

Editorial

Adapting social policy achievements to changing needs

2004 is proving to be a very productive year for the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS). First and foremost, the revised version of the Council of Europe's Strategy for Social Cohesion, which was drawn up by the Committee, has been approved by the Committee of Ministers and subsequently received its public European launch at a conference in Warsaw on 12 July.

The revised Strategy sets out the Council of Europe's understanding of social cohesion, lists the principal achievements of the past five years and sets out objectives for the future. Replacing an earlier version of the Strategy which the Committee drew up soon after the start of its work, the revised Strategy builds on the results of the work done during the past few years. The revised Strategy starts by putting forward, for the first time, an agreed definition of social cohesion as understood by the Council of Europe, namely: *the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation*. It goes on to show that the Council of Europe espouses a rights-based approach to social cohesion, but one which also insists on the need for all individuals and social actors to accept their responsibilities for

building a society based on solidarity. (read article on page 4)

In parallel with the development of the Strategy for Social Cohesion, work has been under way to develop a system of indicators which would enable governments to measure their progress in achieving social cohesion. The results of this work have been examined by the CDCS and a *Methodological Guide to the development of social cohesion indicators* will be published soon by the Social Cohesion Development Division. Following on from this, the possibility of devising an index of social cohesion is currently under consideration.

Several other activities have also been brought to a successful conclusion. The Forum for Children and Families has completed its work on children's rights in residential institutions and on participation of children; it has also raised awareness of the problem of corporal punishment in the family and prepared some practical material on alternatives to the resort to violence in bringing up children. A successor body, the Committee of Experts on Children and Families has been set up by the CDCS and will in particular be responsible for a new project on supporting parenting in the best interests of the child and for contributing to a future cross-sectoral project on children and violence. Thus, questions concerning children and families will remain an essential part of the Council of

Europe's work on social cohesion. (read article on page 8)

In the area of access to social rights two other projects have been resulted in the preparation of policy guidelines and reports which are currently under examination by the CDCS. These concern: access to employment for marginalised groups (read article on page 7) and user involvement in social services. These again are areas of continuing concern for the CDCS and work will now begin on the following new topics:

- flexibility of employment and its implications for job security;
- the integrated delivery of social services.

The Council of Europe is developing a growing interest in the new forms of economic solidarity and responsibility which are emerging in European societies in order to meet the present-day challenges of human and environmental vulnerability. Accordingly, the revised Strategy for Social Cohesion (2004) draws attention to the "concern on the part of individuals to develop new forms of economic action capable of contributing to social cohesion ... using the means of action that are open to them as individuals such as their power as consumers and the way in which they use their savings" (para. 30). This is why the Social Cohesion Development Division is organising, on 4 and 5 November 2004 in Strasbourg, a Forum entitled "Socially responsible



COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Social cohesion development division

DG III Social Cohesion

F - 67 075 Strasbourg Cedex

Tel.: + 33 (0)3 90 21 47 94

Fax: + 33 (0)3 90 21 49 52

www.coe.int/t/e/Social_Cohesion

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consumption and finance systems: public authorities' and citizens' commitment for social cohesion". It is hoped that the Forum will serve as a springboard for the setting up of a Platform for political dialogue between governments and all who are involved in the promotion of ethical and socially responsible community-based initiatives in economic life. (read article on page 4)

It was recently announced that a Third Council of Europe Summit Conference of Council of Europe Heads of State and Government will be held in Warsaw in May 2005. It was at the Second Summit, held in 1997, that social cohesion was identified as "one of the foremost needs of the wider Europe and [...] an essential complement to the promotion of human rights and dignity".

Much has been achieved as a result of the measures which were taken in the late 1990's in order to give effect to this new priority fixed at the highest political level. Now, however, it is important to consider how the Third Summit can not only give political backing to what has been achieved so far, but also set new social policy goals for the Council of Europe and its member States in the years to come.

One idea currently being developed by the CDCS takes as its starting-point the so-called "European social model", which is rightly hailed as one of the great achievements of European societies in the twentieth century. Now, however, the gathering pace of welfare reforms in the member States leads many to question the continued validity of the traditional social model to which the Council of Europe has long been committed. Under these circumstances, and unless we can come up with a convincing new vision, the risk is that the old model will "die the death of a thousand cuts". As stated in the Revised Strategy, "the challenge for Europe in the twenty-first century is to find ways of adapting these social policy achievements to changing needs and changing circumstances without losing their essential character". This, indeed, would be a challenge worthy of being taken up at the level of Heads of State and Government.

John Murray

Executive Secretary of the Council of Europe
European Committee for Social Cohesion



Newsletter: What do you see as the main social policy challenges facing Poland today?

The three main social policy challenges facing Poland today are: unemployment, unemployment, and unemployment. Indeed, in my country unemployment is a major determinant of social exclusion. With the Polish unemployment rate oscillating around 20% for the last several years and our employment rate at merely 53%, it really cuts into the mainstream of the society, not just some marginalized groups. Large proportions of that 20% are long-term unemployed. We may soon be facing multi-generational unemployment, with its concomitant social exclusion, welfare dependency and higher crime rates.

High unemployment exacerbates our already difficult financial situation as it brings up pressure for more social spending, while reducing the pool of taxpayers. At the same time, the old ways of dealing with it, i.e., early retirement and more government borrowing to finance increased social interventions, are no longer available to us. We must be fiscally responsible.

These are the challenges. Of course, we are not folding our arms and waiting for higher economic growth to create jobs for us.

We have moved toward redirecting our labour laws to encourage more hiring for new jobs rather than protecting the existing ones. We have also reduced the Corporate income tax (CIT).

We are especially proud of our 2000 pension reform which we have been implementing in a politically non-partisan fashion, in an atmosphere of social dialogue. It testifies to our determination to put our financial house in order, while securing the system's sustainability, offering decent benefits and rewarding economic activity. The new system is very employment-friendly, extending the effective retirement age. Protections have been put in place for older workers with difficulties in retaining employment.

We have made great strides towards a fairer social protection system. Social assistance has been reformed to better address the benefits and to structure them in a way that promotes gainful work. Supports for the employment of persons with disabilities, where fraud used to be rampant, have been revamped. More resources are now being directed to children and young persons with disabilities or threatened by disability, so that they may find jobs in the future. Sick-leave has been modified, so that it is used when really needed. The currently 97%-subsidized pension system for farmers will be reformed. Farmers who can afford it will be asked to contribute their fair share.

All in all, these measures should help us rationalize our social spending which will only be fairer to our taxpayers. Our fiscal responsibility should ultimately translate into more new jobs, reducing unemployment—the root cause of our social problems today.

Newsletter: How can the Council of Europe help you face these challenges?

Through its sophistication born out of its broad perspective. The Council of Europe is a great source of multifaceted international expertise. Let me just mention the 2002 report on Access to Social Rights in Europe. It lays out interesting, practical policy advice on how to be decent states that make good on the lofty social

promises enshrined in their national laws. Most of the time it does not require more public outlays, but rather more thoughtful allocation of the available resources. This is just one example. But, on a more general note, the more it is grounded in the real economic and social dilemmas of our time, the more the advice the Council of Europe offers will be appreciated.

Newsletter: The revised Strategy for Social Cohesion was launched in Poland recently. What do you consider to be the most interesting features of the Council of Europe approach to social cohesion?

I wish to express our sincere appreciation for the launching of the revised Social Cohesion Strategy in Warsaw, at the 12th July 2004 Conference on access to social rights. It was a harbinger of our upcoming Council of Europe presidency.

Poland needs social cohesion. After 45 years of practicing a farce of it under Communism, we leappfrogged into the market economy that created all kinds of earlier unknown social and economic divisions. Consequently, despite the tremendous economic and social progress Poland has achieved over the last 15 years of democracy and market economy, 52% of our people, according to a recent survey, still believe that their unsatisfactory lot is due to social injustice. We cannot ignore those feelings, even though we know that actual income disparities in Poland are smaller than in many EU member states.

The Council of Europe social cohesion strategy reminds us that social polarization is ultimately bad for economic prosperity. It also very rightly stresses the importance of family and civil society as vehicles of social cohesion. Families provide individuals with the sense of belonging to a society, giving them emotional support and offering the most effective provision of care. This is not just an ideological claim, but what people actually believe. If families are at the foundation of an effective social cohesion policy, organizations of civil

society are its indispensable allies. They harness human solidarity and expand the potential for community service. We could not do without them.

Newsletter: Now that Poland is a member of the European Union, in what ways do you think the Council of Europe can complement the work of the EU in the social field?

There is a long tradition of the two organizations benefiting from each other's achievements. This should be cherished and continued.

There are important pan-European social issues that need public cognizance and visibility. We have to address the crisis of the traditional "welfare state". We have to reverse the declining birth rates in Europe, if we are to preserve our social solidarity and cohesion in the long-run. We have to find a sensible approach to immigration, if our societies are not to be fragmented by ethnic ghettos. The Council of Europe is perfectly suited to take up the social issues of greatest gravitas for the Continent as a whole.

Newsletter: The traditional European social model is sometimes criticized as being out of date. In what ways do you think it needs to be revised?

Social justice is by no means out of date in Europe. And yet, the traditional "welfare state" which had originated as an agent of social justice, has turned into a mechanism of spiraling social aspirations impossible to fulfill, while producing debt for future generations to pay and strangling our economies with high taxes. The 2000 Lisbon Strategy has put this problem on the European Union agenda. However, we are still lacking a comprehensive, non-partisan diagnosis of that failure, without which an optimistic vision for the future will not be possible. It has to be a vision of a decent society governed by a decent state in which there is real opportunity for all who are able and protection for those, who for no fault of their own, lack such opportunity. It

has to be a vision bringing back to the fore the somewhat forgotten ethics of industriousness, performance, and, above all, responsibility for one's own life, for the family and society. That responsibility should also include fiscal responsibility, as in the global economy we can no longer afford to live in denial of international competition and its consequences. It has to be a vision empowering every European through the best education in the world and freeing them up from the bureaucratic restraints so that they may realize their full potential. Finally, it has to be a vision cast in a language inspiring to our societies.

Definitely, there is now an intellectual readiness and political momentum for a more comprehensive reform. I know of a recent initiative coming from the Council of Europe Committee on Social Cohesion, to set up a group of 'sages' to produce a vision of modernizing the European "welfare state". I think it a very worthy idea. We have to make sure though that the 'sages' we select are men and women of both bold imagination and deep understanding of the economic realities.

Newsletter: Poland will be hosting the Council of Europe Summit next year. What commitments would you like to see the Summit make in the field of social cohesion?

It is a great honor for Poland to host the 2005 Council of Europe Summit. Naturally, I cannot prejudge its results. Poland will support the setting up of the group of sages on "welfare state" reform. As regards social cohesion, we should renew our firm commitment to it in our national policies and in the Council's work. There is social cohesion beyond redistribution of wealth. I have indicated already some of the pertinent themes: searching for a new balance between social cohesion and economic prosperity, preserving the cultural cohesion of Europe and the cohesion between generations. I am sure the Warsaw Summit will be quite productive.

THE REVISED SOCIAL COHESION STRATEGY

On 31 March 2004 the Committee of Ministers approved the revised version of the Council of Europe's Strategy for social cohesion. This text was drawn up by the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) so as to provide a brief exposition of the Organisation's understanding of social cohesion and to set out broad guidelines for future work.

The revised Strategy was given its official European launch at a seminar held in Warsaw on 12 July 2004. It will be distributed widely to the social policy community in the member States and translated into several languages in addition to English and French (it is already available in Bosnian, Polish and Russian). During the coming year, the revised Strategy will be presented at a series of national seminars on social cohesion.

The revised Strategy defines social cohesion as follows: *the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means.*

The approach to social policy which was developed by European countries in the

twentieth century has often been referred to as the "European social model". Noting that this approach now faces a number of questions and strains, the Strategy recognises that the challenge for Europe in the twenty-first century is to find ways of adapting these social policy achievements to changing needs and changing circumstances without losing their essential character.

The Strategy sets out a human rights-based approach to social cohesion, but notes that the legal protection of rights has to be accompanied by determined social policy measures to ensure that everyone in practice has access to their rights. There has to be a particular commitment to making a reality of the rights of those who are at particular risk of becoming vulnerable, such as children and young people, migrants and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and the elderly.

At the same time, it is recognised that an exclusive stress on the rights of the individual cannot form a sufficient basis for social cohesion. A society is cohesive when people also accept responsibility for one another. It is therefore necessary to rebuild a sense of society, of belonging, of commitment to shared social goals.

The Strategy goes on to show how the State, economic actors, civil society and families all have an essential part to play in maintaining and strengthening social cohesion. At a time when the role of the State is often questioned, the Strategy insists on the essential functions of the State in ensuring the social cohesion, but shows that the way in which the State carries out its functions is changing: more and more, governments seek to achieve their social policy goals by working in partnership with other social actors.

Finally, the revised Strategy reviews the achievements of the past five years and sets out priorities for the future. These will include work in the areas of social protection, social services, employment, housing, children and families and the elderly. Through its various activities, the European Committee for Social Cohesion will seek to mainstream social cohesion into the programmes of other Council of Europe bodies, assist member States in applying the results of the Strategy, and share the European approach with other parts of the world.

John Murray

*Executive Secretary of the Council of Europe
European Committee for Social Cohesion*

2004 FORUM

DEVELOPING A EUROPEAN ETHICAL MODEL



As every year since 2000, the Division for the Development of Social Cohesion is organising an annual forum at which an issue of importance to the development of social cohesion will be examined

during two days of discussions. The 2004 Forum on "Socially responsible consumption and finance systems: public authorities' and citizens' commitment for social cohesion" will be held at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 4 and 5 November. It is being prepared in co-operation with the European networks for an ethical and socially responsible economy.

The Council of Europe and DG III in particular are now taking a keener interest than ever

in the new forms of financial responsibility and solidarity being put in place in Europe to meet the current challenges of human and environmental vulnerability. As the "home of democracy and human rights", the Council of Europe acknowledges every community-based effort that helps to make society a decent place for everyone to live in.

The *Strategy for Social Cohesion* (revised in 2004) proclaims the concept of *shared responsibility* and urges governments to take account of the emergence of "a concern on the part of individuals to develop new forms of economic action capable of contributing to social cohesion. People are using the means of action that are open to them as individuals such as their power as consumers and the way in which they use their savings" (paragraph 30).

The 2004 Forum will look into one of the challenges of "shared responsibility", namely how connections that favour social cohesion

can be established between the functioning of society and individuals' day-to-day practices in consumption and the utilisation of financial resources. Finance and consumption are, after all, pre-eminently perceived as expressions of a burgeoning individualism - hence the question of how to foster the social responsibilities inherent in these individual actions.

In four working sessions involving leading figures from public life, representatives of networks for a socially responsible economy and researchers, the forum will explore the question of *how personal economic acts and choices can incorporate a dimension of social cohesion and responsibility and why responsible individual choices should be of interest to the authorities.*

The forum, which will be opened by Ms Fabienne Keller, Mayor of Strasbourg, will also see the launch of:

- the planned Platform for political dialogue and promotion of ethical and socially

responsible community-based initiatives in the economy;

- the planned Observatory of legal frameworks and of dialogue between public authorities and ethical and socially responsible community-based initiatives in the economy;
- the European Charter to support ethical and socially responsible initiatives.

These new instruments should open up a regular pan-European forum for dialogue, proposals and consultation between the players in the ethical and socially responsible economy and the authorities.

The 2004 Forum will also be part of the Council of Europe's *social cohesion week*. In addition to the plenary meeting of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS), other events aimed at the citizens of Strasbourg are planned, in particular a seminar on the issues covered by the observatory on the ethical and socially responsible economy in co-operation with the Regional Chamber for the Social Economy and an evening debate in the *Strasbourg Debates* series organised jointly with the Council of Europe at Strasbourg Town Hall, with Jean-Paul Vigier, President of the European Federation of Ethical and Alternative Banks (FEBA), as keynote speaker.

The four working sessions of the Forum 2004

Session I: Ethical and socially responsible community-based initiatives in the economy, responding to the challenges of social cohesion

Session II: Official support for ethical and socially responsible community-based initiatives

Session III: Approaches and decisions to spread the impact of ethical and socially responsible community-based initiatives

Session IV: Promoting the concepts and practices of an ethical and socially responsible economy at the pan-European level.

Further information can be found on following Website: <http://www.coe.int/socialcohesion/forum2004>

Contact: Gilda Farrell, Head of the Social Cohesion Development Division, Tel.: + 33 (0)3 88 41 30 57, Fax: + 33 (0)3 90 21 49 52, E-mail: gilda.farrell@coe.int

Guidelines on the employment of marginalised groups

The Group of Specialists on Employment for Marginalised Groups (CS-MA)¹⁾ completed its work in March 2004. A report by Jane Pillinger on "Employment for Marginalised Groups" will be published shortly. It describes and analyses practices identified in the member states for improving the situation of these groups. The CS-MA has also prepared guidelines which are to be examined again by the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) in November 2004 before being published and disseminated in the member states.

The group's objective was to identify means of improving employment access opportunities for members of disadvantaged population groups, who may suffer various forms of discrimination. The exclusion of certain population groups from the labour market has negative consequences for the whole of society. Not only does it constitute an infringement of the human dignity and the fundamental social rights of the persons concerned, it also is a waste of development potential and of the positive contribution they could make to community life. Lastly, it is a threat to social cohesion.

Policymakers' attention therefore needed to be drawn to the social and economic situation of these groups, which often go unnoticed in daily life and only rarely are specifically covered in public policies. Thanks to the efforts of public and private bodies, however, some good practices for the employment and vocational training of these groups do exist in the member states. The group chose to analyse these practices in order to pinpoint the elements that could help heighten the impact of measures aimed at reintegrating the most marginalised groups into the labour market.

The guidelines are applicable to various groups of people suffering from exclusion. However, the group decided to focus on four categories in particular: prisoners and ex-prisoners, homeless people, drug users or former drug users and victims of human trafficking.

The guidelines are based on certain fundamental principles that should underpin all policies for improving these groups' access to employment. If they are to benefit

fully from equality of opportunity on the labour market, it is necessary to implement specifically targeted additional support measures to bridge the gap that often separates them from employment. Moreover, the relevant action and programmes should include measures to meet the multiple needs of excluded groups, for instance in terms of housing, health, transport and education. The aim is to use co-ordinated long-term policies both to prevent marginalisation and to promote the reintegration of marginalised groups.

¹⁾ The CS-MA comprised representatives of the member states (from welfare and employment ministries) and of NGOs specialised in providing services for the most marginalised groups.

Contact: Françoise Kempf, Administrator, Social policy Department, Tel.: + 33 (0)3 90 21 49 66, Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 27 18, E-mail: francoise.kempf@coe.int

Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Social Security



The Euro-Mediterranean conference on "social security: a factor of social cohesion" took place in Limassol (Cyprus) on 27 and 28 May 2004.

It was organised by the Council of Europe in co-operation with the International Labour Office (ILO) and its relevant regional offices, at the invitation of the Cypriot Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance.

The aims of this conference were to:

- promote the concept of social security as a universal human right and a fundamental aspect of social development, as well as the Council of Europe and ILO legal instruments on social security;
- encourage exchanges between Council of Europe member states and southern and eastern Mediterranean countries to raise awareness and co-ordinate protection of the basic principles of social security;
- establish dialogue between European and southern and eastern Mediterranean countries on welfare issues concerning migrants.

The conference was attended by some one hundred social security experts from thirty Council of Europe member states and eight non-member countries from the southern and eastern Mediterranean. International governmental and non-governmental organisations, workers' and employers' unions, members of parliament and research centres were also represented.

The main factors behind the holding of this conference were the recommendations of the 8th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Social Security (Bratislava, 22 and 23 May 2002) on the theme "Implications of labour migration for social security systems in European countries" and the interest shown by participants representing Mediterranean countries which are not members of the Council of Europe in the conference on access to social rights (Malta, 14 and 15 November 2002). It was also part of the *Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All*, launched by the ILO in 2003.

The conference was opened by Mrs Lenia Samuel, Permanent Secretary at the Cypriot Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. Her address was followed by opening speeches by Mr Alexander Vladychenko, Director General of Social Cohesion at the Council of Europe, Mr Alexei Tulbure, Representative of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and Mr Taleb Rifai, Director of the ILO Regional Office for Arab states in Beirut. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe was also well represented.

There were six working sessions during the conference:

The first session was devoted to a presentation of the main features of the systems of social protection and social security in southern and eastern Mediterranean countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, the Palestinian Authority, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan), their political, economic and social context and recent developments. The presentation was followed by a discussion.

During the second session, the participants discussed the relevance to southern and

eastern Mediterranean countries of international social security standards, such as ILO Convention 102 or the European Social Security Code (Council of Europe). There was a wide-ranging debate not only on a number of general issues arising in relation to these standards but also on the question of their permanent adaptability to the needs and resources of different communities.

The third working session, on how to increase the effectiveness of social security, provided the opportunity to identify and discuss the components involved in this process: the institutional and legal component, the financial and economic component and the social component. Particular attention was drawn to the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

The fourth session, which concerned social security and the informal economy, studied the origins of the informal economy and the methods of incorporating certain social security practices into formal development initiatives.

During the fifth session, the participants studied real access to social security by women in southern and eastern Mediterranean countries and the types of protection specific to women which were necessary and feasible. The other aspects considered were the disadvantages affecting women with regard to social security and the characteristics of social security systems which reduce or increase the effects of women's limited role on the formal labour market.

The aim of the sixth and final session was to consider how the social rights of migrant workers from the Mediterranean are implemented not only in the country where they work and live (equality of treatment) but also in their own country when they return there (retention of the rights by migrant workers).

The proceedings of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Social Security will be published in autumn 2004.

Contact: Ana Gomez Heredo, Administrator, Social Policy Department, Tel.: + 33 (0)3 88 41 21 94, Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 27 18, E-mail: ana.gomez@coe.int

Parliamentary Assembly: Zero tolerance for domestic slavery

"I arrived in the United Kingdom as a domestic worker to a businessman and his wife. I was told that my salary was £20 per month. But I never received any money. My madam was very cruel. She hit me on my stomach. She regularly tried to strangle me. I worked 18 hours a day and was forced to sleep on the floor without a blanket. She kicked me every morning to wake me up. I had no winter clothes and no shoes. I had no hot water for my bath during winter. Some times I skipped bath because it was very cold. When I asked for hot water, madam got very angry and asked me whether my father would pay the bill. I had very little food to eat. When I put butter on my toast, madam came and took it from my hands, threw it away and hit me."

This was the experience of Mary Parmar, a victim of domestic slavery who testified before the Parliamentary Assembly's Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men on 22 June 2004, the day the Assembly debated a report on the subject. Although slavery has been outlawed for over 150 years, Mary Parmar's experience is sadly not unusual. Today's slaves are predominantly female and usually work in private households, starting out as migrant domestic workers, au pairs or "mail-order brides". Most come willingly at first, seeking to improve themselves, escaping poverty and hardship, but some have been deceived by their employers, agencies or other intermediaries, have been debt-bonded and even trafficked. Once on the job (or married to a "consumer husband"), however, they are vulnerable and isolated, creating ample opportunity for abusive employers or husbands to force them into domestic slavery.

The Council of Europe should have zero tolerance for slavery. As an international organisation defending

Supporting parenting in the best interests of the child: a new Council of Europe priority

The concept of the best interests of the child appears in many programmes and documents concerning childhood. The Council of Europe now wishes to draw attention to the link between this important concept and parenting.

Fundamental texts on the protection of children such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Council of Europe's European Social Charter also mention providing support for families, parents and legal guardians in raising children. Indeed the harmonious development and well-being of children depend to an immeasurable degree on parenting and the quality of child/adult relationships.

The activities of the Forum for Children and Family have over the past few years shown just how important it is to address the issue of parenting at a time when, owing to social and economic upheavals and the pressures of modern working life, parents have an increasingly demanding role to play and one that it is sometimes difficult to assume fully. Faced with a bewildering range of opportunities, challenges and risks, children growing up in present-day societies are clearly disoriented.

Different family structures, social isolation, poverty and insecurity, stress and the values glorified by the media and the market exert a powerful influence on both parents and children. This makes it difficult for them to find their bearings and fosters individualism rather than social cohesion.

The Council of Europe's *Strategy for Social Cohesion*, which is based on the sharing of responsibilities within society, therefore attaches great importance to this topic. Although most parents manage to find ways in which to raise their children properly, it is important, on a European level, to promote measures to assist parents, particularly to avoid crisis situations and the possible break-up of the family. The Council of Europe will also propose policies and measures to help children and protect them against violence in all contexts.

With this aim in mind, the Council of Europe will shortly set up a new Committee of Experts on Children and Families, with a three-and-a-half-year mandate. The first stage of the project will consist in pinpointing the difficulties and challenges of parenting and will include a study of the policies deemed to be in the interests of both families and children. The next stage will be to take stock of the best examples of practices, policies and research designed to assist parents and propose non-violent ways for them to raise their children.

Contact: Irena Kowalczyk-Kedziora, Administrator, Social Policy Department, Tel.: + 33 (0)3 90 21 44 34, Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 37 65, E-mail: irena.kowalczyk@coe.int

Children of migrants: new problems, new approaches?

A considerable part of activity undertaken under the authority of the European Committee on Migration (CDMG) is devoted to the problems faced by the children of migrants. The changing nature of these problems requires reassessment of existing policies aimed at the integration of the children of migrants with the view to considering their continuing relevance. What effect, for example, does globalisation and social fragmentation have on the formation of cultural identity of migrant children? The answer to this question may have considerable implications for integration policies that are developed to accommodate the second generation migrants.

In order to examine a range of current and emerging issues that are faced by the children of migrants, the CDMG has established the Committee of Experts on the Children of Migrants (MG-EN) in 2004. The main task of this committee is to identify the most important problems and to make proposals for future activities of the CDMG in the field.

At the initial stage of its activity the Committee MG-EN works to identify the issues that require closer examination and detailed analysis. In particular, it focuses upon such areas as school and education, family and upbringing, and cultural and religious identity. The consideration is given to the efforts aimed at ensuring concerted action of state institutions, schools, civil society, and

human rights, it is the Council of Europe's duty to stand in the forefront of the fight against all forms of slavery and trafficking in human beings.

The Council of Europe and its member states must promote and protect the human rights of the victim and ensure that the perpetrators of the crime of domestic slavery are brought to justice so that slavery can finally be eliminated in Europe.

The Parliamentary Assembly thus adopted [Recommendation 1663 \(2004\)](#), which recommends a number of preventive, protective and repressive measures to the Committee of Ministers and the Council of Europe's member states, in particular the elaboration of a charter of rights for domestic workers and better regulation of the au pair placement and "mail-order bride" industries.

The debate at the Parliamentary Assembly took place on 22 June 2004 in the light of following report:

Domestic slavery: servitude, au pairs and mail-order brides, Rapporteur Giuseppe Gaburro, Italy, Group of the European People's Party

<http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/doc04/EDOC10144.htm>

The Recommendation 1663 (2004) on Domestic slavery: servitude, au pairs and "mail-order brides" adopted on 22 June 2004

<http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/AdoptedText/TA04/EREC1663.htm>

Contact: Tanja E.J. Kleinsorge, Secretary of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, Parliamentary Assembly, Tel.: + 33 (0)3 88 41 29 06, Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 27 02, E-mail: tanja.kleinsorge@coe.int

parents for the purpose of making integration policies viable and effective.

It appears evident that addressing the problems of the children of migrants effectively is only possible in conjunction with other policies. For example, the problem of the existence of deprived areas ('ghettos'), where many migrants reside leads to reproduction of segregation and inequality, and inhibits integration policies aimed at children of migrants. A comprehensive and integrated approach, that includes elements of urban, social, educational, employment and other policies, is required to tackle this complex problem.

An increasingly important role in helping integrate the children of migrants may also be played by the countries of origin. They should be involved in the processes of design and implementation of integration policies.

The CDMG is committed to continue its work towards improving existing approaches to the integration of the children of migrants and offering new policies that will meet the emerging challenges of changing European societies.

Contact: Sergey Khrychikov, Administrator, Migration Division, Tel.: + 33 (0)3 88 31 84, Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 27 31, E-mail: sergey.khrychikov@coe.int

Improving the housing conditions of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe

Housing is a fundamental need and a basic right essential to respect for human dignity. The definition of "adequate housing" in paragraph 60 of the United Nations Habitat Agenda not only concerns housing's qualitative and functional aspects, but also takes account of safety and security, infrastructure (water supply, sanitation and waste-management facilities), the environment, accessibility and availability of basic services (schools, hospitals, a place of work, etc.). Housing is indeed a key factor of social integration since it often determines access to employment, education and health care, the right to vote and issuance of identity papers, as well as many other social and civil rights.

Nonetheless there are still millions of people in Europe who live in deplorable housing conditions, frequently thought to be typical of third-world standards of living. Roma and Traveller communities stand out as a population group in which this problem is particularly pronounced. For many of them poverty is the main cause. However,

they also suffer from many direct or indirect forms of racism and discrimination by public authorities, municipalities, property owners or neighbours. Examples are denial of access to public housing (as in a recent case in Hungary, reported on 19 May by *TOL Transitions Online*) or forced evictions without reparation, which are unfortunately increasingly commonplace (for instance in the United Kingdom - see *The Guardian* of 7 June 2004; Belgrade, where Roma displaced by the Kosovo war are now being evicted; Burgas in Bulgaria and Banja Luka in Bosnia and Herzegovina).

It was for these reasons that, having already dealt with the questions of education and employment,¹⁾ the Group of Specialists on Roma, Gypsies and Travellers (MG-S-ROM), turned its attention to the issue of housing. Following two years' work on the subject, in which government experts, NGOs active in this field (the COHRE, the ERRC) and Roma and Traveller representatives participated, a new *Recommendation on improving the housing conditions of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe* is about to be adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

It sends a strong message to the 45 governments of the member states, which seeks to raise awareness of the inhuman living conditions: growing ghettoisation, health problems for those living on refuse dumps, development of diseases such as saturnism and tuberculosis, risks for children's safety where the campsites are too close to major roads, difficult access to sites and to public services, no electricity, water supply or sewage system in areas where thousands of people are crowded together because they are not wanted anywhere else. Tragedies sometimes occur, such as the people of Roma origin who recently lost their lives in a caravan fire in the Bordeaux region of France or the incidents in Armenis on the island of Chios and on a site near Aspropyrgos (greater Athens), from which many Roma were evicted in preparation for the Olympic Games.

The recommendation addresses the problem as a whole, examining the obvious links with other fields: education, health, the environment, employment, infrastructure, civil rights, etc. It covers all kinds of accommodation (houses, caravans, mobile homes) so as to include the different lifestyles - sedentary, semi-nomadic or nomadic - of Roma and Travellers. It addresses the legal framework for housing rights and proposes solutions for preventing and combating discrimination. It also proposes guidelines on the legalisation of Roma settlements and encampments, access to land

ownership and legal protection from forced evictions.

The recommendation stresses that housing and sites must, as far as possible, be adapted to the communal way of life of these population groups. In this respect it complements another draft recommendation on the movement and encampment of Travellers, which lays emphasis on the need to respect their choice of a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle and addresses vital issues such as establishing an official place of residence, provision of facilities, the right of encampment and security of residence.

At a time when the number of collective complaints lodged with the European Committee of Social Rights concerning discrimination in access to housing is growing,²⁾ the forthcoming adoption of these two new recommendations is particularly opportune. They should also become reference documents for the network of European municipalities wishing to address issues linked to integration of Roma and encampment of Travellers which the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe intends to set up.

The recommendation on housing conditions will shortly be presented at a workshop on housing of Roma being held by the Directorate General for Social Cohesion and the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) in Budapest on 27 and 28 September 2004.³⁾ This workshop is being organised in partnership with the World Bank and the Open Society Institute in the context of the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015), which includes housing among the four priorities (the others are education, employment and health) for the next ten years.

1) Respectively, Rec (2000)4 and Rec (2001)17. The full text of these recommendations is accessible on the following website: http://www.coe.int/T/E/social_cohesion/Roma_Gypsies/Documentation/

2) For example, the collective complaints lodged by the European Roma Rights Center against Greece (No. 15/2003) and Italy (No. 27/2004). Details can be found on the following website: http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Esc/5_Collective_complaints/

3) The Council of Europe Development Bank and the World Bank recently brought out a publication entitled "Housing in South Eastern Europe: solving a puzzle of challenges".

Contact: Michael Guet, Administrator, Roma/Gypsies Division, Tel.: + 33 (0)3 90 21 49 63, Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 27 26, E-mail: michael.guet@coe.int

Compendium of Cultural Policies in Europe

The *Compendium* is a web-based, permanently-updated information and monitoring system of national cultural policies in Europe. Set up in 1998 it will comprise, by the end of 2004, 38 cultural policy profiles.

The *Compendium* offers contextualized policy information on structures and regulations, it reflects current issues and policy debates and provides statistics, indicators and good-practice information. Examples include:

- Cultural identity, diversity and intercultural dialogue;
- The role of new actors in a changing system of governance;
- Support to creativity;
- Participation in cultural life;
- Economic, legal and educational dimensions.

Recent work concentrates on the introduction of new indicators in the area of diversity, intercultural dialogue and cohesion to regularly monitor policy developments and to assemble cases of good policy practice. An experiment is being carried out on the creation of a cultural consumer price index, providing information about the varying prices of cultural goods in different countries and their relation to household incomes – an issue of interest to the debate on access and participation in culture. Inclusion of the local and regional policy perspective is also on the future work programme.

The Council of Europe's Cultural Policy and Action Department manages the *Compendium* in partnership with the European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research (ERICarts), Bonn. It is operational thanks to a dedicated network of partners including governments, cultural policy experts and research institutes across Europe. Through constant communication and use of an innovative methodology, this network has developed into a "community of practice" for cultural policies in Europe.

Working methods and tools include, *inter alia*, annual comprehensive updates of the profiles, permanent ad-hoc updates, annual adaptation/sophistication of the grid used for the collection and presentation of information, an online forum on indicator development in the area of diversity, intercultural dialogue

and cohesion, annual *Compendium* authors' meetings and an online newsletter.

The users

Designed as a dynamic and user-friendly public service information system with direct feed-back functions, the *Compendium* informs a broad audience of policy makers and administrators, cultural managers from arts institutions and networks, researchers and documentation professionals, journalists and students so as to facilitate decision-making, conduct comparative analyses and maintain data collections. Use is also made of the system within the Council of Europe, for example to generate instant comparative reports on specific issues; to prepare missions, meetings and interventions; to liaise with partners and to provide tailor-made information to stakeholders, etc.

The achievements

- User statistics: The *Compendium* site had 6800 visits in May 2004 and the number of hits was 403 000 during the same period. This corresponds to 218 visits and 13 015 hits per day to the site.
- Acknowledgement: the *Compendium* was chosen Web site of the month by the Information World Review in 2002 and received the Best Practices Award for Social Sciences in 2003 (University of California). Recently, the *Compendium* site has been included in SOSIG, the Social Science Information Gateway (University of Bristol). The Conference of the European Ministers of Culture referred to it as a working tool in its Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention (Opatija, Croatia, 2003) and the *Compendium* has been included in the Council of Europe's contribution to the World Summit on the Information Society, Geneva 2003.
- Teaching tool: the *Compendium* is more and more used as a teaching tool at various European Universities (Dresden, Jyväskylä, Krakow and Vienna).
- Sponsors: In addition to the support provided by the Council of Europe and ERICarts, the *Compendium* has received funding from several Governments (Finland, Germany, Hungary, and The Netherlands) and the European Cultural Foundation.

- Inspiration: the *Compendium* inspires the development of information systems in other areas within the Council of Europe and is used as model also outside the Organisation: UNESCO's CONACULTA conference considered the establishment of a similar system for Latin America; EURO CULT21, a thematic network under Key Action *City of Tomorrow & Cultural Heritage* in the European Union 5th Framework programme which is supported by EURO CITIES proposed to set up an analogue *Compendium for urban cultural policies in Europe*.

Its future

It would be interesting to see a social policy information system be developed on the manifold pertinent data collections available at Directorate General for Social Cohesion. Such a system could be easily linked up with the *Compendium*, as is already the case with the Council of Europe online system on heritage policies (HEREIN). Not only would a truly comprehensive information system provide a strong basis for integrated policy analysis and formulation at the service of Council of Europe stakeholders, it could also be a useful tool for monitoring of developments and classical monitoring activities. Lastly, a "meta-information tool" would well reflect the unique assets of the Organisation in terms of the variety of policy areas treated, geographical coverage, methodological know-how and political vision including integrated policy making in reply to a complex reality.

The *Compendium* is available on following website: <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/>



Contact: Kathrin Merkle, Head, Cultural Policies Research and Development Unit, Cultural Policy and Action Department, Directorate General IV - Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport, Tel.: +33 (0)3 88 41 28 84, Fax : +33 (0)3 88 41 37 82, E-mail : kathrin.merkle@coe.int, Website: <http://www.coe.int/culture>

Monitoring of the Macedonian census completed

The headcount expected to settle a decade of conflicting claims

The international monitoring of the 2002 population and housing census in “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” has ended as the final results of the census were released by the State Statistical Office throughout the first half of 2004 and the monitoring reports were submitted to the national political authorities and international organisations.

The objective of the international monitoring was to verify the fair and impartial enumeration of the population in accordance with international census standards and standards on data protection and confidentiality. The monitors have also aimed to evaluate the methodology of the census preparation by the relevant authorities and to contribute to the building of confidence in the census.

The monitoring was organised by the European Commission and the Council of Europe at the invitation of the Macedonian government. The monitoring covered all phases of the census, from the preparatory phase and the drafting of the Census Law up to the release of the final results. The necessary financial means available to accomplish the mandate amounted to 1.4 millions Euro of which 1.2 millions Euro were from the European Union and 0.2 million from the Council of Europe.

The activities have extended over a period of more than two years and have been divided into four phases: the planning and preparatory phase; observation of the fieldwork (the enumeration of the population and the post-enumeration survey carried out for control purposes; monitoring of the data processing procedures and methods and analysis and assessment of the census processing and the census material.

The international monitors assessed the 2002 population census as a successful operation from both the technical and political point of view. In a press-conference in Skopje, the Chair of the group of international monitors, Hallgrímur Snorasson stated that “It was a successful

and professional census, done in accordance with international standards”. The census preparations by the State Statistical Office were professional, the Census Law drafted in compliance with international standards. The census fieldwork was mostly free of interference; some irregularities were observed but did not have a significant impact on the census results. The processing of the census data was found to have been carried out in a professional manner and without interferences.

There was a high level of participation of the population to the census operations and the census took place in a good and peaceful climate. Census results were widely accepted by all components of the population, political parties, media and the international community.

The State Statistical Office published results showing Macedonians account for 64.18 percent and Albanians form the second largest ethnic group with 25.17 percent, out of total population of 2,022,547. The census gave a precise picture of the composition of the population and can be seen as a key event in the stability of the country. It was also considered an important prerequisite for the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement and the administrative-territorial reform. For that reason, the press paid a high attention to the census operations and to the activities of the international monitoring mission. Media were regularly informed through press releases and press conferences about monitoring activities.

All along the monitoring mission, speculations on the census results were published by local media but in particular when the international monitors were not present in the country. The regular communication with media greatly contributed to the success of the operation. International experts, with their recognised competences, contributed to raise confidence in the census and prevented the publication of wrong reports in the local media.

Contact: Adrian Evtuhovici, Secretary of the European Population Committee, Social Policy Department, Tel.: + 33 (0)3 90 21 54 24, Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 27 18, E-mail: adrian.evtuhovici@coe.int

Culture, Heritage, Migration and Social Cohesion: towards a cross-sectoral activity

Keeping a finger on the pulse of modern society and seeking to provide responses to the new challenges linked to migration, conflict prevention and political rights implies cross-sectoral thinking building in the cultural and social dimensions. The needs are twofold: considering the role that can be played by culture in establishing a stable and mutually supportive society and, conversely, integrating cultural diversity into any social cohesion policy.

Realising the potential complementarity of such an approach, two of the Council of Europe’s directorates general (DG IV - Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport, and DG III - Social cohesion) have decided to organise a meeting of the chairs, vice-chairs and secretariats of the four steering committees concerned by these themes (culture, heritage, migration, social cohesion) with a view to identifying a number of areas where cooperation can be forged.

Joint efforts, based on cross-related experiences, could focus, for example, on drawing up an inter-sectoral political strategy for promoting intercultural dialogue and preventing conflicts and on defining social and cultural indicators.

A conference on the cultural dimension of migration, involving all four committees, could be organised in 2005. It is also envisaged that the committees will participate in one another’s meetings where discussion bears on the integration of migrants’ children into the host society, cultural identity issues, the social dimension of heritage and links between cultural development and ethical financing.

In addition, there could be joint consideration of questions of access to political rights (social rights and cultural rights) as well as the challenges of the new economy and the knowledge society.

These initial work priorities could be explored from 2005 onwards.

Contact: Simone Bernhardt, “Intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention” Project Manager, Cultural Policy and Action Department, DG IV – Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport, Tel.: + 33 (0)3 88 41 26 04, Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 37 82, E-mail: simone.bernhardt@coe.int

Activities in the Health Field - Recent Decisions and Current Developments

As part of its overall mission to achieve greater unity between member states and contribute to social progress, the involvement of the Council of Europe in the health field is aimed both at raising medical care standards and at promoting living conditions conducive to health.

In this context, the European Health Committee (CDSP) plays a key role elaborating practical guidelines on policy issues improving the daily life of citizens in the member states. Its strategy is based on an integrated approach of medical developments on the one hand and values of the individual – legal, ethical, social – on the other hand. Its activities are always aimed at the democratisation and humanisation of health services.

At its June 2004 meeting, the European Health Committee (CDSP) adopted three draft Recommendations for submission to the Committee of Ministers with a view to their adoption.

Draft Recommendation on the impact of information technologies on health care – The patient and Internet.

The draft Recommendation emphasises the role of the internet as new information source for the patient and in this context recommends a number of concrete measures to be undertaken by governments.

The availability of the Internet should be enhanced for all citizens to allow easy access to the enormous amount of useful information and services. Internet legislation and regulation related to internet health content should be consistent whether concerned with fraud or consumer protection and stay within the bounds of the normal expectations in democratic society of freedom of expression. “Internet exceptionalism” should be avoided. The interests of patients should be served when appropriate policies for providing

education and promoting best practices in the use of information sources are established. No difference should be made between internet health content and information available in other format, for example, print publications.

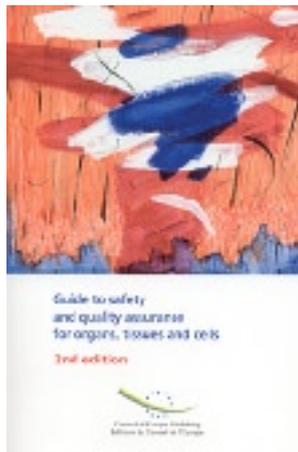
Provided that the health information on the internet is of good quality, the use of the internet would lead to a new partnership between health professionals and the better informed patients.

Draft Recommendation on teaching transfusion medicine to nurses.

The draft Recommendation recommends to governments that all nurses receive education in blood transfusion. More specifically, only nurses who have been trained and assessed as competent in blood transfusion medicine should be allowed to practice blood transfusion. Mechanisms should be developed for the co-operation between nurses, physicians, and other health care workers employed in hospitals, blood establishments, and hospital blood banks.

Draft Recommendation on criteria for the authorisation of organ transplantation facilities

The draft Recommendation recommends to governments that certain criteria should be met before authorising facilities eligible for organ transplantation. The most important criteria are the following: a quality-management system should be in place to evaluate performance against established national and/or international standards to ensure the quality or the process of organ procurement; outcome results of each type of transplant should be within the margin of international registers, at an equivalent degree of complexity of patients; to guarantee clinical results and cost-effective performance, minimal yearly activity standards should be established to maintain an active programme; any new transplant centre should be authorised,



accredited or licensed on the basis of agreed criteria and initially be limited in time.

The European Health Committee (CDSP) also adopted the second edition of the *Guide on safety and quality assurance for organs, tissues and cells* with a view to its publication. The purpose of this Guide is to provide guidance for all those involved in the transplantation procedure. It includes safety and quality

assurance standards for procurement, preservation, processing and distribution of organs, tissues and cells of human origin used for transplantation purposes. As the European Union Directive on Tissues and Cells (2002/23/EC) was recently adopted, the European Commission will build on this Guide when establishing technical standards to be set under the Directive.

At its November 2004 meeting, the European Health Committee (CDSP) will review the progress of its current work programme, which includes studies on the following topics: health services in a multicultural society; management of safety and quality in health care – prevention of adverse events in health care, a system approach; hospitals in transition: new balance between institutional and community care; trans-border mobility of health professionals and its implications for the functioning of health care systems.

Further information can be found by visiting the following Websites:

http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social_Cohesion/Health/

and

<http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/Themes/Health/default.asp>

Contact: Karl-Friedrich Bopp, Head of Health Division, Tel.: + 33 (0)3 88 41 22 14, Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 27 26, E-mail: karl-friedrich.bopp@coe.int



World Congress Human Movements and Immigration

2-5 September 2004, Barcelona

This Congress, organised within the framework of the Barcelona 2004 Universal Forum of Cultures, brought together 1 886 participants from 64 countries from 2-5 September 2004. There were 269 speakers in some 30 workshops exploring the migration phenomena from all possible perspectives – from the individual motivations to migrate to those of the larger communities the migrant joins or leaves behind, from how new migrants affect our values to how they contribute to social cohesion, from the way film and media shape our attitudes to migration to how development can give people the option of staying at home.

The following is a summary of the conclusions of the Congress with a direct link to social cohesion:

Demographic complementarities

A significant shift in the world's demography is already noticeable. Many regions are inexorably headed towards an important demographic transition which will profoundly change their societies and economies over the next few decades. However, there are enough differences among regions to allow for complementarities as regions with ageing and shrinking workforces can still turn to those with youthful populations.

Rethinking concepts

If migration is to contribute to economic progress, social cohesion, and justice and peace in the 21st century there is a need to re-examine the way we think about it. Should we continue categorizing people solely on the basis of nationality or citizenship when more and more societies are creating individuals and groups with multiple national and cultural identities?

Common enrichment

Whatever may be propelling human movements, history teaches us that migration enriches cultures and societies. The migrants are key actors in introducing change in traditional societies. Migrants who have

experienced living in free societies have always been the main purveyors of democratic principles and freedoms when they return. Migration and the existence of trans-national families and communities create the bridges that hasten progressive social change in origin countries. Migrants are likewise the economic lifeline to many families and communities. Workers' remittances received by developing countries are already a large and stable source of external finance for developing countries. Increasing remittance flows by strengthening financial infrastructures, together with enhancement of investment climates, will have a significant impact on global poverty and development. Enhancing the cross-border mobility of labour will rebound to significant benefits for all. For this reason all initiatives for enlarging regional labour markets that allow people to move from areas where development potential is low to where they can be more productive are welcome.

Integration and social cohesion

Host societies face the challenge of promoting social cohesion amidst growing diversity. This implies on the one hand respect for the values of the host societies and on the other, recognizing and valuing cultural and religious pluralism. It implies achieving more equality which will be difficult to attain without negotiating for more social assistance to those who face greater difficulties because of language and other cultural differences, ill health, or lack of skills. There is a need for social infrastructures and political institutions that promote non-discrimination and which entitle minorities and the migrants themselves to participation in their social integration. The returns to investing in social integration are very significant. Migrants and migrant communities represent substantial social capital.

Negotiation-based policies

States must find the right tools and strategies for protecting the basic rights of the migrants and contributing to the development of their countries of origin. Since there are diverse and often conflicting interests and stakes in migration the processes for negotiating policies must be made more transparent. Migration policies are bound to fail if there is a lack of coherence with those in other spheres like trade, investments and social

integration. There is an especially acute need for social dialogue in drawing up migration policies since policies built on fragile social consensus tend not to have clear objectives and are very prone to manipulation for short-term political gain. Policies cannot be insensitive to the complexity of human condition and yet must be seen to protect the interests of host societies. Policies will be ineffective where they ignore the logic of the labour market and the limits to regulation.

International cooperation

Managing migration requires not only creative thinking, since it is constantly evolving, but also cooperation at the international level. There is a need to build a coalition of interests not only within but also between and among countries to establish more orderly forms of migration, and to generate the political will to share responsibility over its management.

The Congress closed with this declaration: "We share a common vision of a more integrated world where men and women move, not because they are forced by hunger or despair, by denial of their human rights, or because of threats to their lives, but because by moving they are able to express the full range of their creativity and reach the full potential of their humanity".

As seen above, the conclusions of the Congress are very much in line with the priorities of the Social Cohesion Directorate General.

The conclusions of the Congress can already be consulted on following website:
<http://www.mhicongress.org>

The dialogues between key international experts, immigrants and representatives from civil society as well as the main international organisations from the field of migration will also soon be published.

Contact: Maria Ochoa-Llido, Head of Migration and Roma/Gypsies Department, Directorate General for Social Cohesion, Council of Europe, Tel.: + 33 (0)3 88 41 21 79, Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 27 31, E-mail: maria.occhoa@coe.int



A new agenda for European social policy

Aart Jan De Geus, minister for social affairs and employment, and Henk Van Hoof, state secretary of the same department, intend to use the Netherlands Presidency of the EU from July to December 2004 as the foundation for a new European social policy agenda for presentation to the European Commission in 2005. There will be a new directive on European social and employment policy to 2010, whose main aims are to raise the level of knowledge and skills of the working population, increasing the supply of labour and strengthen social cohesion.

At the informal Social Council meeting in Maastricht from 8 to 10 July, the European Union's social affairs and employment ministers had an exploratory discussion on the major challenges facing social policy and employment, and the priorities and problems of the new agenda, with particular emphasis on practical ways of implementing the policy. According to De Geus and Van Hoof, the time for action has now arrived. The idea is to implement the agreements reached in Lisbon in 2000 in order to achieve the strategy's objectives.

They also argue strongly that a social Europe must adapt to change, particularly labour market developments, an ageing population and its effects on the viability of the social security system, and growing social diversity. The EU ministers have acknowledged the vital need to involve everyone in the labour market – men, women, ethnic minorities, elderly persons and persons with occupational disabilities. They call for a more flexible labour market, while ensuring that employees are still offered adequate security. This means an all round change in attitudes, from governments, employers and employees themselves. Continuing and in-service training throughout the working life are of critical importance for achieving this flexibility, responsibility for which rests not just with government but also with

the entire business community, which will need to make a major effort in this regard.

This new European social policy agenda will be preceded by a number of high level conferences and meetings. The conclusions will be presented to a final conference in Rotterdam, early in November 2004, on the theme "A social Europe: Let's deliver!"

Timetable of meetings:

30 September-1 October: Conference on the future of European labour legislation, Leyden.

4 October: Formal Social Council, Luxembourg.

6-8 October: Conference on recent developments in European industrial relations, The Hague.

18-19 October: round table conference on social inclusion in an enlarged European Union, Rotterdam.

21-23 October: Conference on childcare in a changing world, Groningen.

25-26 October: Conference on increasing the supply of labour, Amsterdam.

4 November: Conference on second pillar pension schemes: between solidarity and the free market, Amsterdam.

8-9 November: Final conference: "A social Europe: Let's deliver!", Rotterdam.

22-23 November: Conference on future developments on anti-discrimination, The Hague.

7 December: Formal Social Council, Brussels.

Further information can be found on the official website of the Dutch EU presidency:

<http://www.eu2004.nl>

ETUC's involvement at the Council of Europe

Strengthening social cohesion, which is one of the Council of Europe's priorities, is also a key element of the strategy pursued by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)¹.

When the Council of Europe decided to develop its Strategy for Social Cohesion, the ETUC therefore immediately offered support and assistance, even though the conditions for its participation in the relevant bodies were not ideal at the outset. This was because it was only invited to every second meeting. Fortunately, however, the repeated efforts of the Secretariat of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) and certain national delegations, including the French and Belgian delegations, have led to a great improvement here. The ETUC now participates in the meetings quite normally and under entirely satisfactory conditions.

At the same time, the ETUC believes that one of the keys to guaranteeing social cohesion lies in developing effective social security systems based on solidarity. It has therefore developed training activities for its members in this area, in particular with the much appreciated support of the Council of Europe and the CDCS Secretariat.

The issue of the implementation of effective social security systems is all the more acute today since the various governments having to deal with the problems of globalisation and, in particular, unemployment are confronted with economic difficulties and are tending to make cuts in their welfare budgets so as to reduce their spending on the budgets that fund social security systems, thereby encouraging the development and use of private systems, which are sources of discrimination and risk selection, and creating multi-tier social protection systems, which goes against the social cohesion objectives proclaimed by the Council and firmly supported by the ETUC.

Nevertheless, the ETUC does not wish to hide the problems the various member states face in this area. It is aware of the difficulties that exist, but intends to participate and assume its share of responsibility in the joint exercise to find solutions. It therefore asked the CDCS to be allowed to attend the

France: Strengthening Social cohesion

On 30 June 2004, Mr Jean-Louis Borloo, French Minister for Welfare, Employment and Solidarity, presented a Social Cohesion Plan. Its aim is to strengthen social cohesion, boost the return to growth and offer innovative and appropriate responses to situations that lead to exclusion.

The distinctiveness of the plan lies in the establishment of a genuinely comprehensive policy covering three areas: employment, in particular for young people and those on minimum income benefit, access to housing and equal opportunities for children. The plan will comprise twenty programmes and will be covered in a five-year planning law.

The first strand of the plan, which carries on from the measures already taken to boost employment, involves further major efforts to promote **employment**, which is the best defence against the breakdown of society and is the key to personal dignity.

The measures will see the implementation of a “new contract with job-seekers”, who will receive effective personalised support through the establishment of 300 special centres bringing together all of the relevant players.

One of the key challenges to be tackled in this area is, of course, youth unemployment. A total of 800 000 young people in difficulty need to be helped to find lasting employment. To this end, sandwich training courses under special vocational-skills contracts and apprenticeships will be developed. Every young person without a job or qualifications will be helped by an adviser until he or she finds lasting employment.

It is also crucial to give all individuals the opportunity to make the most of their potential. The plan therefore provides

for the creation of one million “activity contracts” over a four-year period. These will be personalised support measures for people who have been in receipt of minimum income benefit for over six months. Under the two-year contracts, the individuals concerned will receive training while holding jobs for which they will be paid the statutory minimum wage (€ 7.61 per hour as at 1 July 2004).

These wide-ranging efforts to promote employment also require the revival of industrial dialogue, and management and labour have been urged to come together and discuss central issues such as the employment of older people, the social management of company restructuring exercises, working hours and so on.

The second strand of the plan concerns **housing**. This happens to be a priority recognised by the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS), which, after considering access to housing, has now set up a group of specialists on housing policies for social cohesion. The aim in France is to help solve the housing crisis by building rented social housing. 500 000 dwellings will be built in both the public and the private sectors over a five-year period. At the same time, the existing emergency accommodation facilities will be expanded with the provision of almost 13 000 new places in shelters and hostels, as well as centres for asylum seekers.

Lastly, it is necessary to foster **equality of opportunity** in three areas: for children, for immigrant groups and between different regions. First of all, regional social cohesion charters will be drawn up by local players to help restore the social fabric. These charters will involve the various strands of the Social Cohesion Plan (accommodation and integration facilities, provision of social housing, one-stop welfare services). At the same time, it is important to upgrade the facilities for receiving and integrating immigrant groups, while also combating discrimination. To this end, two bodies will be set up: a National Migration and Reception Agency

meetings of the Committee of Experts on Standard-setting Instruments in the Social Security Field (CS-CO) as an observer. This request, which was granted in May 2004, reflected a dual concern on the part of the European Trade Union Confederation.

First of all it gives further practical effect to the ETUC's involvement at the Council of Europe, in particular in the development and implementation of the Council's *Strategy for Social Cohesion*. It therefore enables it to play a greater part in the discussions concerning social security, which the ETUC regards as the cornerstone of the strategy.

The Confederation also believes that it is important to be able to put across the views of the workers it represents: firstly, because they are both the main contributors to, and the main beneficiaries of, social security systems and, secondly, because the future of social security systems based on solidarity is not only a matter for the member states, even though they have a particular responsibility by which the ETUC sets store and which it supports. The developments are also a matter for the public themselves and hence, more generally, for civil society, of which the European Trade Union Confederation forms part.

The ETUC believes more strongly than ever that the social security systems put in place reflect the society people are trying to build. In its view, there can be no doubt: the society it is seeking to build along with other partners, in particular at the Council of Europe, is a society based on solidarity and social cohesion, in which all individuals feel that they share responsibility rather than being dependent on welfare. That is probably what is sometimes called the development of the “European social model” – or “heritage”!

1) The European Trade Union Confederation brings together the trade union organisations in 35 European countries (from Ireland in the west to Romania in the east, and from Iceland in the north to Malta and Cyprus in the south, not forgetting Turkey) and has 60 million members.

Contact: Henri Lourdelle, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), 5 Boulevard Roi Albert II, B-1210 Brussels, Tel.: + 32 2 22 40 450, E-mail: hlourd@etuc.org, Website: <http://www.etuc.org/en/>

and a High Authority for Combating Discrimination and Promoting Equality. The two bodies will receive significant levels of funding and will help boost French integration policy.

The new plan, designed for the benefit of all citizens and social cohesion in general, is based on the mobilisation and know-how of government and its partners, in particular local elected representatives, associations and management and labour. As the vector of a real project for society, its success is the precondition for a truly dynamic economy.

Further information on the new Social Cohesion Plan can be found (in French) on the official Website of the Ministry:

<http://www.cohesionsociale.gouv.fr>

Contact: Marie-Cécile Vadeau Ducher, Chair of the European Committee for Social Cohesion, Responsible for relations with the Council of Europe, Ministry for Employment, Labour and Social Cohesion, 8 avenue de Ségur, F - 75 350 Paris 07 SP, Tel.: + 33 (0)1 40 56 73 70, Fax: + 33 (0)1 40 56 47 72, E-mail: marie-cecile.vadeau-ducher@sante.gouv.fr

Germany The new Immigration Act

On its second attempt and after long and intensive negotiations in committee, this fundamental legislation was passed by the Bundestag on 1 July 2004. The Bundesrat approved the law in its session of 9 July 2004 and it enters into force on 1 January 2005. Some legislation makes it through the legislative process with far less difficulty, but immigration is a very sensitive social issue, which made the political interest in it that much more apparent. First passed in 2002, the Immigration Act was declared invalid by the Federal Constitutional Court due to a procedural error in the Bundesrat vote. The Federal Government then resolved to reintroduce the proposed

legislation seeking a broad political consensus.

Labour migration

The Immigration Act represents an improvement over the current legal situation first of all with regard to labour immigration. For example, after graduating from university, students will be able to remain in Germany for another year while they look for a job. And it will be easier for highly qualified workers to move to Germany, making the country more competitive in the global market for the brightest minds. In addition, self-employed persons who want to invest in Germany and create jobs here will find it easier to immigrate. In the area of labour immigration, the most important innovation is the simplification of administrative procedures: in future a residence permit application to the responsible foreigner's authority will suffice and this authority will then send the application to the local government employment agency which will decide whether to grant permission to work.

European standards with regard to humanitarian concerns

The new legislation also makes significant improvements to the right of residence for humanitarian reasons. In this area, the Act is based on the Council Directive on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals and stateless persons as refugees, adopted by the Council of the European Union on 30 April 2004. Non-state and gender-related persecution are explicitly recognized as grounds for granting refugee status. If legal obstacles to deportation exist (e.g. threat of torture in the country of origin), the affected person *shall* receive a residence permit. Further, a residence permit *may* be issued if the affected person is unable, through no fault of his or her own, to return to his or her country of origin. This legal basis will significantly reduce the

MISSION EUROPA For a new European citizenship: security and cross-cultural exchanges

Mission Europa is a non-political association with the aim of studying all the problems linked to insecurity - its causes, its consequences and its solutions - and fostering civil society's efforts to identify and promote the entire range of measures likely to help guarantee the rule of law and the security of Europe's citizens in the third millennium. *Mission Europa* considers that this objective must be attained with due regard for human rights and by cross-cultural links between the peoples of Europe.

An analysis of opinion polls and election results shows that the public's main concern is the improvement of interpersonal relations and abidance by rules based on respect for others within society, with a view to guaranteeing the security to which citizens aspire and are entitled. Civil society and economic, cultural and educational stakeholders are invited to pool their efforts with those of the public authorities in order to pursue this long-term endeavour. It was with the same aims in mind that *Mission Europa* was established in Lausanne in May 2002. The intention was that it should constitute a forum for debate and origination of proposals, combining and boosting everyone's efforts at the international level. This pooling of efforts would help attain the association's declared objectives.

Mission Europa sets out to:

- a) constitute a "pool of excellence" by combining the activities and experience of all the associations, institutions and bodies concerned not just at the transnational and European levels but also at the national and regional ones;
- b) help enhance the effectiveness of measures combating insecurity by attacking the roots of the problem;
- c) prepare strategy instruments best suited to the attainment of its objectives;
- d) promote activities conducive to establishing safe conditions for citizens notably through prevention measures relying on a cross-cultural approach;

problem of successive suspensions of deportation orders.

In future, the German Länder will be able to set up committees to rule on hardship cases. These will be able to issue residence permits for humanitarian reasons when all other legal means have been exhausted. The decisions of these hardship committees will be in the nature of exceptions.

Integration measures

The Act places support for integration on a completely new footing. For the first time, all new immigrants, whether of ethnic German origin or not, will be entitled to a basic offering of integration support measures. But this entitlement goes hand in hand with an obligation to participate for those who do not have even minimal German language skills. In addition, the Act provides that foreigners already living in Germany may be required to attend integration classes if they are receiving social benefits or are otherwise determined to have a special need for integration. Recipients of social benefits who fail to fulfil such requirements may have their benefits reduced.

Security-related aspects

A major innovation in this area is the provision with regard to deportation orders. The Act allows the interior ministries of the Länder to issue deportation orders that take immediate effect without prior notification or warning in order to avert a potential terrorist threat. Based on the information in its possession, the acting authority must assess the threat a particular foreigner poses to internal security. In cases of special national interest, the Federal Ministry of the Interior can assume responsibility and issue a deportation order. Appeals for legal protection against such deportation orders may be addressed only to the Federal Administrative Court, which will result in consistency of rulings and

administrative practice with regard to deportation orders.

Further, the grounds for expulsion will become stricter, for example allowing “hate preachers” to be expelled: foreigners who incite hatred against segments of the population or attack the dignity of others through malicious slander in a way capable of disrupting public order and security.

Under the new law, those foreigners in particular will be subject to regular expulsion who in the past actively supported terrorist activity. These include persons who received training in Afghan terrorist training camps years ago and now appear to lead law-abiding lives. Such past activity is of course relevant only in conjunction with an existing threat. In addition, leaders of banned groups are as a rule to be expelled. Persons convicted of human smuggling and sentenced to prison are to be expelled; human smugglers given suspended sentences or fined are as a rule to be expelled.

The Immigration Act also introduces legal provisions to make enquiries regarding anti-constitutional activities before granting citizenship on the basis of naturalization. Such enquiries are also required before issuing long-term settlement permits. This will prevent dangerous foreigners known to the authorities from establishing residency.

Further information on the new German Immigration Act can be found on the official Website of the Ministry:

<http://www.bmi.bund.de/>

Contact: Hans-Joachim Stange, Bundesministerium des Innern, Referat Grundsatzangelegenheiten der Migrations-, Ausländer- und Asylpolitik, D - 11014 Berlin, Tel: + 49 (0)30 39 81 21 75, Fax: + 49 (0)30 39 81 22 33, E-mail: HansJoachim.Stange@bmi.bund.de

e) foster synergies between all the stakeholders concerned through cross-sectoral approaches and the identification of key concepts.

To translate its objectives into action the association has organised forums and discussion sessions. For example, one of the most recent events that it hosted was a forum on “Families and security: trends and risks” (held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, in June 2004), at which various themes were addressed: changes in the structure of family units, migratory movements, social cohesion and also family ties and trends in risks. The objective was to make parents aware that they were not alone, that other parents experienced the same problems in raising their children, that there was nothing shameful about the difficulties they encountered and that what was important was that they should be able to make themselves heard so as to identify solutions and take positive steps, sometimes with the support of those around them (neighbours, friends, teachers). A statement along those lines was moreover issued: “Our desire is that by the end of today each family should feel that its key role in raising children has been recognised, that its concerns have been understood and are reflected in the support it may obtain from family members and friends, that it should be aware that it is not alone.”

It is against this background that *Mission Europa* has established a pilot forum for exchanges of views and offers of assistance and solidarity and the association *Lausanne Famille*, the forum’s co-organiser, has launched the concept of a “Parents’ café”, where parents can come together and encourage one another.

Mission Europa considers that the way children are raised is the key to the future: “whether they are our own or our neighbours, they are still our concern.”

For more information, please consult the website: <http://missioneuropa.free.fr>

Contact: Marise Goldsmith-Dansaert, Secretary General of Mission Europa, 5, chemin des Chamblandes, CH - 1009 Pully, Tel.: + 41 21 729 16 17, Fax: + 41 21 729 16 63, E-mail: marise.goldsmithdansaert@vtxnet.ch

ADOPTED TEXTS

Recommendations:

- Rec (2004)10 of the Committee of Ministers aimed at protecting the dignity and human rights of those suffering from mental disorders (adopted on 22 September 2004)
- Rec (2004)7 of the Committee of Ministers on organ trafficking (adopted on 19 May 2004)
- Rec (2004)8 of the Committee of Ministers on autologous cord blood banks and explanatory memorandum (adopted on 19 May 2004)
- Rec 1666 (2004) of the Parliamentary Assembly on Europe-wide ban on corporal punishment of children (adopted on 23 June 2004)
- Rec 1663 (2004) of the Parliamentary Assembly on Domestic slavery: servitude, au pairs and “mail-order brides” (adopted on 22 June 2004)
- Rec 1661 (2004) of the Parliamentary Assembly on Future of social security in Europe (adopted on 30 April 2004)
- Rec 1655 (2004) of the Parliamentary Assembly on A European migration observatory/agency (adopted on 26 April 2004)

Resolutions:

- Resolutions of the Committee of Ministers on the application of the European Code of Social Security and its Protocol for the period from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003 (Adopted on 9 September 2004)

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Reports:

- Report on the collection, testing and use of blood and blood products in Europe in 2001 (English only)
- Exploratory Report on the Access to Social Protection for Illegal Labour Migrants
- Report on “*The Specific Situation of Female Migrant Workers in Relation to Social Security*”, Silke Steinhilber, Committee of Experts on Co-ordination in the Field of Social Security (CS-CR)

Publications:

- Population studies n°45, *Reproductive health behaviour of young Europeans*, Volume 2 “the role of education and information”, Osmo Kontula, July 2004, Council of Europe Publishing, ISBN 92-871-5456-2.
- Population studies N°47, *Active ageing in Europe*, Volume 2, “demographic characteristics of the oldest old, Ronald C. Schoenmaeckers, July 2004, Council of Europe Publishing, ISBN 92-871-5469-4.
- *Guide to safety and quality assurance for organs, tissues and cells*, 2nd Edition, September 2004, Council of Europe Publishing, ISBN 92-871-5518-6 (English only)
- Proceedings of the Euro Mediterranean Conference “Social security: a factor of social cohesion”, Limassol, Cyprus 27-28 May 2004 (to be published in November 2004)
- Brochure on *Children, participation, projects – how to make it work!*
- *Transplant Newsletter*, 1st issue, September 2004 (English only)

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

Conferences:

- 30 September - 1 October: [Regional Conference on transit migration](#) – Istanbul, Turkey
- 15-17 October: Conference with Roma Youth on Alternatives to Migration - Budapest,, Hungary
- 4-5 November: [Forum 2004](#) “*Committed citizenship in the solidarity economy: the role of ethical financing and responsible consumption in social cohesion*” - Strasbourg
- 25 November: 3rd session of the Political Platform of the Council of Europe on Migration - Strasbourg

Seminars and other meetings:

- 27-28 September: Decade of Roma Inclusion Workshop on Housing - Budapest,, Hungary
- 20-22 October: Meeting of the South East Europe Network of social security – Durres, Albania
- 8-10 November: 9th meeting of the South-East Europe Network on Health issues – Chisinau, Moldova
- 2-3 December: 5th meeting of the South East Europe Housing Network – Strasbourg
- 3-4 December: North-South dialogue - Thematic Workshop II on migration: “Co-development: the role of local authorities” – Lisbon, Portugal

Committee meetings:

- 11-12 October: 6th meeting of the Committee of Experts for the co-ordination in the social security field – Strasbourg
- 28-29 October: 2nd Meeting of the Committee of Experts on the Children of Migrants (MG-EN) –Strasbourg
- 2-3 November: 13th meeting of the European Committee for Social Cohesion – Strasbourg
- 3-5 November: 2nd meeting of Committee of Experts on the education and integration of children with autism (P-RR-AUT) - Strasbourg
- 8-9 November: 1st meeting of the Group of specialists on Housing Policies for Social Cohesion (CS-HO) – Strasbourg
- 16-17 November: 56th meeting of the European Health Committee (CDSP) – Strasbourg
- 21-24 November: 18th meeting of the Group of Specialists on Roma, Gypsies and Travellers (MG-S-ROM) - Prešov, Slovakia
- 24-26 November: 48th Meeting of the European Committee on Migration (CDMG) - Strasbourg
- 1-3 December: 8th meeting of the European Population Committee (CAHP) - Strasbourg
- 7-8 December: 1st meeting of the Group of Specialists on Integrated Social Services (CS-INT) – Strasbourg
- 8-9 December: 1st meeting of the Committee of Experts on Children and Families (CS-EF) – Strasbourg
- 10 December: 1st preparatory meeting of the Committee of Liaison Officers for the XXVIIIth Session of the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Family Affairs - Strasbourg

“[Social Cohesion Developments](#)” - electronic newsletter published by the DG III – Social Cohesion of the Council of Europe – Publication: issued three times a year – **Members of the Editorial Group:** Gilda Farrell (responsible editor), Head of the Social Cohesion Development Division – Maria Ochoa-Llido, Head of the Migration and Roma/Gypsies Division – Cathie Burton, Press Officer – John Murray, Head of the Social Policies Department – Françoise Zahn (coordination, edition and layout) – **E-mail : DG3.Bulletin@coe.int**