efforts will be made in matters of employment to identify new mechanisms and good practices that make for social inclusion. Also concomitant with this desire to establish a Europe excluding no-one will be the themes of participation by young people in European society, the integration of people with disabilities in every area of community life, the removal of barriers preventing access to employment and training and the protection of children.

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"More Europe" – this is the general motto of Spain's Presidency of the European Union during the first half of 2002. For the social dimension of its programme, Spain has adopted the motto "More Europe, more employment and more social cohesion".

In a brochure published by the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Minister, Juan Carlos Aparicio Pérez, states that the ambition which inspires the Spanish Presidency of the European Union is to create a common area which will be not only a concurrence of economic interests but also a confluence of social values. The Minister goes on to invite each and every European to demand real social integration and stable and quality employment, to ensure equality between men and women in Europe's common area, to preserve and enhance the legacy of well-being which Europeans enjoy today for future generations, and to face the challenges of the future, transforming them into greater opportunities for progress and well-being for all citizens.

One of the main priorities of the Spanish Presidency's social programme is to give fresh impetus to the Lisbon process. The objectives of employment, social protection and the fight against social exclusion were approved in Lisbon in 2000 and will be at the heart of the Presidency's social and employment commitments. Modernisation of the European social model will therefore be the principal theme of the Barcelona Summit scheduled for spring 2002.

In the field of employment, the Presidency would like to use the Barcelona Summit to evaluate the results of the European Employment Strategy launched in 1997 and draw up general guidelines for a new European strategy. Spain is de-

Final Declaration of the Joint NGO and Parliamentarians' Conference

Parliamentarians and NGO representatives met at the Council of Europe on 6 and 7 November 2001 to design together the outline of Europe demanded by citizens in the face of present-day society's ills, and to debate the role of Parliaments and NGOs in making civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights, a full reality in the whole of Europe.

Considering the respective roles of Parliaments and NGOs in enhancing participation of citizens in political life, they

- renewed their commitment to pluralist parliamentary democracy as the best system for ensuring the democratic functioning of society based on the values of freedom, justice, equality and solidarity, Human Rights and the rule of law which are the Council of Europe's *raison d'être*;
- recognised the existence of an active civil society and its NGOs as a vital component of European society and as an important and indispensable element of democracy;
- reaffirmed the essential role of NGOs in a pluralist democracy by contributing to checks and balances and enhancing the active participation of all citizens in the conduct of public affairs.

Considering the respective roles of Parliaments and NGOs in promoting democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities, they

- underlined the importance of life-long formal and non-formal education to nurture a democratic culture throughout Europe and to promote citizens' awareness of their rights and responsibilities in a pluralist democracy;
- stressed their joint responsibility in combating marginalisation, civic apathy, intolerance, racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and violence;
- called for particular efforts to be made to develop partnerships between educational institutions, local communities, NGOs and political authorities to strengthen education for democratic citizenship with its political, economic, social, (inter)cultural and ecological dimensions, and with its different levels - from local to international;
- underlined the necessity of activities carried out by young people, and with them, which favour the exercise of their responsibilities and the daily practice of active citizenship;
- called for seeking ways and means of encouraging greater participation by civil society in European political life, thus strengthening participatory democracy as an integral part of representative democracy.

Considering the respective roles of Parliaments and NGOs in strategies to promote social cohesion, they

- reaffirmed the indivisible nature of all Human Rights, be they civil, political, social, economic or cultural;
- confirmed that social cohesion between all those who live together in the Greater Europe without dividing lines is an essential part of human rights and dignity;
- recalled that social cohesion would be all the more efficient if it were associated with education for democratic citizenship;

Social protection: an essential tool for social cohesion

The title "*Social protection: an essential tool for social cohesion*" expresses very well the rationale and the objectives underlying the training programme on social protection which the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) set up for union officials in the countries of central and eastern Europe which have applied to join the European Union.

The ETUC is recognised by the European Union, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the Council of Europe as the only cross-sectoral union organisation at European level. It is composed of 74 national trade union confederations from 34 European countries and 11 European industry federations, making a total of 60 million members. It also includes most large union organisations which were formed by or emerged from the political changes that followed the collapse of the "Eastern Bloc".

After the upheaval of the 1990s and the transition period, central and eastern European countries have set about reforming their social protection systems. Drawing inspiration from the policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, they appear to favour the privatisation of social provision.

Given these developments, and since it considers social protection to be a basic human right and an essential tool for social cohesion, the ETUC decided to launch a training programme to enable union activists from these countries to familiarise themselves with international social security instruments and strategies for their implementation so that they can have a real influence on current reforms.

The programme was set up with the financial and technical support of the Council of Europe (through DG III – Social Cohesion), the European Commission (Employment and Social Affairs Directorate-General), the International Labour Organisation (primarily its Budapest office) and the French and Belgian ministries of employment and social affairs. It was launched at the end of 2001 and will continue through 2002.

The first training course was held in Budapest from 5 to 8 December 2001. Around fifty participants were introduced to the range of international social security instruments, in particular the Council of

Europe's European Code of Social Security and European Social Charter and the ILO conventions. They also learned about the implementation of strategies, especially those of the European Union. For 2002 the aim is to form a network of union-based specialists in specific social security issues from among those who attended the first Budapest course. Several sessions are planned: a week of training in Strasbourg and another in Budapest, followed by two weeks shared between Paris and Brussels. The first training session in 2002 will be held in Strasbourg, thanks to the logistical and technical support of the Council of Europe, from 24 to 28 March. Participants will expand their knowledge and improve their ability to apply the Council's standard-setting instruments. Subsequently, in Budapest, using progress reports drawn up by the regional ILO/ACTRAV office, they will be able to analyse the progress of reforms undertaken in their home countries, consider their impact and formulate conclusions.

During the two weeks in Paris and Brussels, finally, participants will work with the French and Belgian employment and social security departments to examine the approaches they have followed in ensuring a quality system of "genuine" social security for all. They will also meet union bodies in these two countries in order to consider how to become involved in the management of social security schemes. In addition, there are plans to hold several work sessions with the European Commission in order to assess the challenges currently facing social protection systems and the strategies introduced at European level to respond to these challenges.

At the end of the training programme, with the help of the ETUC and in the light of their experiences and the specific circumstances in their home countries, participants will draw up proposals designed to influence the reform processes and bring their social protection systems into line with the model prevailing in the European Union. The ETUC's goal is to develop a social protection system which will help to combat poverty and social exclusion, strengthen social cohesion and empower European citizens by allowing them to take responsibility for their own destiny rather than have it handed to them.

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- *underlined the need for particular efforts to be made to promote social justice, in particular by involving marginalized groups in public and economic life, and for social partners and NGOs to take complementary action;*
- *called for full accessibility and social inclusion of people with disabilities and full recognition of their organisations.*

Focusing their discussion on citizenship and solidarity at global level, they welcomed the action of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre) in Lisbon, set up as a Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe, and invited all European states to join it.

Participants paid specific attention to the challenges facing societies at the present time, and

- *reaffirmed that both sustainable human development and democracy at all levels of human society - local, national, regional and global - are essential if peace is to endure;*
- *declared that the roots of terrorism are in particular embedded in poverty, injustice, inequality, discrimination and hatred, that preventive strategies would have to include efforts in the fields of education and social cohesion which seek to counter exclusion, alienation and intolerant attitudes and try to resolve conflicts in a non-violent way;*
- *recalled that the fight against terrorism must not undermine democracy, Human Rights, in particular individual freedom, and justice on the grounds of defending these values;*
- *expressed the expectation that a democratic, solidary Europe will substantially work for an environment - at the national, European and global levels alike - which is conducive to sustainable development, global human security and to the elimination of poverty; Europe will do the utmost to ensure that globalisation becomes a positive force for all the world's people.*

Participants called for legislation providing NGOs with a framework and resources to enable them to play their full part.

Participants invited the Parliamentary Assembly and the NGOs enjoying consultative status with the Council of Europe to intensify co-operation, notably by improving their access to the work of the Parliamentary Committees in their different fields of competence. Furthermore, the participants welcomed the creation of the Sub-Committee on the Strengthening of Democratic Institutions, which would allow for a structured dialogue between the Liaison Committee of NGOs enjoying consultative status with the Council of Europe and parliamentarians.

In the same vein, the participants expressed the wish that Committee of Ministers' Resolution (93)38 on relations between the Council of Europe and international non-governmental organisations be revised in order that it reflect the actual partnership between NGOs and the Council of Europe.

Participants required that the present declaration be transmitted to the Committee of Ministers and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe.

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ADOPTED TEXTS

Recommendations:

- Recommendation Rec(2001)17 of the Committee of Ministers on improving the economic and employment situation of Roma/Gypsies and the travellers in Europe (adopted on 27 November 2001)
- Recommendation Rec(2001)19 of the Committee of Ministers on the participation of citizens in local public life (adopted 6 December 2001)
- Recommendation 1545 (2002) of the Parliamentary Assembly on launching a Campaign against trafficking in women (adopted on 21 January 2002)
- Recommendation Rec(2002)1 of the Committee of Ministers on the Guiding principles for sustainable spatial development of the European Continent (Adopted on 30 January 2002)

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Reports:

- CDCS (2001) 61 - Final activity Report of the Group of Specialists on Access to Housing (CS-LO)
- CDCS (2001) 62 - Final activity Report of the Group of Specialists on Access to Social Protection (CS-PS)
- CDCS (2001) 63 - Final activity Report of the Committee of Experts on Promoting Access to Employment (CS-EM)

Publications:

- *Trends in Social Cohesion, Volume No.1 - Promoting the policy debate on social exclusion from a comparative perspective.* (available from the Social Cohesion Development Division; also available in PDF format on the website http://www.coe.int/T/E/social_cohesion/Analysis_and_Research/Publications/)
- *Recent demographic developments in Europe* - Edition 2001, ISBN 92-871-4783-3
- *Population studies series No.35 - Fertility and new types of households and family formation in Europe*, A. Pinelli, H.J. Hoffman-Nowotny, B. Fux - 2001 Edition, ISBN 92-871-4698-5
- *Population studies series No.36 - Trends in mortality and differential mortality*, J. Vallin, F. Meslé, T. Valkonen - 2001 Edition, ISBN 92-871-4725-6
- *European Social Charter - Collected texts* - 3rd Edition 2001 (English version to be published in April 2002), ISBN 92-871-4718-3
- *Social Charter Monographs No.11 - The protection of fundamental social rights in Europe through the European Social Charter* - Proceedings, Sofia, July 2000, ISBN 92-871-4620-9
- *Guide to the preparation, use and quality assurance of blood components* - 8th edition, ISBN 92-871-4770-1
- *Contribution to the sensible use of benzodiazepines* - Seminar Proceedings, Strasbourg, January 2001, ISBN 92-871-4751-5

CALENDAR FROM MARCH 2002 TO SEPTEMBER 2002

8-12 April : Second World Assembly on Ageing (Madrid, Spain)

8-10 May: UN General Assembly's Special Session on Children (New York, United States)

24 August-26 September: World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa)

Conferences:

- 26-27 April: High-level Conference on Health reforms in Europe: from policy to practice » (Vilnius, Lithuania)
- 22-23 May : 8th Conference of European Ministers responsible for social security (Bratislava, Slovakia)
- 20-21 June: Conference of Ministers on equality between women and men (Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)
- 16-17 August: Conference of European Ministers responsible for migration questions (Helsinki Finland)
- 25-27 September: European Conference on "Education and health promotion in schools" (Egmond aan Zee, Pays-Bas)

Seminar:

- 26-27 April: Seminar on the "Access to the effective public health system" (Strasbourg)

Meetings:

- 12-13 March: Bureau of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (Strasbourg)
- 18-19 March: Working Group on Children, Democracy and Participation in Society (Strasbourg)
- 25-26 March: 13th meeting of the Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies (Strasbourg)
- 18-19 April: 3rd meeting of the Forum for Children and Families (Strasbourg)
- 25-26 April: 1st meeting of the Group of Specialists on Employment for Marginalised Groups (Strasbourg)
- 28-30 May : 9th meeting of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (Strasbourg)
- 3-5 June: European Population Committee (Strasbourg)

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