

Editorial

2003 – A year of major projects

Work will start on three major projects in 2003. The first concerns revision of the Strategy for Social Cohesion, the second arrangements for implementing the migration management strategy and the third setting up an advisory European forum for Roma/Gypsies.

Three ministerial conferences have also been scheduled and we are looking to them to provide strong political impetus in the following fields:

- people with disabilities – the 2nd European Conference of Ministers responsible for Integration Policies for People with Disabilities (7 and 8 May 2003, Malaga, Spain);
- health – the 7th Conference of European Health Ministers (12 and 13 June 2003, Oslo, Norway);
- combating drug addiction – the Ministerial Conference of the Pompidou Group (16 and 17 October 2003, Dublin, Ireland).

Ongoing support from three successive Chairs of the Committee of Ministers (Malta, Moldova and the Netherlands) in social and health policies has given our activities a higher profile and welcome publicity both within and outside the Council of Europe.

The great success of the Report Access to Social Rights in Europe following its presentation to the Malta Conference on that subject (November 2002) – as measured by the impressive number of member states interested in themselves

organising presentations of it and the number of languages in which it will be published (see article on p.4) – demonstrates the importance which member states attach to the human-rights approach to social development.

Similarly notable in this connection are promotion of the European Code of Social Security, its protocol and the revised code, and the first signatures and ratifications of these instruments by many central and eastern European countries.

Although there should not be any obstacles to achieving short-term practical objectives, in 2003 we will continue giving thought to conceptual and operational questions in a number of areas which we believe are essential for the future. For example, there will be in-depth discussion on sustainable development, the social dimension of globalisation and the social economy, with particular emphasis on ethical financing. As time goes by, our thinking about social cohesion strategy will take in further issues.

Nor will we spare any effort to further develop Council of Europe action on illegal immigration. Here, we will be promoting not only the Migration Management Strategy, bringing in a number of non-European emigration countries in addition to European transit and destination countries, but also two relevant Council of Europe treaties: the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers and the European Convention on Social Security (see article on p. 7).

We await with interest the publication of the Council of Europe guidebook on

using social-cohesion indicators and in 2003 we are set to test a large number of these indicators at local level in co-operation with our demographic experts (see article on p.8).

It also looks as if 2003 will be a year of energetic assistance to and co-operation with our partners – the NGOs, representatives of management and labour, governments and other international organisations.

It goes without saying that our main partner in combating poverty and situations of vulnerability in central and eastern Europe, and in particular south-east Europe, is still the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB). The rapid expansion of the CEB-Council of Europe co-operation programme, which currently involves 11 projects, is a step in the right direction. The same can be said of the two major conferences on south-east Europe: the high-level conference on housing policies, which will take place in Paris on 23 and 24 April 2003, and the ministerial conference on employment in Bucharest in October. These two events contribute to the Stability Pact Social Cohesion Initiative. We are also co-operating with the CEB in the Mediterranean – where, typically, there is significant migratory movement – to counter the “Fortress Europe” syndrome. Ever greater synergy with the Council of Europe’s financial institution is therefore also on the agenda so as to ensure effective action out in the field.

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INTERVIEW WITH MAUD DE BOER-BUQUICCHIO DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE



Newsletter: What does the Council of Europe mean by saying that its Strategy for social cohesion is *h u m a n rights-based*?

The Council of Europe has a rights-based approach to social questions. In the Council of Europe Strategy for Social Cohesion, social rights are seen as part of human rights. What does this mean? The human rights approach sets universally agreed values at the top of the development agenda. This approach means that we get our priorities right from the outset; it is clear that our primary objective is human well-being for every individual rather than economic growth for its own sake.

Newsletter: Can the Court of Human Rights play a part in strengthening the protection of social and economic rights?

The Court already plays a part in guaranteeing social rights. In point of fact, two of the key concepts to be found in the case-law are human dignity and the effectiveness of rights. This is what led the Court to declare that there is no watertight division separating social rights from civil and political rights. In recent years, it has considerably elaborated on its case-law in the field of social rights. In all probability it will continue along this path, particularly following the entry into force of Protocol No. 12 on non-discrimination. As the European Social Charter is also founded on the concepts of dignity and effectiveness (as regards access to and enjoyment of rights), there is clear interaction between the Charter and the ECHR. The two texts are, in the field of social rights, broadly complementary and any progress achieved in the one serves to strengthen and consolidate the advances made in the other.

The Parliamentary Assembly has once again put forward the idea of drafting a protocol incorporating social rights into the ECHR and the Steering Committee for Human Rights has begun to look at

this question. I shall be keeping a close watch on these developments and the question of European Union accession to the ECHR and the Social Charter.

Newsletter: You took part in the Malta Conference on access to social rights. What were the main messages of this conference?

The Conference made clear that preserving and strengthening social rights means facing new challenges nowadays. These challenges mainly come about through rapid social and economic change in Europe. It is of utmost importance to ensure effective access to social rights for the most vulnerable in our societies.

One of the main messages of the Malta Conference is that social rights cannot be seen as a luxury. The correlation between poverty and weak social protection shows how dramatic the consequences of abandoning social rights could be. No country in Europe or indeed any region of Europe can afford to neglect social rights.

The Conference also emphasised the interdependence of social rights. Lack of access to one basic social right has a spill-over effect, making it harder for those concerned to gain access to other social rights. In other words, there is a risk of multiple exclusion. Hence, the need to implement integrated approaches in organising service delivery around users' multiple needs.

The Malta Conference worked hard to find out why access to social protection, employment, education, health and housing can be impeded and proposed measures to make access easier. The Declaration, adopted by the Conference, calls on Governments and other political, social and business actors to follow these measures in order to ensure easy access to social rights, especially for the most vulnerable. These measures should be based on principles of solidarity, equality and transparency.

In 2003, the Committee of Ministers will be invited to endorse a Recommendation containing the policy guidelines prepared by the Conference. The Malta Conference is a landmark in the development of the Social Cohesion Strategy.

Newsletter: What do you think are the main threats to social cohesion in contemporary European societies?

The marginalisation of whole segments of the population is undoubtedly the main threat to social cohesion and to political stability. The exclusion from society of population groups, be they elderly persons, persons with disabilities or ethnic minorities is not only a violation of basic human rights but a dangerous attitude which could lead to conflicts and social unrest.

Some situations are intolerable. The treatment of the Roma populations in most of our member states is perhaps one of the best examples. It is unacceptable in Europe today that thousands of people are allowed to live in miserable conditions, without proper shelter, without water and electricity and without drainage- and most of the time segregated from the rest of society and discriminated against in all aspects of life.

As an organisation with a particular concern for human rights we are actively involved in promoting the development of coherent and comprehensive strategies which will help to break the vicious circle of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment. Our work is not limited to making recommendations but extends to field work and to direct contacts with the national and local authorities concerned. Thanks to these activities several countries have passed anti-discrimination legislation and carried out reforms, particularly in education and health.

We are also aware that decisions concerning Roma can no longer be taken without involving the Roma in the decision-making process. An initiative launched by Mrs. Halonen, the President of Finland, to set up a consultative European forum for the Roma will go a long way in giving a voice to the Roma in Europe and enable them to set down their priorities themselves. Our organisation is involved in this initiative and is currently examining its implementation and the links which such a forum would have with the Council of Europe.

Interviewer: Cathie Burton, Council of Europe Press Officer



Miranda Vuolasranta, a Finnish Roma woman, is the first Roma to work at the Council of Europe. Seconded by the Finnish

government for a period of one year, she started working in the Directorate General for Social Cohesion in the Roma/Gypsy Division in early October 2002.

Her way to the Council of Europe has been long, colourful and difficult, starting from a semi-sedentary travelling life in a caravan. Her family had its first fixed home when she was 7 years old and she was then able to go to the comprehensive school. On her first school day the other children threw stones at her and screamed "Gypsy go away, you don't belong here". On that day, she decided to prove that it would be her school one day and her world also. These nomadic memories and their complexity have acted as a driving force all her life and determined her choices. Her father used to say to the children: "Roma have to learn to survive even if he/she will be left on a bare rock." The moral of this was that it is always possible to find a way to solve problems.

Miranda Vuolasranta lived in Sweden for nine years and qualified as a teacher of own mother tongue, romani, and romani history. She took part in the awakening of the Roma to society in general. Since 1978, she has been involved in creating and being a representative of several local, national and international NGOs. She has also worked for short periods in different countries such as Estonia, Israel, USA and Austria participating in different events and running development projects aimed at improving the living conditions of Roma.

For the last five years she has been working within the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs in the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. This is an interministerial body functioning as an expert body to the Council of State

aiming to promote the living conditions of Roma, to create national strategies, to follow and take part in legislative amendments, to monitor and give expert statements on questions related to national minority policies and Roma. Miranda Vuolasranta started at the ministry in 1997 as a planning officer and a year later she was nominated secretary general for this government body, being the first woman and the first Roma ever appointed to this position.

Five years in the Finnish administration has given her the chance to follow closely the development of unification and the growth of European human rights and social policy, where the question of minority rights and protection has become a central issue and a crucial factor in European democracy and stability.

From 1996, Miranda Vuolasranta represented Finland in the Council of Europe Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies (MG-S-ROM) which aims at improving the situation of Roma/Gypsies in Europe and promoting their interests.

In January this year, Miranda Vuolasranta gave a presentation of the main Roma cultural characteristics to the DG - III Roma/Gypsy Division staff to help others understand better the Roma community. Despite living mostly outside mainstreaming European society, the Roma have been able to maintain their distinctiveness and their old cultural traditions. These cultural values are related to ancient oriental values based on a set of interconnected rules concerning gender and age. Honouring the elderly because of their life experiences and the importance of children and family life form the basis of their culture. Beliefs are based on the oriental extended family view which considers that the rights of individuals are not important, as the welfare of the individual is based on the common well-being of the family as a whole.

At the Council of Europe, Miranda Vuolasranta is currently involved in a number of major activities and particularly in the joint project of the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities,

the Council of Europe and the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) "Roma Women and Access to Public Health Care". A report on the access of Roma women to public health care services in Council of Europe member States will be launched during a major intergovernmental conference planned for May 2003. The primary aim of this Conference is to provide member States with policy recommendations to ensure adequate health care for Roma women on a non-discriminatory basis. A spin-off of this project is the establishment of an International Romani Women's Network (IRWN). One of its immediate goals is to lobby the governments effectively at the intergovernmental Conference on Roma Women and Access to Public Health Care. The network will also raise awareness about violation of Roma women's rights and encourage and empower young Roma women.

She is also involved in the Council of Europe project "Education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe", which aims *inter alia* at the harmonisation and production of textbooks, workbooks and teacher-guides in romani for comprehensive schools and for romani children from grade 1-9 in Europe. A conference on the harmonisation of teaching materials in the romani language will be held in Strasbourg on 26-27 May 2003.

Following a proposal made by the Finnish President, Mrs Halonen, Miranda Vuolasranta is involved in the setting up of a European Forum for Roma. This would aim to give a voice to the Roma on a political level and to contribute to the on-going work of gathering Roma populations' experience in the field. The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers has instructed its Rapporteur Group on Social and Health Questions (GR-SOC) to examine this initiative.

Miranda Vuolasranta's participation in the activities of the Council of Europe is an enriching experience for all those who work with her.

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Gender mainstreaming in social policies

Since the inception of its Strategy for Social Cohesion, the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) has been concerned with equality between men and women. The strategy adopted in May 2000 is currently being revised and the CDCS has decided to pay greater attention to equality between women and men, as it firmly believes that this principle is an important ingredient of social cohesion and should therefore be promoted in all its activities.

For example, in September 2001 the CDCS and other steering committees took part in a pilot project conducted by the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG) to introduce gender mainstreaming in the work programmes of the Council of Europe's various steering committees.

At its 8th meeting in late May 2002, the CDCS therefore held a debate on the subject of gender mainstreaming in social policies. At the end of the discussions, the Committee proposed that in its new project on social services, to be launched in 2003 (*see article on page 6 on this subject*), account be taken from the outset of the need for equality between the sexes.

This new project will focus on user involvement, which is also an important aspect of the integrated social strategies designed to combat social exclusion by helping the vulnerable members of society to become more independent. In this connection, the CDCS considers "gender" to be particularly important since women and men do not necessarily have the same needs.

The CDCS and the CDEG therefore organised a meeting of experts from various fields and specialists on equality between women and men and other social issues in Strasbourg on 13 December 2002 to discuss the following question: why is sexual identity important in social services?

During the discussion it emerged, in the light of several examples of good practices adopted in some member states, that it was important to consider users – both women and men - as resources and not as potential sources of problems, that account should be taken of the fact that

the vast majority of social service providers were women and of the possible effects of this on service provision and that it was essential to have tools for evaluating practical gender mainstreaming measures.

Emphasis was placed on the 3R method – ie Representation, Resources and Reality – which had already been successfully used in several studies in the social services sector in Sweden to analyse differences in the situation of men and women.

The results of this seminar will be forwarded to the Group of Specialists on User Involvement in Social Services (CS-US), whose first meeting will be held in Freiburg (Germany) from 7 to 9 May 2003.

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Access to social rights: follow-up to the Malta Conference

Organised jointly by the Council of Europe and the Maltese Ministry for Social Policy, the Conference on "Access to Social Rights" was held at St Julian's in Malta on 14 and 15 November 2002. Information on the conference is available on the Internet at the following address: <http://www.coe.int/SocialRights> (*see also the article in Newsletter No 7*).

On the basis of the report on *Access to Social Rights in Europe* by Professor Mary Daly (Queen's University, Belfast), the conference discussed the obstacles to access to social rights and underlined the importance of implementing measures aimed at promoting the full exercise of social rights, especially by the most vulnerable groups in our European societies.

In their Final Declaration, the participants called on governments and other political, social and business partners to develop and implement policies promoting access to social rights in accordance with a specific list of policy guidelines and resulting measures. They also recommended that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe support the continuation of the Council's work on promoting recognition of and effective access to social rights, in addition to instructing the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) to prepare a draft recommendation on the subject and

Parliamentary Assembly: Challenges of social policy in our ageing societies

At its last part-session in January 2003 the Parliamentary Assembly debated the challenges that demographic trends pose for our society. The ageing of the population and falling fertility rates not only imply changes in social policy but will also have consequences for the economy, health care, culture, education, ethics and immigration, among other policy areas. Pointing out that these developments concern all Council of Europe member states, the members of the Assembly welcomed the report on "the challenges of social policy in our ageing societies" presented by Gyula Hegyi, rapporteur of the Social, Family and Health Affairs Committee, and on 29 January 2003 unanimously adopted Recommendation 1591.

Demographic trends in Europe are shaped by two parallel developments: a rise in life expectancy and declining fertility rates. Europe is currently leading the population ageing process in the world. Today, those aged 60 or over make up about 20% of the population. It is estimated that by 2050 the same group will account for 33%. The fertility rate is reported to have declined dramatically in the last two decades to an average of 1.4, dropping below the replacement level of 2.1 in virtually all Council of Europe member countries.

Of special concern are the financial and economic consequences of these trends, especially the effects on the pension system. Over time, fewer and fewer workers will have to support more and more older people. The growing imbalance between the number of those who are employed and the number of pensioners is regarded as a ticking time bomb. Therefore the Assembly calls on the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to provide guidance to the member States in their efforts to reform national pension schemes, while maintaining, however, the minimum standards enshrined in the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security.

encouraging ratification of Council of Europe legal instruments in the social field.

It is against this background that follow-up to the Malta Conference is being carried out by the Directorate General of Social Cohesion with the support of the Council's member states.

To ensure the widest possible circulation of the report, several member states have undertaken to have it translated into their national languages. The report originally published in English and French will therefore be available in 11 other languages: Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, German, Italian, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

To mark the publication of these translations, several member states are planning to hold national seminars at which government experts and representatives of local authorities, social partners, social protection organisations and NGOs, as well as other players from civil society, will be invited to study and discuss in greater depth the report's recommendations in the light of their respective national situations. Seminars of this kind are due to be held in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Lithuania and Portugal, as well as Finland, France, Ireland, Malta, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine. The first seminar presenting the report was held in the Czech Republic in December 2002.

In addition, a specific recommendation on access to social rights is under preparation and reports providing a clearer picture of the difficulties that certain vulnerable groups face every day may be produced shortly. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe will be asked to adopt the recommendation in the course of 2003.

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User involvement in social services

Over the past years several studies and expert groups have been working on different issues relating to access to social rights. Recently increased attention has been given to the way in which users of social services are involved in their planning, delivery and evaluation and this is

increasingly considered as a key issue for social services as a whole. This new project on user involvement in social services is a follow-up to the earlier activities.

The CDCS approved the launch of this project at its November 2002 session. The Committee recognised the growing importance of users' rights and involvement in a context where social services are provided by an increasing number of different kinds of organisations (public and non-public). As many countries in all parts of Europe are engaged in a process of reforming social services it is timely to try to define a common view at a European level on this topic. The project should produce guidelines for both users and service providers on the rights and involvement of users in social services.

Mr Brian Munday, Professor at the European Institute of Social Services, University of Kent (U.K.) has been appointed as a consultant to prepare a study of the main features of social services in different parts of Europe (with emphasis on countries in Eastern and South Eastern Europe). The study will help to clarify differences between different clusters of member states, it will identify existing problems and identify core values already shared by member states concerning social services. The study will provide valuable background for all the subsequent work of this project.

In March 2003 the CDCS Bureau will select eight experts and four researchers or representatives of NGOs, who will form the specialist group on user involvement in social services (CS-US). This group will present their report and suggest policy guidelines and/or recommendations on users' rights and users' involvement in European social services by June 2004.

Three meetings are planned, the first one will take place from 7-9 May 2003 in Freiburg, within the framework of the 76th German Welfare Congress. Two days will be used for the CS-US meeting and one day for the international event of the Congress. The participation of the experts in the international event of the Congress will be the opportunity for them to present specific study cases from their respective countries to a larger professional public. During this meeting Brian Munday will have the opportunity to

The demographic changes will also require a new approach to employment policy. The Assembly encourages the member states to campaign actively for later retirement and to implement more flexible types of employment. In the debate, Mr. Hegyi pointed out that early retirement carries the danger of poverty and social exclusion. Therefore the best solution is for people to work longer in healthy conditions with flexible employment, such as working at home or working shorter hours. To overcome the negative effects of ageing and depopulation on the workforce, the Assembly also recommends that the Committee of Ministers review migration policies in Europe and the impact of appropriate immigration policies.

Finally, the ageing of society makes new demands on healthcare systems. It is expected that the medical cost of treating illnesses that occur at a very advanced age (80 years and over) will grow exponentially as a result of scientific and technological advances in medicine. Nevertheless, ageing itself should not be seen as a disease and should not be seen as equivalent to frailty and sickness. Moreover, the point was made in the debate that elderly people should not be regarded as a burden. To protect the human dignity of the elderly by integrating them into society and giving them the possibility to choose freely their preferred lifestyle should be a moral obligation. A redefinition of individual and societal values and the search for more social solidarity is necessary.

It is now up to the Committee of Ministers to reply to the recommendation adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly and to suggest appropriate means of implementation.

The full text of the recommendation and the proceedings of the debate can be consulted on the website of the Parliamentary Assembly under the links "adopted texts" and "records" at following address: <http://assembly.coe.int>.

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present his initial study and comments. Through discussions on common denominators of successful practices, elements of promising policies and strategies will be identified.

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Forum for Children and Family: Seminar on corporal punishment of children within the family

On 21 November 2002 the Forum for Children and Families organised a seminar to raise awareness of the nature and extent of corporal punishment of children within the family and to consider causes and consequences. The seminar aimed to identify concrete measures that could be taken by the Council of Europe and its member states to prevent and eliminate corporal punishment of children within the family. The seminar was attended by national representatives from 22 Council of Europe member states, young people and representatives of international governmental and non-governmental bodies, national NGOs as well as representatives from several Council of Europe bodies.

The seminar was a contribution to the Organisation's Integrated Project "Responses to Violence in Everyday Life in a Democratic Society" (*see articles in issues No. 5 and 6 of the Newsletter*) and was opened by Ms de Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe. She set the agenda by firmly emphasising children's fundamental rights not to be assaulted and the need to combat all forms of everyday violence including in the family house. Mr Newell, Joint Co-ordinator of the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children continued by outlining the progress made towards abolition of corporal punishment in the member states while taking into account the problems of realising children's human rights in this regard and looking at ways forward. Ms Långberg, Principal Secretary to the Child Safety Commission in Sweden told the seminar how the ban on corporal punishment has affected child protection in Sweden, while James Anderson and Laura Dent, two representatives from youth organisations, communicated the views of

young children by highlighting some of the results from studies and campaigns.

A panel of representatives from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the European Network of Ombudsmen for Children, two teenagers, a representative from Austria as well as from the Polish "Nobody's Children Foundation" highlighted preventive measures that could be taken to reduce and stop corporal punishment of children within the family.

To this effect, emphasis was put on:

- the need for member states to fulfil their obligations under international human rights mechanisms, and in particular the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child prohibiting all forms of violence, including all corporal punishment against children in the family and in other settings;
- the fact that legal reforms need to be accompanied by allocation of resources to ensure adequate awareness raising about corporal punishment and its harmful effects as well as public and parent education to change attitudes and promote positive non-violent forms of child-rearing;
- the necessity of informing both adults and children about children's human rights, including their right to protection from violence;
- the need to conduct studies on corporal punishment and the interrelationship between different forms of violence, to better understand the scope, incidence, nature, causes and severity of the problem;
- the importance of taking into account the views and experiences of children and young people.

The report of the seminar (CS-Forum (2002)13 Addendum) is available from the Secretariat. A document containing information about international legal instruments, statements and reports as well as a document containing information about the situation in member states with regard to corporal punishment of children are also available.

As follow-up to the seminar, a handbook will be prepared which will highlight and help member states meet their human right obligations to end corporal punishment of children.

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Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe: recent and future activities by the Committee on Social Cohesion

The plenary Committee's activities

In June 2002, the plenary Committee adopted the Report from Diane BUNYAN (United Kingdom, R) *The exercise of women's individual voting rights: a democratic requirement* and the Recommendation 111 (2002), pointing out that the exercise of women's individual voting rights is a fundamental value in the democracies of the Council of Europe's member States.

The report stresses the paramount importance in a democracy of a woman's right to an individual, free and secret vote and underlines that the problem of family voting, observed in several countries in Greater Europe, is unacceptable from the standpoint of women's fundamental rights. It also proposes a number of measures that could be implemented to combat family voting and increase women's participation in public and political life.

The activity allowed raising awareness on the challenges of the issue of family voting within the Council of Europe (Venice Commission, Parliamentary Assembly, Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men).

The Committee has also suggested that it investigate the issue of gender mainstreaming at local and regional level, pursuing in this way the work carried out by the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG). Such an approach should help to ensure that gender mainstreaming is incorporated in the activities of municipalities and regions.

The plenary Committee has also begun work with a view to preparing a report on policies implemented by towns and regions in the former Yugoslavia to integrate or assist the

The European committee on migration activities

The Final Declaration adopted by the European Ministers responsible for Migration Affairs at the Helsinki Conference on "Migrants in our society: policy choices for the 21st century" (16-17 September 2002) sets out an ambitious programme of action for the Council of Europe, covering the following topics:

- regional and international co-operation;
- demographic dimension of migration;
- integration policies;
- access to minimum rights;
- a comprehensive migration management strategy.

The European committee on migration (CDMG) will focus its forthcoming activities on these themes, particularly on the implementation of the migration management strategy, integration policies and the status of migrant workers.

Towards a migration management strategy

The policy paper (CDMG (2000)11 rev), "Towards a migration management strategy" will continue to provide the framework for a series of initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue and partnership between countries of origin, transit and destination. The objective of this dialogue is to examine ways of ensuring orderly migration, social cohesion and the rights of the individual. The aim is to work towards a pan-European strategy through regional debates.

Following a regional round table in Sofia (October 2002) on labour migration as an alternative to irregular migration, a major Mediterranean Migration Conference will take place in Malta on 10-11 April 2003. This initiative of the Maltese chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe will bring together high-level national policy-makers and researchers from North Africa and Southern Europe to discuss ways of improving migration flows in the region. A regional round table is also planned to take place in Kiev in the Autumn.

A proposal to set up a European migration observatory is under active consideration as an instrument for implementing the Strategy. The proposed observatory could

have an important role to play as an instrument for:

- observation (coordinating data collection on migratory flows, assessing challenges and trends in the field of migration) and analysis (common understanding and diagnosis of collected data);
- communication and dialogue for partnership (sharing best practices on migration management, exchanging information on the admission regulations, including legal work possibilities);
- action (developing common policy instruments, providing tools for estimating future migration); and
- fund-raising (promoting investment in areas such as the Mediterranean region in favour of migrant populations).

New integration policies

Effective integration policies form a key part of the migration management strategy, and an area in which the CDMG has a long tradition. The cornerstone of the CDMG's activities in this area is the promotion of the Framework of Integration Policies and the recommendations and conclusions of the report on *Diversity and Cohesion: new challenges for the integration of immigrants and minorities*.

Current activities include both programmes of technical assistance (national round tables on community relations, training for the personnel of migration services) and expert committee work on the development of practical measures for the application of the employment aspects of the Framework on Integration Policies (particularly, access to public sector employment for non-nationals – media, police, health and education).

European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers

May 1st 2003 will be the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers. To mark this event a promotion campaign will be undertaken with a view to promoting the signature and ratification of the Convention, including technical assistance to national authorities on the compatibility of their legislation. Moldova signed the convention on 11 July 2002, following a programme of technical assistance carried out during 2000.

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return of refugees and displaced persons in the countries of this region. To help prepare this report, the Committee has drawn up a detailed questionnaire for circulation to a number of local and regional authorities in the countries concerned, with a view to obtaining up-to-date information. Analysis of the various experiences will be used to prepare a number of recommendations for the towns and regions concerned.

Activities within the Chamber of Regions and the Chamber of Local Authorities

The Committee of the Chamber of Regions is due to examine the consequences of demographic change on regional authorities. Population ageing and migration flows directly affect public policy at regional level. Several European regions have devised innovative programmes to incorporate these changes and develop specific measures for strengthening inter-generational solidarity. In particular, the Congress report will seek to identify the role that regions could play in co-ordinating sectorial policies, promoting the "active ageing" of the European public and encouraging the sharing of experience within a partnership-based network.

The Committee of the Chamber of Local Authorities is due to launch a new activity on the role of local authorities in fighting extreme poverty in towns, on the basis of replies to a questionnaire that was sent to the majority of towns and regions in the Council of Europe's 44 member States; at the same time, it will continue its activities in the field of local security policies in the light of terrorism and urban crime.

For further information on the activities of the Congress of local and regional authorities in Europe, please visit the Website on following address: <http://www.coe.fr/cplre/>

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Testing and monitoring of the Methodological Guidebook on Using Social Cohesion Indicators

At the request of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS), the Division for the Development of Social Cohesion has spent two years developing a methodological guidebook on using social cohesion indicators, suitable for the various stages of monitoring and evaluating social and economic policies and their impact on social cohesion.

This guide is now in the final stages of preparation, and will be assessed throughout 2003. In essence, this means that the guide will be tested to ensure the validity of the work conducted so far in certain specific regions, at national, regional or local level, and to highlight whether the proposed indicators are appropriate in various contexts.

The guide approaches the concept of social cohesion in the light of the Council of Europe's Social Cohesion Strategy, and proposes an evaluation system that takes account of the various aspects of social cohesion. It highlights how the concept changes depending on the historical context. This innovative concept-based approach makes it possible to identify a framework of objectives and key elements in social cohesion in modern Europe, and thus to pinpoint the main questions that arise and suggest indicators for answering them.

Accordingly, use of the guide is also intended to highlight problems and challenges in terms of social cohesion in the regions where the exercise is carried out. It is thus an aid to analysis and decision-making as well as an analysis tool.

Beyond a comprehensive approach to social cohesion, the guide analyses the main tasks for which the public authorities are responsible and the various criteria involved in citizens' well-being (employment, income, health, nutrition, education and training), and seeks to give particular attention to the position of the social groups that are most likely to suffer

from exclusion (migrants, minorities, handicapped people, children, elderly people and women). This approach is based on various Council of Europe recommendations in each of these areas. It also highlights the complementarity in the views of various social players, and their co-ordination in a shared frame of reference. As a result, the guide should be considered as a resource, in which the various players can find indicators of specific interest while retaining an overview of the common context.

Testing of the guide in various European regions will enable the usefulness of the proposed methodology and the various tools and indicators to be discussed. It will also allow for improvement of the guide and the addition a few case studies before publication.

This will provide an opportunity to clarify the essential elements in social cohesion, which could be used as the basis for developing a European social cohesion index.

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Improving access to social protection for vulnerable groups in the South Caucasus

The project on "Improving access to social protection for vulnerable groups in the South Caucasus" is part of the Joint Programme of Co-operation between the European Commission and the Council of Europe to promote and strengthen democratic stability and prevent conflict in the South Caucasus region.

The main objective of the project is to facilitate access to social protection for vulnerable groups (such as the unemployed, elderly, orphans, refugees and people with disabilities) by improving:

- co-operation between service providers – local government centres and agencies, non-governmental and community-based organisations;
- the quality of the information available to the target groups on their rights and entitlements;

Roma Women's International Network

Inadequate health care is one of the aspects of the poor living conditions facing Roma communities and this has a particularly negative impact on Roma women. Although Roma women are the primary caregivers in their family and their community, little information is available on their situation and especially their health needs.

The joint project "Roma Women and Access to Public Health Care" (EUMC/OSCE-HCNM/Council of Europe) is an attempt to shed more light on this issue and provide member states with policy recommendations and examples of good practices to eliminate discrimination and improve access to health care for Roma, Gypsies and Traveller women and those in their care.

The project is now drawing to an end: the fact finding report, which is the key component of the project, is being submitted to the governments for comments and will be presented for discussion at the final conference planned for end May 2003.

In addition to the report, the first meeting of Roma women NGOs, sponsored by international organisations, was organised in Vienna on the 28-29 November 2002 to provide a balanced picture of the current situation of the health status of Roma women. Representatives of Roma women NGOs from 25 countries discussed their experiences in accessing public health care which, despite the variety of situations across Europe, are similar. They identified the key areas of concern and action, examples of good practices and practical solutions outside existing governmental policies and programmes.

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- the efficiency of communication provided by social protection agencies.

The project is being implemented at the local level in Armenia and in Azerbaijan. The local entities selected as pilot areas are the Lori region in northern Armenia, and the Guba region and Nizami district in Azerbaijan. The Lori region is typical of most regions in the country, with two exceptions. It was severely hit by the devastating earthquake in 1988 and has been a special target for many international social aid activities since then. This has resulted in a particular openness towards initiatives of this kind, which was the main reason for choosing this region. The Guba region is a mountain area presenting mainly accessibility problems; the Nizami district of Baku is a particularly poor area with a large number of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and people with disabilities, who are, to a large extent, dependent on social assistance.

Two "brainstorming" seminars have already been held in each country with the purpose of defining the existing barriers to access to social protection benefits or services. The participants came up with a number of good ideas on how to improve information on social rights, although they also underlined the problems they face in enabling the welfare system to keep pace with needs, as well as problems of understaffing and lack of modern equipment such as computers.

In order to agree on and to design projects to overcome these barriers and improve the services to the local population, a multilateral seminar was held in Budapest on 6-8 March 2003. The objective was to show participants (managers of social protection agencies and NGO's working at local level in Armenia and Azerbaijan) how the delivery of social services and benefits can be improved. Particular attention was paid to the Guidelines for improving access to social protection which were adopted by the European Committee for Social cohesion (CDCS) in 2001. The participants have been requested to present partnership projects to be implemented at the local

level, which aim at breaking the barriers to access to social protection for specific vulnerable groups. These projects will be evaluated on the basis of several criteria, in particular their innovative character, cost efficiency and sustainability. Moreover, some of them will be funded through the Joint Programme of Co-operation between the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

An assessment of the results and the impact of these projects will be carried out by the end of this year 2003. Particular attention will be paid to the possibility of replicating the most successful experiences in other regions in the years to come.

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Conference on social and employment activation policies

The Conference on "Social and Employment Activation Policies in the Volga Federal District: what can be done for the most vulnerable groups?" was held in the town of Nizhny Novgorod (some 600 km east of Moscow) from 28 October to 3 November 2002, with the backing of the ARDOSS Agency and the Volga federal authorities. The purpose of the conference was to present a report on promoting access to employment for vulnerable groups and activation policies in the Volga Federal District, by Yevgeny Usachev and Sergey Surkov, which analyses the situation in the region, and to discuss experiences in social and economic activation in EU member states and the former East Germany.

The complex Volga region, which comprises both Muslims and Orthodox Christians, is faced with the problem of converting its arms industry and dealing with the consequences. It is therefore looking for alternatives to help it overcome the ensuing problems of unemployment and vulnerability.

The main aim was to promote integrated and ethical approaches in

This meeting achieved one of the key objectives of the project: to foster the networking and the participation of Roma women actively working on Roma women's issues. At the end of the meeting, participants expressed their desire to set up a pan-European network of Roma women NGOs to act as a pressure group as well as to develop common positions at the intergovernmental conference with a view to exercising a positive influence on states' policies.

The statutory meeting of this network was held in Strasbourg on 3-4 February 2003 under the auspices of the Council of Europe. To begin with, the International Roma Women's Network (IRWN) will be an informal network with a secretariat responsible for co-ordinating the initial activities. Its charter is open for signature to all Roma women wishing to join the network.

With a view to preparing the IRWN's secretariat for the intergovernmental conference the Council of Europe Migration and Roma/Gypsies/Travellers Department will organise an advocacy and lobbying training session on 2-3 April 2003.

News from the Group of Specialists on Roma/Gypsies (MG-S-ROM)

An *ad hoc* working group met on 4-5 February 2003 in Strasbourg in order to draft a new chapter on health issues to be included in the draft recommendation which already covers education, employment and soon housing issues. This draft will then be submitted to the MG-S-ROM for further discussion at its 15th meeting on 24-25 March 2003 in Strasbourg.

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seeking solutions for the most vulnerable groups, particularly in the fields of employment and social policy, and also to stimulate discussion on possibilities for co-operation between local or regional authorities in West European countries and the Volga federal authorities. The Social Cohesion Development Division therefore invited experts representing the Directorate for Production and Employment of the Emilia Romagna Region (Italy), two integrated programmes in Italy and Austria, the Padua *Banca Etica* (Italy) and the "Forum Synergies" European Network, as well as the Director of the European Monitoring Centre on Change (EMCC) attached to the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in Dublin.

The majority of the Russian participants (50 people) were "federal inspectors", university academics, staff from the government authorities in Nizhny Novgorod and Moscow and young professionals appointed by the Governor, Sergey Kiriyenko, in the different republics which make up the region and to innovate in public administration and seek appropriate solutions to the complex problems in the Volga region. Their drive and their commitment to the region and its future were striking.

At the end of the conference a visit was organised to the capital of the Cheboksary Republic to meet members of the business community and social affairs ministers. The conference provided the opportunity to identify those bodies which could become involved in the project and consider preparing co-operation programmes in specific areas to be decided at further meetings in the light of existing possibilities and expert appraisals.

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Greece is holding the European Union Presidency for the fourth time since its accession to the European Communities in 1981. Its slogan "Our Europe: sharing the future in a Community of Values" reflects the objective it has set itself for its term of office.

The priorities of the Greek agenda include first and foremost, of course, the enlargement of the EU – the Treaty governing the accession of the ten candidate countries is due to be signed in Athens in April 2003 – but also, and of greater relevance to social policies, the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy adopted in 2000, which aims to achieve "full employment and social cohesion" by 2010, and the framing of an EU policy on immigration, asylum and the management of external borders. There are also plans to hold a major debate on the future of Europe at the Thessaloniki European Council meeting in June 2003, on the basis of the proposals currently being drafted by the Convention.

At the Lisbon European Council meeting (March 2000), the EU set itself a new strategy objective for the next decade: *to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion*. Although the European Commission believes that the Social Policy Agenda is "on track" to strengthen the Lisbon Process, it will have to undergo a mid-term review this year, as provided for in the Nice Treaty. The European Commission is therefore holding a major conference in Brussels on 19 and 20 March 2003, which will help to take stock of recent achievements and will concentrate on future activities and measures. The participants have been invited to share, discuss and compare their different aspirations with regard to the future of social and employment policy.

In the field of employment and social affairs, the Greek Presidency held a conference in Athens on 13 and 14 February 2003 on the theme "The Future of Work: Key Challenges for the European Employment Strategy". This major event of the Greek Presidency focused on new trends in the organisation of work and future needs in this field. The purpose of the conference was to contribute to the discussions concerning the review of the European Employment Strategy (EES) to bring it more closely into line with the

Lisbon strategy objective. This review will also be one of the main subjects on the agenda of the Spring European Council meeting in June 2003.

Immigration issues are one of the main priorities of the Greek Presidency, which is determined to develop an effective common European policy on not only asylum, cross-border co-operation, the financing of infrastructures and external co-operation but also labour and social matters relating to immigrants. It believes that the issue of migration should not be viewed only in the context of protecting external borders and co-operating with third countries in controlling migration flows and countering illegal immigration. The Presidency is equally interested in promoting issues relating to legal immigration and strengthening policies for the integration of non-EU citizens. The Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Tassos Giannitsis, also pointed out that "the objective is to create barriers to social tensions and to extreme political forces which take advantage of such conditions". At the Thessaloniki European Council meeting the Greek Presidency will take concrete steps to establish common objectives and a set of standard practices, offering a balanced and long-term approach to immigration.

Many other major events have been scheduled throughout the Greek Presidency. Relevant information is available on the Greek Presidency's official website: <http://www.eu2003.gr>

Another landmark is the European Year for People with Disabilities 2003. This is being co-organised by the Greek Presidency and the European Commission, and was launched on 26 January 2003 at an official ceremony at the *Megaro Moussikis* in Athens, in the presence of the President of the Republic, Constantinos Stephanopoulos, representatives of member states' governments and MEPs. All the speakers at the conference stressed the importance of the right to full social integration for the 37 million European citizens who have disabilities, while Ms Diamantopoulou said that this year must mark the start of a lasting change for our "invisible citizens". For further information on the EYPD, please see the Internet site: <http://www.eypd2003.org/eypd/index.jsp>

This year's **special issue** of the "Social Cohesion: developments" newsletter, which is due to be published mid-May, will focus on the theme of the integration of people with disabilities.

The third World Social Forum (WSF) which took place on 23-28 January 2003 in Porto Alegre (Brazil) has been a triumph since its outset: it drew a staggering number of 100 000 activists, including 20 763 representatives of 156 countries and more than 25 000 young people. The WSF, which started as a contrast to the World Economic Forum (WEF) held in Davos (Switzerland), has been described by its organisers as a "factory of ideas" where groups and movements of civil society come together to pursue their thinking, debate ideas democratically, formulate proposals, share their experiences freely and network for effective action.

Under the slogan "Another world is possible", the WSF has been conceived as a world process of seeking and building an "alternative" type of globalisation based on solidarity, democracy and sustainability, rather than simply an event localised in time and place.

On the agenda of this year's WSF were 1 700 workshops and seminars organised around the following five thematic areas:

- Democratic sustainable development;
- Principles and values, human rights, diversity and equality;
- Media, culture and counter-hegemony;
- Political power, civil society and democracy;
- Democratic world order, fight against militarism and promoting peace.

The latter theme has been added purposely this year within the context of growing concern about the prospect of a war against Iraq. Consequently, peace has gained strength among the slogans of the WSF as confirmed by the opening march led by tens of thousands of protesters demonstrating against the war. Former president of Portugal, Mario Soares presented a "Manifesto for peace and against war" which was signed by personalities from all ideological currents and which condemned "the propaganda of war".

The Council of Europe, represented by Gabriella Battaini, Director General of Social Cohesion, and Gilda Farrell, Head of the Social Cohesion Development Division, was particularly involved in the debates on solidarity in economics, ethical finances and citizen's commitment initiatives. The purpose was to understand what exactly is comprised in this type of initiatives and how they contribute to building social cohesion. Other issues such as human rights, diversity, equality and ethnicity, which are more directly linked to the current work of the Council of Europe, were also extensively debated. Education, health and social security were more discussed as a matter of rights than benefits.

Globalisation of human rights

Two major human rights organisations stressed the importance of human rights in the world integration processes in order to provide ethical groundings. They also emphasised the need of a real globalising social justice and human rights in order to fight inequalities, poverty and insecurity. In the same way as governments are bound through international rules to respect and protect human rights, so economic and financial actors should be submitted to the same obligations as their activities and rules may have an important impact on human rights due to the economic globalisation. Thus, ensuring responsible behaviour by these actors would help guarantee the globalisation of human rights.

The fight for equalities and social justice

This year's edition of the WSF has shown that the countries from the South are thinking about their own model of development and that corruption, inequality and social injustice would no longer be tolerated by civil society. The New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) provides a good example of how African leaders commit themselves to prevent conflicts, promote good governance and gain autonomy by deciding upon investments coming from developed countries. The fight against inequalities

between poor and rich countries requires a constant mobilisation of the civil society at an international, national and local level in order to support the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of development policies of poor countries. Although international organisations have a major role to play in promoting social justice through their legal standards, NGOs should be full partners in the development of the world trade and economic policies. Though this would require full recognition of human rights primacy.

Migrants and refugees

The prospect of an imminent war against Iraq, and the consequences this might have on civilian populations, was at the heart of the discussion of the panel *Beyond National Borders: Migrants and Refugees*. Panellists raised the alarm that there has been too little reflection on the probability that a conflict would result in an exodus of refugees from Iraq and a significant level of internal displacement. At worst, such developments might also put at risk the security of neighbouring countries. Most of Iraq's neighbours already host thousands of Iraqi refugees and are reluctant to accept greater numbers. Such a situation could mean that the responsibility of dealing with refugees and internally displaced people would fall on international aid agencies which might only have a limited capacity to operate.

Civil society and the government

The importance of maintaining independent social movements was stressed in one of the panels within the fourth thematic area. Jose Genoio, president of the Brazilian Workers Party, rejected both the "traditional" models of a "Stalinist" party-state or a party that is "an annex of the government" and that of a party standing at "the opposition". However, panellists agreed on a necessary albeit uneasy alliance between social movements and left-wing political parties. As stated by Willy Madisha of the Confederation of

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South African Trade Unions, “the duty of social movements is to support progressive action”, while “the duty of the government is to engage with the social movements as part of the parcel of team players”.

The future of the World Social Forum

No common declaration was adopted but discussions are going to be compiled in documents which will be sent to the governments, NGOs, political parties and trade unions. Furthermore, it has been decided that the WSF will no longer take place at the same time as the World Economic Forum. In addition, WSF 2004 will be hosted in India in order to facilitate the participation of Asian and African organizations. This geographical change will be an opportunity to analyse new and different contexts and formulate new strategies accordingly.

Although WSF 2003 was without doubt an achievement, in future it will have to take up new challenges in terms of organisation. It will indeed have to combine an increasing participation with a greater convergence of various sectors and trends of thoughts – which guarantees diversity. The necessity of a conceptual quality as well as a clear communication of the addressed trends is also to be integrated. In this way, and in order to find a solution to this contradiction between “quantity and quality”, the implementation of a WSF permanent network was discussed. A continuing network of dialogue and action would permit concrete results throughout the year, could ensure its unity and also serve the collective characteristic of the WSF.

Further information can be found in Portuguese, Spanish, French and English on following website: <http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/home.asp>

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The Russian Federation: challenges in the area of housing reform

In December 2002, parliamentarians taking part in the debates on ratification of the Council of Europe’s European Social Charter (Revised) recommended that the Government of the Russian Federation table a draft law for this purpose with the Duma by September 2003. It is recommended that this draft law be based on the assumption that a maximum number of Charter articles will be ratified. Nonetheless, the Duma has serious doubts regarding ratification of a whole series of articles. One of these is Article 31 – the right to housing.

Russia is now firmly committed to a painful (and consequently long-deferred) reform process: that of the housing market and associated services. The latter term covers urban heating and water services, maintenance and repair of buildings, and other housing services that are currently provided by the public sector and for whose quality local authorities are responsible. Housing is the most geographically scattered and dilapidated of the remaining inherited monopolies, which are essential targets in the current reform phase.

In a harsh climate such as Russia’s, the lack of care arising from financial and economic difficulties in recent years has resulted in a degradation of housing stock and heating networks. Consequently, and given that almost all towns have central-heating systems, a large section of the population is regularly confronted with heating failures, breakdowns and collapse in the depth of winter: homes in 30 towns, housing 17 million people, were affected this winter.

However, modernisation and new sources of funding will only be possible if new economic rules are introduced to the sector, allowing for competition, the dynamism of

consumers’ associations, and new forms of interaction between the public and private sectors.

However, in the absence of a well-structured reform programme and given the poorly-thought-out initiatives taken by certain regional authorities, attempts to reform this branch have so far resulted only in price rises. Indeed, this has already led to public expressions of discontent in some regions. The main thrust of these reforms consisted in requiring the population to pay the full cost of services.

Thanks to state grants, rents have remained relatively low throughout the recent transition period. This was not merely a precondition for the population’s survival during a period in which incomes plummeted spectacularly; indirectly, it was also a condition for the public’s acceptance of other economic reforms. In addition, the Russian system of social transfers is exceptionally characterised by all sorts of category-based benefits.

The draft law proposed by the Government, supplemented by parliamentarians’ amendments, provides for targeted support for poor families rather than grants to service providers. Consideration is also being given to setting up individual bank accounts, into which all the various types of housing-related social transfers could be paid. Welfare support is envisaged for families for whom rent (all services included) represents more than 22% of total income. In addition, and on parliamentarians’ insistence, provisions allowing for the expulsion of individuals from their homes owing to indebtedness, without prior agreement by the courts, have been removed from the Government’s draft law.

Russia’s climate and size, the degree of centralisation of service provision and, undoubtedly, the attitudes of people who are used

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to relying completely on the State for the allocation and maintenance of housing and the sharing of costs, mean that this reform will be unprecedented in its complexity.

However, in addition to the objective difficulty of the task in hand, there are other factors which make the social results of this reform even more daunting. From an economic point of view, reform of this monopoly is secondary to reform of the energy sector, which is being implemented simultaneously. The first consequences of this reform emerged last month, and have led to an increase in electricity bills by as much as 60% in some regions; the government is powerless to control this development.

The fate of the draft law on housing reform, which will have a direct influence on "access to housing of an appropriate standard" is also linked to the 2003 electoral period, now underway in Russia.

Rent increases and the abolition of category-based benefits for fairly large sections of the population are not "easy" questions to raise prior to parliamentary elections, which are due in December.

For the moment, the draft law on housing sector reform has passed the first of the three necessary readings in the Duma. The package of laws on energy sector reform was adopted at its final reading in the Duma on 21 February 2003.

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Institute to Promote Social Links

The Institute to Promote Social Links (I.P.L.S. - *Institut pour la promotion du lien social*) was founded in Strasbourg in June 2000 with a view to forging links between university and city. It seeks to contribute to appeasing social tensions and developing social cohesion. Social relations are currently under threat from anti-social behaviour and violence in all areas of society and we therefore need to analyse and improve our understanding of those areas where social malfunctioning is threatening the social fabric, and we need to encourage attitudes and behaviour that do not cause harm to others. Achieving this objective calls for close collaboration between academics from a range of disciplines as well as those active in the different social fields. Only by bringing together different viewpoints and drawing on both theory and practice can we hope to find relevant answers to the multiplicity of problems that citizens and their communities face in the wide-ranging field of social interaction. Theoretical constructs and models are by themselves insufficient for us to grasp the full significance of what is happening on the ground. It is essential to know and understand how the facts thus brought to light are subjectively perceived and experienced by all those concerned, whatever their status.

The I.P.L.S. organises study days in close collaboration with those directly involved in social and educational activities in the field. Two such events have so far been held in Strasbourg: "Promoting social relationships in cities" (22 March 2003) and "Illiteracy and social relationships" (17 May 2003). These brought together academics and practitioners in both workshops and general discussions, leading to instructive and fruitful exchanges of opinion. Each study day is generally

followed by seminars in which one of the specific themes is further developed. Action research in the field is another of our activities as part of wider projects sponsored by the City of Strasbourg or the French state.

The I.P.L.S. has also established a number of study and action groups that are also concerned with the situation on the ground. It has identified three main themes - "preventing at-risk behaviour", "schools and society" and "combating social segregation" - because it believes that young persons' disenchantment with life and their environment is reflected in three types of behaviour: risk-taking of varying degrees of seriousness, anti-social conduct and outright violence, and rejection of school, generally accompanied by failure in the classroom and in the job market. Each of these has to be tackled separately, in terms of both analysing and interpreting these social processes and phenomena and designing and implementing means of remedying them. However, the Institute is well aware that such attitudes and forms of conduct have common roots and believes that, although absolutely necessary, immediate and closely targeted action must be supplemented by a more in-depth approach, which is vital for the future of our society. While involving itself in the formulation of short-term and practical responses it also stresses the need for more co-ordination between the different areas of activity aimed at securing the gradual emergence of a shared approach that can reinforce and enhance the specific activities of individual agencies.

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ADOPTED TEXTS

Recommendations:

- *Rec(2003)2* of the Committee of Ministers on *neighbourhood services in disadvantaged urban areas* (adopted on 13 February 2003)
- Recommendation 1587 (2002) of the Parliamentary Assembly on *Residence, legal status and freedom of movement of migrant workers in Europe: lessons from the case of Portugal* (adopted on 18 November 2002)

Resolutions:

- Res 1310 (2002) of the Parliamentary Assembly on *Maternity in Europe: improving social and health conditions* (adopted on 18 November 2002)
- Res 1311 (2002) of the Parliamentary Assembly on *Functional food: serving the interests of the consumer or the food industry?* (adopted on 18 November 2002)

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Reports:

- Report on the Seminar *Corporal punishment of children within the family* - CS-Forum (2002)13 Addendum

Publications:

- *New social demands: the challenges of governance*, Trends in social cohesion Volume No. 4, Council of Europe Publishing, November 2002, ISBN 92-871-5012-5, 19€
- *Recent demographic developments in Europe 2002*, Council of Europe Publishing, December 2002, ISBN 92-871-5078-8, 23 €
- *The demographic characteristics of immigrant populations*, Council of Europe Publishing, 2002, ISBN 92-871-4974-7, 39€
- *Guide to the preparation, use and quality assurance of blood components* - 9th edition, Council of Europe Publishing, January 2003, ISBN 92-871-5075-3, 19 €

CALENDAR FROM MARCH TO SEPTEMBER 2003

Conferences:

- 10-11 April: "Migration in the Mediterranean: prospects for the future" Conference - (Malta)
- 23-24 April: High-level Conference on Housing Policies in South-East Europe - Paris (France)
- 7-8 May: 2nd European Conference of Ministers responsible for Integration Policies for People with Disabilities - Malaga (Spain)
- 27-28 May: Conference on Roma Women and Health - Strasbourg (France)
- 12-13 June: 7th Conference of European Health Ministers "Health, Dignity and Human Rights - the role and responsibility of Health Ministers in meeting the challenges of the new millennium" - Oslo (Norway)
- 18-19 Sept.: Euro-Mediterranean Conference on the importance of Social Security Standard-setting for Developing Social Cohesion - (Cyprus)

Seminars and other meetings:

- 26-27 May: Round Table on the harmonisation of teaching materials in Romani language - Strasbourg
- 3-5 Sept.: Joint Council of Europe/UNESCO consultation meeting on Family support policy for central and eastern Europe - Budapest (Hungary)

Committee Meetings:

- 24-25 March: 15th meeting of the Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies (MG-S-ROM) - Strasbourg
- 25-27 March : 45th meeting of the European Committee on Migration (CDMG) - Strasbourg
- 25-26 March: 5th Forum for Children and Families (debate: the role and the competences of ombudspersons for Children in Europe) - Strasbourg
- 7-9 April: 3rd meeting of the Working group on children at risk and children in care - Strasbourg
- 7-9 May: 1st meeting of the Specialist Group on user involvement in social services (CS-US) - Freiburg (Germany)
- 20-22 May: 10th meeting of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) - Strasbourg
- 4-5 June: 53rd meeting of the European Health Committee (CDSP) - Strasbourg
- 4-6 June: European Population Committee (CAHP) - Strasbourg
- 19-20 June: 3rd meeting of the Group of Specialists on employment for marginalised groups (CS-MA) - Strasbourg
- 1-2 July: 5th meeting of the Committee for Co-ordination in the Social security field (CS-CR) - Strasbourg
- 16-17 Sept.: 5th meeting of the Committee of experts on standard-setting instruments in the social security field (CS-CO) - (Cyprus)

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