

Editorial

Social cohesion: a new partnership model

One of Europe's great achievements in the twentieth century was the recognition that economic growth must go hand in hand with social protection and social justice. This was characterised by the development of the "welfare State" and by a growing commitment to social rights, as expressed above all in the Council of Europe through the Revised European Social Charter.

Now, however, many influential voices are questioning the continuing validity of this approach, possibly because of the fierce global competition and the more individualist and consumerist value systems that prevail today. If this is true, we have to find new ways of building on our European heritage and of strengthening our 46 member States' firm commitment to preserving social cohesion. I fear that if we don't, the stability of our continent will ultimately be affected.

The Council of Europe's **Revised Strategy for Social Cohesion**, approved in March 2004, provides us with some of the building-blocks that we need to meet the challenges posed by globalisation. The Strategy sketches out a new way for the State to fulfil its traditional function of securing social cohesion. Thus, without in any way suggesting that the State should divest itself of its own responsibility for securing social cohesion, we have to move away from the idea that governments and other public authorities can or should

attempt to do everything in splendid isolation. Increasingly, they need to work in partnership with other social actors, and move from the traditional notion of a "welfare State" to the more complex model of a "welfare society".

I would like to give three examples of how the Council of Europe is promoting this partnership model.

Firstly, by means of the Methodological Guide to the Development of Social Cohesion Indicators, which will be published this summer. It provides an analytical tool for the development of shared responsibility through a series of indicators and methodological inputs which suggest how new partnerships could be built.

Secondly, thanks to the impact of the annual Social Cohesion Forum held in November 2004, which was devoted to the question of socially responsible consumption and finance systems. This Forum demonstrated how citizens' movements can develop new forms of economic action which effectively contribute to social cohesion. People are increasingly questioning whether their own economic acts and choices as consumers and investors can incorporate an ethical dimension of social cohesion and social responsibility. Encouraged by the success of the Forum, we are now beginning to set up a Platform for a political dialogue between governments and other partners for developing ethical, socially responsible and solidarity-based initiatives in the economy. (see articles on pp.3, 15 and 17)

Thirdly, by promoting a new partnership with Roma minorities in Europe. No social

cohesion strategy could possibly disregard the situation of Roma and Travellers, who are among the most vulnerable and socially excluded minorities on our continent. Many well-meaning attempts to solve their problems have failed, however, because Roma have not been treated as full partners in building their own future. The Council of Europe has taken a major step forward by signing a partnership agreement with the recently created European Forum for Roma and Travellers. We have now committed ourselves to working more closely in order to serve a common cause: the integration of Roma and Travellers in our societies in full respect of their culture and traditions. The contribution which the Council of Europe is making to the Forum in terms of financial and human resources is a sign that we are on the right track. For the first time in their history, Roma and Travellers now have a voice at a pan-European level. It is therefore up to us to ensure that international and national authorities not only hear their voices but also respond constructively to what they have to say. (see article on p.7)

These are but a few examples that illustrate in what way the Council of Europe offers innovative solutions to challenges to social cohesion and its values. The **Third Summit**, which will take place in Warsaw on 16-17 May 2005, will provide the opportunity to renew our commitment to encouraging a broader participation of civil society and thereby ensuring the cohesion of European societies.

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Newsletter: What are the bases and challenges of a welfare society based on a «culture» of rights?

I think it is very useful to refer to work on the Strategy for Social Cohesion in order to understand the bases and challenges of the welfare society. The welfare society is described in paragraph 17, which introduces the principle of shared responsibility. Universal well-being should be a shared objective for which everyone is responsible in what it is now customary to think of as a triangular partnership (“ménage à trois”) involving the State, the market and civil society.

There are several bases for such as society, but I should like to single out two that strike me as particularly important. The high standard of education in our societies strengthens our belief that our destiny is in our hands. Delegation arrangements are being called into question because members of the public feel they are now better able to influence collective mechanisms. Governments play a major role in raising the general standard of education. It is they that have made this favourable situation possible, and they must continue to do so. At the same time, the globalisation of society is confronting us with a radically new situation: from what we read about and see of the world, we know that the destinies of the peoples of the planet are closely intertwined. This new situation is so complex that nobody can act alone. We must stand shoulder to shoulder so as to take control of our future.

Newsletter: Can you explain what joint responsibility means in this context and how education prepares people for joint social responsibility?

The higher standard of knowledge and awareness, combined with the great complexity of our world, necessitates a society where well-being is something for which everyone is responsible.

It is the responsibility of governments, market operators and civil society alike to devise a strategy in keeping with our collective ambitions and implement the measures we have decided on in order to achieve our objectives.

This means that all these parties are subject to the same participation obligations. Businesses, for instance – and their shareholders – must understand that they are being asked not only to respect the existing

framework but also to help build the sort of world envisaged by democratic institutions.

Those who believe that joint responsibility means watering down the powers of the State are wrong. Joint responsibility means that citizenship involves not only abiding by the rules governing the way in which we live together but also being actively involved in forging, by democratic means, the sort of future we all want.

Newsletter: What changes need to be made to public management in order to achieve this joint responsibility?

Joint responsibility definitely doesn't mean that everyone takes decisions and nobody has the final say. Shared responsibility requires governments to have the resources needed to bring about a steady increase in people's standard of education and to support the exercise of democracy. There is a responsibility to make sure that the weakest have the same rights as the strongest and are able to exercise them in practice.

Furthermore, governments must endeavour to ensure that everyone can be collectively involved in devising a grand design for society, and must set up the machinery needed to allow people to be involved in bringing such a society about.

So I should like to propose a line of approach for authorities wanting to enhance citizens' capacity to act responsibly and in a mutually supportive way. I think it can be based on five principles that need to be respected in all public action and are prerequisites for the exercise of responsibility in any form.

This line of approach is based on the capacity of individuals and society as a whole to **get together and come up with a blueprint** for the future. If we are to enhance the capacity of members of the public to act responsibly, it seems to me to be crucial to propagate, wherever possible, the concept of getting together to devise a blueprint. A blueprint necessitates a clearly defined aim, measures to achieve it, human, material and financial resources to implement these measures, planning, and so on. This makes it possible to bring about change.

It is also necessary to **get away from individualism**. This goes hand-in-hand with collective involvement in a strategy for the future, which in turn means working out how to interact with the economic, social, cultural and political environment. All in all, it means realising that we are not alone in the world and that what we do have an impact on the rest of the planet. For example, in order to get away from individualism, we need to promote a culture of evaluation and accountability.

Responsibility thrives on **information**. The government has a duty to provide citizens with effective, viable information tools. Measures to promote press freedom, government information and awareness campaigns must be based on openness, debate in which all

parties are represented and the identification of areas of tension, and indeed conflict.

Responsibility is always a **complex** matter. Education involves learning about complexity. Too bad if it creates uncertainty. To paraphrase Ilya Prigogine, I am happy to live in a society that is experiencing the end of certainty and the emergence of a plural future. Although there is no longer any certainty, present-day society still frequently makes people believe there is. Advertising messages assure us that consuming particular goods will make us happy. Electoral promises guarantee change. Yet it is only by ridding itself of its complex about the complexity of the world that the economy can address the issue of externalities. It is only by ridding itself of its complex about complexity that free trade, sacrosanct concept that it is, will come to acknowledge that the third-sector “social” economy has the capacity to meet the needs of the market. It is only by ridding themselves of their complex about complexity that consumers will exercise choice. How often have I heard, “What's the point? In any case, my public-spirited act is only a drop in the ocean.” Talk about complexes!

Lastly, responsibility is based on the capacity to see the **need for social conflict**. The political authorities have a duty to accept, and even value such conflict. A political authority that pokes fun at such social forums as the one in Porto Alegre, on the grounds that they have difficulty in coming up with genuine alternatives, is irresponsible. These forums must be given credit for putting social conflict back on the agenda. In doing so they have made a major contribution.

Newsletter: How can one restore confidence between the public and politicians when globalisation is undermining the effectiveness of the civil service?

While I don't have a miracle solution, I would suggest making evaluation systematic. When our acts are evaluated in the light of our promises, we are often inclined to be more modest. Politicians, businesses and civil society – we must all subject ourselves to appraisal and accept complete openness.

Newsletter: How can one develop and/or encourage ethical behaviour (particularly among consumers) and the concept of a sustainable society?

We need to pay attention to the supply side. The consumer world in which we live has created a supply that takes little account of environmental and social consequences. Establishing a credible alternative supply is a prerequisite for a change in behaviour. It is for that reason that I have undertaken to support those involved in the third-sector, solidarity-based economy, fair trade and ethical finance. What they are proposing, at micro-economic level, contains the seeds of a stronger alternative. Our objective should be to enable them to attain a critical mass.

FORUM 2004: FOLLOW-UP WORK ON SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND FINANCE SYSTEMS



Forum 2004, “Socially responsible consumption and finance systems: public authorities’ and citizens’ commitment for social cohesion”, held in Strasbourg on 4 and 5 November, clearly highlighted the relevance of the ethical and socially responsible economy for social cohesion. The views put forward introduced a number of key concepts for understanding and operationalising a model of society based on recognition of everyone’s right to dignity.

Three examples may be cited:

- experimenting with a ménage à trois (state, market and civil society), which was seen as the most useful approach to integrating collective and commercial interests;
- taking the term “market” to mean an institution where consumers can make their opinions known, so that it becomes a focus for solidarity and action on behalf of human rights and the environment;
- organising the so-called fourth sector, where greater recognition is given to the time and resources dedicated to mutual assistance.

Other examples threw light on the numerous opportunities for collaboration between the public and private sectors at local, regional and national levels, and how it can strengthen the contribution of the social economy to the collective interest. Finally, the discussion of legal arrangements and other regulatory tools, such as labelling, showed that public authorities and consumers were now taking more and more account of social and environmental standards.

The 400 or so participants from more than 30 countries approved a **final declaration** urging the Council of Europe to launch a **platform for political dialogue** between public authorities and organisations involved in ethical finance and responsible consumption. The platform could incorporate an experimentation and innovation fund, which in collaboration with the three main components of the social economy – ethical finance, fair trade and responsible consumerism – would support new developments in this field, for example aimed at adapting experience gained in other contexts, particularly in countries where the social economy was still limited or non-existent.

Other issues to accompany the general dialogue about the platform could include the observation of good practices in terms of legislation and agreements between government and organisations active in this field. Key topics could also be treated in greater depth to offer more assistance to decision making and the preparation of co-operation projects.

The Council of Europe’s Deputy Secretary General, Ms Maud de Boer-

Buquicchio, supports the Forum 2004 final declaration and has drawn attention to the relevance of concepts such as socially responsible consumption and finance for the new European Year of Citizenship through Education, co-ordinated by the Council’s DG IV – Education and Culture – in conjunction with other Council of Europe departments. This aims to make responsible citizenship a basic principle of democracy and sustainability in Europe.

Events such as the Forums, which are open to the public, offer the Directorate General of Social Cohesion an opportunity to debate and open up new perspectives on this field. Each year, the Forum casts the spotlight on one of the key issues identified in the **Social Cohesion Strategy**, which the Committee of Ministers approved on 31 March 2004.

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Trends in social cohesion No. 12
Ethical, solidarity-based citizen involvement in the economy: a prerequisite for social cohesion (2005)

Council of Europe Editing, ISBN: 92-871-5558-5, 150 pages, 10 Euros

[Order this publication](#)

Forum 2005, which will be held on 17-18 November, will focus on the sensitive issue of labour market flexibility and possible ways of reconciling changes in job security and employment prospects and social cohesion. Since September 2004, a group of experts has been working on this topic with the Division for the Development of Social

Cohesion, with a view to producing recommendations based on detailed analysis of the situation.

This highly topical issue raises questions that go to the very heart of the post-War model of social cohesion, which sought to integrate persons into society through work and give them

the opportunity to develop their own contributions and forms of collective participation. In particular, how can we manage the changes imposed by globalisation while maintaining social cohesion? A number of contributors will try to offer a response.

CARDS PROGRAMME LAUNCHED

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS SUPPORT PROGRAMME IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

Social support institutions throughout South-east Europe (SEE) are badly in need of structural

reforms, in particular in terms of financing to reach sustainability. While regional cooperation on cross border social protection has started, it needs to be enhanced and all SEE countries would benefit from a regional approach. All countries in the region have started some process of social protection reform, but institutions need to be strengthened and weak contribution collection systems severely hamper social protection efforts even where reformed systems are in place. Social services delivery is underdeveloped; moreover, access to social services for minorities is limited and needs to be reformed throughout the region.

With this in mind, the Council of Europe has embarked on implementing an ambitious three-year programme in South East Europe to support social policies and institutions and promote social security coordination in the region. It is a joint CARDS project between the European Commission and the Council of Europe and Directorate General for Social Cohesion assumed the management of the project.

The programme is a spin-off of a previous activity, carried out within the Initiative for Social Cohesion of the Stability Pact for South East Europe finalised recently, which contributed to the creation of a network of social security professionals and set the basis for the regional cooperation in the field of social security coordination.

The CARDS programme aims to strengthen the legislative framework and the policymaking process for social protection policies, improve co-ordination of social security systems for migrating and moving persons and build capacities in the public administrations with respect

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to social security and social policy making.

The first component of the programme focuses on the co-ordination of social policies, and specifically on the sustainability of the social protection system. In order to modernise the system, one has to streamline processes of strategic reforms and align them to the European standards. The main attention of the component will be on pensions, health care and social assistance schemes, producing a set of analyses on the viability of the social sector in the participating countries, outlining models of financing and administrative procedures and supporting the development of the legislative framework. The programme foresees an exchange of best practice between administrators from partner countries in the area of access to services according to the European social security standards of the Council of Europe and the European Union.

Under the component of cross border co-operation in the field of social protection, the programme will attempt to modernise social security coordination techniques, aiming at guaranteeing equal access to social security rights in general and more specifically in relation to the cost compensation schemes (health care, child benefits and social assistance) for all vulnerable groups.

Creating a basis for removal of impediments to cross border payments of social benefits and support procedures for cross border payment of health care costs has been identified by the programme stakeholders as a crucial aspect of the support offered to the countries. This is why particular attention will be

paid to the establishment of a clearing centre for data and social security benefits exchange. Several models are currently under consideration:

establishing a query system of data exchange, an automatic swap of data benefits information, or a more advanced cross-road bank for social benefits exchange.

The programme is designed to pay particular attention to the inclusiveness of the social policy-making process, involving a large group of stakeholders in it through open house events, public debates and different printed and electronic materials.

Within the component for institutional capacity and quality development, the programme will establish and develop inter-country networks of key-professionals to promote the reform agenda, creating one or more focal points in each state with emphasis on social reform as well as on cross border issues and improving capacity by targeted training in the field of social security. A number of trainings programmes and study tours to member states of the EU countries will be planned throughout the programme for professionals and trainers, anticipating the creation and modernisation of regional training centres.

The regional office of the project, hosting the project implementation team and serving as a central point for regional social dialogue, has been established in Skopje and the project team is currently in discussions with national authorities on the creation of liaison offices in all the countries of the region.

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Users' involvement in social services: progress within the Group of Specialists

During 2003 and 2004, the Group of Specialists on user involvement in social services and integrated social services delivery (CS-US) worked on user involvement in social services and produced **guidelines** on the subject, which have recently been published.

The group received new terms of reference for 2005 and 2006, namely to review current trends in social services integration in Europe and analyse existing examples of integration with a view to drawing up recommendations for policy-makers. The aim is to identify ways of improving the quality of social services delivery while reinforcing users' rights.

It is a tough task since, outside the United Kingdom and the United States, there are as of yet few studies comparing and analysing the consequences of social services integration. Furthermore, there is no real definition of social services integration and the existing models differ greatly from one country to another.

The group will therefore seek to identify, using preset criteria, a number of integration practices in Europe – north, south, east and west – and go on to take an in-depth look at those experiences in terms of both impact of service integration (particularly as regards user satisfaction) and the processes used to integrate social services. It will then prepare recommendations based on analysis of the projects presented by its different member countries.

The group's next meeting is planned on 7 and 8 June 2005. The project should be completed by mid-2006.

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See article on page 16:
"Vanadzor: an example of social services integration" (Armenia)

Planned guide on the development of policies for integrating young people from disadvantaged urban areas

Following the review of the methodological approaches and the work on the ground in six European cities, the results of which were published in *Trends in Social Cohesion* (Volumes 8 and 9), the Division for the Development of Social Cohesion is to produce a guide on the development of policies for integrating young people from disadvantaged urban areas (in particular with regard to education and the labour market). The main thrusts of the guide were discussed with the European Youth Centre and the experts from the Directorate General of Social Cohesion's childhood project at a seminar on the relationship between child, youth and family policies (Kyiv, 23-25 September 2004), at which the participants strongly underlined the need for research in this area to help with the implementation of appropriate policies.

The motivation for the guide stems from the fact that, although many studies have been conducted and policies carried out here, they do not deal comprehensively with the problems that face the young people concerned. And the situation does not seem to be improving. On the contrary, the problems of disadvantaged areas appear to be worsening and are even emerging in areas where spatial segregation previously did not exist.

When it comes to integrating young people from disadvantaged areas, there is an all too frequent tendency to employ under-funded, short-lived pilot projects. Although necessary, such projects need to be combined with other policies, ie employment, education and town-planning policies and, above all, ones that take account of the relevant areas as a whole, in relation to their environment and in a manner that integrates them with the rest of society.

The guide will also deal with the clichés that are heard in the media, in political debate and even in the areas concerned. The idea is not to deny the reality behind these prejudices but, rather, to separate the myths from that reality and thereby succeed in understanding what the roots of the problems really are.

Another reason for producing the guide lies in the causes of the growing divisions

Partnership Programme between the Council of Europe and the European Commission on youth research

The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy

The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYC) is a **youth research partnership activity** between the Council of Europe and European Commission. It is an ambitious project that will, for the first time, provide youth policy makers with a single entry point to retrieve accurate up-to-date research based information in a user friendly manner on the realities of youth across Europe.

It is a tool for the implementation of the White Paper on Youth and in particular the European Commission Common Objectives on a Better Understanding of Youth. It will follow the implementation of common objectives on Participation, Information, Voluntary activities and a Better Understanding of Youth. The EKCYC is supported by a European wide network of Knowledge Centre correspondents who were nominated by the member states ministries.

In the first phase of pilot project 15 countries will participate: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden and United Kingdom. These correspondents will feed research based information into the core content of the EKCYC. The core content is answers to questionnaires on the priority topics. The core content has a specific search mechanism which allows a user to search the information by multiple countries for one question and one year and for multiple years for one question and one country. The core content will be supplemented with a powerful searchable database of documents from research, policy and practice on youth policy priority

in society, with the phenomenon assuming various forms and being compounded by the emergence of other factors such as the decline of the integrating role of the labour market and the welfare state and the exacerbation of religious intolerance.

Lastly, there are imbalances in the perceptions of the problem. Policymakers and those affected by the policies have differing views of the solutions, in terms both of expectations and of regulatory mechanisms. The causes of this “non-integration” need to be identified more clearly so as to make political intervention more effective.

The guide will therefore have multiple objectives:

- To deconstruct the relevant clichés, which take a degree of truth and deform it to such an extent that it becomes a sweeping generalisation;
- To recognise the potential and the vulnerability of the young people concerned. Integration policies are fundamentally geared towards “normalising” individual conduct and often ignore the factors that make the young people socially vulnerable and lead them to assert themselves through the mechanism of “generating fear”. Identifying the potential of the young people and their resources is an

obligation for all policy approaches;

- To analyse the conduct of the institutions either present in, or absent from, the areas concerned;
- To distinguish between “visible” and “invisible” social barriers. Various forms of “invisible” stigmatisation have the effect of undermining the positive role young people from troubled neighbourhoods can play in society;
- To analyse relationships with the symbols and values of the “dominant” society;
- To distinguish and define areas of common ground. It is necessary to distinguish non-negotiated policies and the impact of mistaken policies from negotiated policies;
- To put forward areas for “communicative” representation and autonomous decision-making;
- To highlight the new possibilities that arise from these analyses, including on the basis of successful examples. There must be a clearer focus on the roots of the social conflict between these young people and the rest of society.

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European Population Conference 2005 **Demographic Challenges for Social Cohesion**

Council of Europe, Hemicycle, 7-8 April 2005

The Council of Europe is planning for April 2005 a population conference, bringing together demographers and policy-makers in a debate focused on demographic challenges for social cohesion. The Conference is organised by the European Population Committee of the Council of Europe in collaboration with the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

The Conference will take place in the Council of Europe Hemicycle, Strasbourg, from Thursday 7th to Friday 8th of April 2005.

The topics of the conference will combine demographic issues and policy responses for demographic challenges, thus targeting national, European and international decision-makers concerned with population and demographic issues and will include the following sessions:

- Session 1: Policy Implications of Changing Family Formation, combining the issues of low fertility, family, family formation and housing and health policies
- Session 2: Population Ageing and its Challenges to Social Policies, focusing on ageing, inter-generational solidarity, health and its economic and social consequences
- Session 3: Impacts of Migration on Society and Policies, addressing issues of international migration, integration of migrants and social cohesion
- Session 4: a roundtable on Population Issues and Social Cohesion – Priorities for Action

The programme, registration form, draft reports, practical and additional information can be found on the following website: <http://www.coe.int/population/>. Registration forms (downloadable from the website) should reach the Secretariat at the latest by 4th of March 2005.

topics and pages of background information.

The latest news from policy and research on the priority topics will be available and sent to users who register as interested in the topics. It will also contain a glossary of terms used in the youth policy field, an expert database, examples of good practice in youth policy and online applications for seminars.

Calendar of activities 2005

- January: Correspondents begin work collecting answers to pilot phase questionnaires
- 3-4 March: Training of correspondents on the EKCYP
- March/April: Filling in the core content to the first 3 questionnaires
- May/June: Filling in the core content to the second 3 questionnaires
- June: First Launch of pilot project - Luxembourg Presidency
- July/Sept: Nominations received from remaining countries
- Sept: Training of new correspondents
- 24-25 Sept: Second Launch at CoE Youth Ministers Conference, Budapest
- Sept-Dec: New correspondents fill in core content
- Nov: Evaluation of pilot project

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THE EUROPEAN ROMA AND TRAVELLERS FORUM

SIGNATURE OF A NEW PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE



The 15 December 2004 will remain a landmark in the chequered quest of Roma, Travellers and related groups for a better life. On that day the **European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF)**, a non governmental international organisation which aims at defending the fundamental human rights of these populations, signed a Partnership Agreement with the Council of Europe. The Agreement provides for assistance in terms of financial and human resources and, most important of all, a privileged relationship with the various bodies of the Organisation. The purpose of this relationship is to involve the Forum in those activities of the Organisation which are related to their needs and to provide them with the possibility of participating in the decision-making process at the European level.

Through the participatory role of the Forum, the Roma, Travellers and other related groups – about ten million people throughout the continent - will for the first time have a say in Europe. This was the dream of Ms Tarja Halonen, the President of Finland, when in 2001, in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, she called for the establishment of a Forum to give these populations a voice. That dream has now come true. As Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis said at the ceremony marking the signature of the Partnership Agreement “We must ensure that both national and international authorities not only hear the voices of Roma and Travellers but also listen to them.”



Roma, Travellers and related groups have been persecuted and marginalised for centuries. Today, in most countries, the overwhelming majority live in miserable shanty towns, are largely illiterate, massively unemployed and have a lower life expectancy than the rest of the population in the country they live in. Discrimination is widespread: segregated schools or classes for children, entrance refused to restaurants and public places, no jobs offered, and often the victims of violence.

The Council of Europe has been addressing these problems for some time. Today, it will have the opportunity to address them together with the representatives of these populations. As Mr Rudko Kawczynski, the acting president of the Forum, said on the occasion of the signing of the Partnership Agreement: “In the past, decisions were made for us by governments, but from now on, we are going to be the ones to decide. This is the beginning of the participation and the integration of the Romani people in Europe.”

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Interview with Henry Scicluna

Coordinator of Council of Europe Roma Activities

Newsletter: Why does the Secretary General need a co-ordinator on Roma issues?

In the 1990s, especially after the political changes in central and eastern Europe, various sectors of the Council of Europe launched activities concerning Roma populations. The Secretary General felt there was a need to co-ordinate these activities and ensure a certain coherency within the Organisation. In 1995 a Group of Specialists was set up to focus specifically on Roma issues.

This did not prevent certain sectors, particularly those concerned with monitoring, from continuing and even stepping up their activities in this field. Other international organisations were also launching initiatives. So there was an increasing need for co-ordination, both within the Organisation and at the international level.

Newsletter: What are your main activities?

The main task of the Co-ordinator is to follow the Roma-related activities conducted by the different sectors of the Council of Europe and other international organisations, to make sure the various activities and initiatives are consistent and complementary. By encouraging concerted efforts and multilateral co-operation, I also play a “promotional” role.

The European Roma and Travellers Forum was established recently. The Council of Europe has signed a partnership agreement with it and there has to be liaison between the two. This is a new task for the Co-ordinator.

Although I am not an ombudsman, I receive a lot of information and complaints which I cannot ignore. In such cases I try to approach the authorities in the country concerned, with the help, for example, of senior Council of Europe officials.

Newsletter: Can you give an actual example of a crisis or conflict situation

or a political deadlock that was solved thanks to your intervention?

The best example was in 2003. Seven hundred Roma refugees from Kosovo housed in a centre in Skopje run by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) were offered alternative accommodation in various places around Skopje. The refugees refused the offer and, in mid-summer, left en masse for the Greek border, with the intention of entering Greece. For several weeks they lived in plastic tents in the sweltering heat, with dire consequences for the infants and pregnant women among them.

With the assistance of the Macedonian authorities and representatives of Roma organisations, I managed to organise a meeting of the Macedonian authorities, the HCR, Roma organisations and the refugees themselves, which resulted in the return of all the refugees to Skopje.

This sort of work really requires considerable freedom of action, which unfortunately I do not always have.

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Health and related activities: towards a strategic approach

The Council of Europe's role in the health field is to contribute to social cohesion and democratic stability through the promotion of equal access to health services that are safe and of good quality, and by furthering the interaction between patients' rights and health services. This is the democratic functioning of health care services that are patient-oriented, ensure patients' full and responsible participation, and that are, at the same time, respectful of the ethical, social and human rights dimensions of the provision of health care.

During their Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers (November 2003 – May 2004), the Netherlands put health high on the political agenda. The Netherlands elaborated proposals in order to give the various health and related activities carried out within the Council of Europe a strategic approach and thus a higher visibility. The overall objective of the approach will be to guarantee that the right activity is carried out at the right moment in the right setting. In order to meet this overall objective, the future health and related activities would have to pass certain selection criteria, of which the most important are:

1. Is there a direct link between the core tasks of the Council of Europe and the activity?
2. Does the activity of the Council of Europe have added value as compared to national initiatives and the programme of activities of other institutions active in Europe (in particular European Union, World Health Organisation (WHO)?
3. Is the proposed activity the best way to achieve a specific goal, either in partnership with one or more institutions active in a European context, or otherwise?
4. Does the proposed activity help meet the needs of the member states (added value)?
5. Does the proposed activity reflect a balance between the different needs and interests of various member states?

The proposals have to still to be adopted by the Committee of Ministers. They will certainly influence the decision-making process for health and related activities in the

future. It will be the Committee of Ministers itself which will monitor and evaluate the strategic approach three years after its approval.

For further information, please visit following websites: http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social_Cohesion/Health/ and http://www.coe.int/T/E/Communication_and_Research/Press/Theme_Files/Health_policy/Index.asp

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Conference on the rights of children with disabilities

Protection and promotion of the rights and dignity of children with disabilities was the **focus of a conference** organised by the Council of Europe and the Norwegian chairmanship of the Organisation's Committee of Ministers (Strasbourg, 8 and 9 November 2004).

Full participation in society of people with disabilities and their families is one of the main aims of the Council of Europe. This conference has contributed by earmarking the existing policies and good practice in Europe which lead to respect of disabled children's rights and freedoms and which assure complete social integration.

Two elements can be particularly underlined:

- First, the medical approach – still often the most commonly used – should be replaced by a multidisciplinary model based on the assessment of the abilities of a child and its development potential rather than on disabilities. An individual plan of development should be established for every person and the services to be



Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

Activities 2004 of the Committee on Social Cohesion

During 2004, the Congress **Committee on Social Cohesion** continued its work against the general background of the Council of Europe's Strategy for social cohesion, in particular by carrying forward the preparation of activities and reports on the following: the involvement of the towns and regions of South East Europe in the management of refugees and displaced persons (report adopted), the promotion of effective access to social rights for migrants in Europe's towns and regions, gender mainstreaming at local and regional level (report adopted) and the role of local and regional authorities in efforts to combat trafficking in human beings, notably in liaison with the work done by the Council of Europe with a view to the preparation of the Convention on action against trafficking in human beings.

The Chamber of Local Authorities Committee dealt with the following subjects: the role of local authorities in fighting severe poverty in towns (report adopted), the main challenges of social cohesion at local level, the planned establishment of a European observatory for crime prevention and the role of local policing in Europe (report adopted).

Lastly, **the Chamber of Regions Committee** continued its work on regional ombudsmen (report adopted). In this connection, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights and the Congress organised a Round Table of European Regional Ombudsmen in Barcelona on 2 and 3 July 2004 in co-operation with the Ombudsman of Catalonia. The committee also proposed launching an activity on regions' role in promoting youth employment.

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provided should be tailor-made and person-centred, defined on the basis of the individual needs. They should be user-driven, not system-driven.

- Second, due to the major problems faced by the people with disabilities living in institutions such as higher than average mortality rates, malnutrition, overmedication, abuse of restraint and no rehabilitation, a move towards deinstitutionalization of people with disabilities should be made.

For that purpose, one step would be to improve institutions by downsizing them, decentralizing them, making them more home-like and integrating them in the community.

To develop, in parallel, local, community-based services is also a way to achieve this aim.

The draft Council of Europe Disability Action Plan, drawn up following the **Malaga Ministerial Conference** (May 2003) and setting out the framework for the new multi-disciplinary approach, was presented. The conference also provided an opportunity to promote the UN draft Disability Convention, which is being drafted along the same lines as the Council of Europe's Action Plan, and to which the Council is contributing as observer.

The results of the Conference will be taken into account in the elaboration of the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan and the Council of Europe will also promote them in order to be incorporated in the elaboration of the UN Disability Convention.

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For further information, please visit following website:
<http://www.coe.int/soc-sp>



How can democracy learning promote social cohesion?

What is social cohesion? How does a society work? And what should be done about those left behind on its margins? We all construct our own answers to these questions based on our experience and learning at school, in a community and in a family. And whatever we learn about "living together" – both in terms of knowledge and values – has a major impact on our own well being, and on the well being of the society as a whole. But how can this learning be supported?

In 1997 the Heads of State of the Council of Europe launched a project on "Education for Democratic Citizenship" (EDC) in order to promote educational practices which help young people and adults learn and exercise their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society. Since then, practitioners, government officials and decision makers from all over Europe have worked together to define EDC concepts, policies and strategies. It is on the basis of this work that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted, in 2002, **Recommendation (2002) 12**, which laid down guidelines to be followed by member states.

In order to support the practical implementation of these guidelines, the Council of Europe proclaimed 2005 European Year for Citizenship through Education. Coordinating committees – comprising policy makers, civil servants, practitioners,

media and civil society – will facilitate the organisation of the "Year" in each member State. They will decide on the priorities to follow within a very broad framework proposed by the Council of Europe, including the two key issues the 'Year' is to focus on: "How to bridge policy and practice in EDC and Human Rights Education?" and "How can democracy learning contribute to solving societal problems and promote social cohesion?"

The "Year" was launched at an international conference in Sofia on 13-14 December 2004 which brought together governments, practitioners and international governmental and non-governmental institutions and organisations, including the European Union, UNESCO, OSCE, European Youth Forum, Open Society Institute and the International Committee of the Red Cross. The participants adopted a **communiqué and an action plan** stating the main lines of action and the most important events. Among these are a seminar for NGOs on EDC hosted by the Polish Presidency in Warsaw on 14-17 April 2005 and a seminar for teacher training institutions that will take place in Strasbourg in June 2005. A proposal to organise a campaign on responsible consumption in the framework of the "Year" is also under consideration.

For further information, please visit following website:
<http://www.coe.int/eyce>

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Drug Prevention: 1st European Consultative Forum

The first European Consultative Forum for Drug Prevention on “Poly-drug-use: mixing different drugs - a new trend in youth cultures?” took place in Ekaterinburg (Russian Federation) on 5-6 October 2004. It was attended by 134 participants (experts, decision makers and young people) from 18 countries and for the first time there was an equal balance between young people and other participants. The concept of a consultative forum involving young people has shown that a regular consultation process between young people and experts and decision makers can generate new insights and information of relevance to developing prevention policies.

During this event the young people highlighted the following issues as being of concern to them:

- Co-dependency is a significant problem for young people who have family members with a drug problem.
- Young people feel that they have not been given sufficient reasons why they should not take drugs.
- They feel that alcohol and cigarette commercials manipulate them into addictive behaviour and create a culture of substance-use that also lures them into taking illegal drugs.
- The consequences of poly-drug-use are little known, particularly health effects, and young people request more information.
- Healthy lifestyles have become more attractive for young people and related activities must be appealing and take into account their wishes and needs.
- Adults should offer better role models, particularly parents.
- There was strong agreement among young people, despite diverging views on drug use, that the use of cannabis should not be criminalized.
- Young people find that the differentiation between legal and illegal drugs is not helpful and that this does not really influence their choices; health issues and other risks, such as developing dependence or addiction have more impact on their choices and are certainly of interest and concern to them.
- Young people feel that they are often given activities to occupy time rather than giving them real opportunities in life.
- Substances are used primarily for their specific effects or experimentation, rarely just for fun only.
- Young people do not find ‘prevention’ as a concept very appealing. They feel that approaches of support and empowerment would give more effective results than traditional prevention programmes.

- Young people want to be seen as a resource to overcome problems rather than the problem itself.

The final report and proceedings of the Forum will be produced in early 2005 and will include information on types and risks of poly-drug use, guidelines for youth participation in drug prevention and examples of the benefits of youth participation in drug prevention projects.

The European Prevention Prize 2004 was awarded to the three projects selected by jury during their meeting in May 2004 in Hamburg: “Voilà” (Switzerland), “Be Aware” (Slovenia) and “Young Leaders in the Community” (U.K.). The winners received the awards, certificates and a letters from the Secretariat informing them of the cash prize of 1,500 Euros. The next European Prevention Prize will be awarded in 2006 and calls for applications will be disseminated by 31 March 2005.

The 2nd European Drug Prevention Forum is planned for 2006. The Secretariat invites proposals for hosting this Forum by 30 April 2005.

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New Pompidou Group project:

“Drug Prevention Support Network for Parents and Professionals”

The role of parents in prevention is increasingly seen as highly important. Many parents do not have direct access to professional information and support or are afraid to seek it. In addition professionals working with parents in isolated and rural regions lack professional contacts, information and support.

The project is aimed at creating an on-line information, support and training network primarily for parents and professionals working in isolated and rural regions. The support network is planned to be established in the remote regions of the Russian Federation with participation from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Monitoring the population census in Moldova

The Government of Moldova has been conducting its first population and dwellings census since 1989 and requested the Council of Europe to monitor it. The field enumeration phase of the census ended on 12 October 2004 and the Expert Group appointed by the Council of Europe to monitor the census was present throughout. They briefed, trained and supervised the 30 observers who were spread throughout the country in order to accompany selected enumerators in the field. The international observation of the census took place in all 35 districts of the country. The work involved observing the enumeration of approximately 1 500 households in one third of all Census Circumscriptions or Districts. These observations were randomly spread over the country, and therefore they provide a fairly reliable picture of how well the Census was carried out.

The Expert Group reported that the enumeration phase has been carried out successfully and with professionalism. Moreover, the observers were received everywhere with courtesy and cooperation both by the enumerators and by the public. The Department of Statistics, responsible for carrying out the census, has extended full cooperation to the Expert Group.

"(...) there are reasonable grounds for concluding that the Census was conducted in a correct and acceptable manner (...)"

the Census was conducted in a correct and acceptable manner and that good and useful results can be expected to be obtained for many of the topics for which data were collected in the census. The data that were collected for some of the topics are considered to be potentially more problematic, and therefore it is

recommended that users use them with greater care, particularly if the data are intended to be used for purposes that some groups of the population may view as being sensitive."

The Expert Group expressed its general satisfaction with the enumeration phase of the census and, while making it clear that no census is perfect, drew attention to a few areas of concern. In cases of households with members living abroad (especially numerous in Moldova) it was often difficult to get reliable and complete data for them.

The items in the questionnaire concerning nationality and language proved to be the most sensitive, particularly

The items in the questionnaire concerning nationality and language proved to be the most sensitive (...)

with respect to the recording of responses to these questions as being "Moldovan" or "Romanian". Although reports from the field showed that a large proportion of respondents spontaneously provided answers to these questions, seven of the ten Teams of Observers reported cases where enumerators encouraged respondents to declare that they were Moldovan rather than Romanian. In addition, even within the same family there often seemed to be some confusion about these terms. In view of this, the experts have concluded that special care will be required by the Department of Statistics to assess the data on nationality.

The Expert Group will continue to monitor the subsequent stages of the census including the control checks of the field work, the coding and data processing phases and the preparation and publication of the preliminary data.

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Joint Programmes in favour of Moldova and the Russian Federation

At the beginning of December 2004, the Directorate General for Social Cohesion launched the social component of the Joint Programme between the European Commission and the Council of Europe: support to continued democratic reforms in Moldova. The programme will be implemented in 2004-2006 in close cooperation with the Moldovan authorities.

The objective of the element "Better social service access for vulnerable groups" is the promotion of an effective access to social rights in Moldova for the individuals most affected by the recent political and socio-economic crisis (such as people with disabilities, young unemployed and children whose parents left the country). Focussing on vulnerable groups is an essential aspect of creating the conditions for social stability in this country.

This project will facilitate access to existing provisions of social protection for vulnerable persons in Moldova by improving the quality of information on their rights and entitlements and by offering pro-active communication measures and training of social protection agencies staff. The activities will take place at local level in Hincesti, Drochia and Soldanesti regions, include:

- the dissemination of the report on access to social rights in Europe,
- the preparation of a framework report on the situation of access to social benefits and services for vulnerable persons in this country;
- training seminars at a local level to identify communication obstacles and to improve the delivery of social services,
- a joint training seminar on how to improve the quality of information and the efficiency of communication with a special focus on client reception,
- training seminar to improve the skills of the trainers
- and the creation of local partnerships for employment.

The implementation of the programme began with a seminar in December 2004 presenting the Report on Access to Social Rights and the Council of Europe's revised Strategy for Social Cohesion. An exploratory mission was also carried out which helped to identify the beneficiary groups and the partners for this programme.

A similar social component is also included in the Joint Programme between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in favour of Russia (Joint Programme - Russian Federation VIII), which is to be launched in early 2005.

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Conference on transit migration

A **Regional Conference** on “Migrants in transit countries: sharing responsibility for management and protection” was held in Istanbul (Turkey) on 30 September and 1 October 2004 in co-operation with the Turkish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The aim of the conference was to discuss the particular problems of transit migration and the mechanisms and processes involved, as well as the situation of migrants in transit countries, from the point of view of respect for human rights and the protection of migrants’ dignity. A further aim was to identify best practice and relevant experiences at national level in terms of transit migration in order to improve the way it is managed and promote regional and international co-operation regarding transit migration by strengthening dialogue and partnership between Council of Europe members and non-member states.

Four case-studies from major transit migration regions (Russia, Turkey, Tunisia and Morocco) were presented as background material for the discussions. Consideration of the main characteristics of irregular migration in transit countries was followed by a debate on “Burden sharing, not burden shifting - the basis for genuine co-operation on irregular transit migration.” Part of the conference was also devoted to transit migration in other parts of the world (Senegal and Mexico).

The participants called for increased co-operation in this area and for the development of a European migration policy in liaison with countries of origin, transit countries and host countries. In particular, it was stressed that intergovernmental co-operation here, based upon mutual respect and solidarity, largely depends on the determination and will of individual countries to assume their responsibilities.

The provision of reliable and comprehensive information about the immigration situation in destination countries, both for the countries concerned and for potential migrants, was identified as a priority.

The Council of Europe was urged to continue its activities on irregular and transit migration and trafficking in human beings. It was also asked to draw up guidelines for harmonising member states’ policies in these areas and to review its legal norms and recommendations from the point of view of their efficiency so as to ensure that they are implemented at national and international level.

Further details about the conference are available on following website:

http://www.coe.int/T/F/Cohesion_sociale/Migrations/Istanbul_Conference.asp

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In January 2002, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe launched two “Integrated Projects” for a three-year period. The aim was to assist member states in the implementation of policies and also in the development of practical tools for the different actors concerned, in accordance with the common values by which these states are united in the Council of Europe. Such challenges require the implementation of specific activities in a wide range of fields by means of a coherent overall approach, making it necessary to mobilise and to support the efforts undertaken by the various sectors of the Organisation in order to accelerate the production of the necessary tools, to strengthen their overall coherence and enhance their visibility. With this in mind, partnerships were established with other international organisations as well as with civil society representatives.

Integrated Project “Making democratic institutions work”

2004 marked the final year of activity of this three-year project and the results were presented at the **Project Conference in Barcelona** from 17-19 November 2004, at which the CDSCS was represented by its Chairperson and its representative from Malta.

The project took stock of the European *acquis* in the fields of democratic institutions, civil society participation, and fair and inclusive electoral systems, and highlighted some important gaps,

omissions and weaknesses. It initiated action on “emerging themes”, and prepared summary publications and practical tools. One very important theme has been the democratic potential of the information society. In September 2004, the Committee of Ministers adopted a **recommendation on e-voting**, the first international legal instrument on this subject, and a **recommendation on e-governance** was adopted at the end of 2004.

“The **Green Paper** on the Future of Democracy in Europe: Trends, Analyses and Reforms”, a major input to the IPI final conference in Barcelona, addresses the challenges and opportunities facing democracy as it is practised, and analyses their impact upon citizenship, representation and decision-making institutions. It concludes by proposing some twenty-eight potential reforms that are intended to make democratic institutions work better, and thereby enhance the legitimacy of governing and governance arrangements.

The main conclusion of the Barcelona Conference is that the Council of Europe should establish a Forum for the Future of Democracy to build further the *acquis* and take forward the work of the Integrated Project.

Since January 2005, a follow-up project on “Good Governance in the Information Society” focuses its attention on how new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) affect the practice of

democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Council of Europe member states.

Further information can be found on the following website:

http://www.coe.int/t/e/integrated_projects/democracy/

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Integrated project "Responses to violence in everyday life in a democratic society"

The three-year integrated project, launched in 2002, was concluded by an **ad hoc Conference of European Ministers responsible for the Prevention of Violence in Everyday Life**, held in Oslo from 7 to 9 November 2004 on the theme "Preventing everyday violence in Europe: responses in a democratic society".

The ministers unanimously approved twelve fundamental principles that should serve as general guidelines for developing overall policy on preventing and dealing with everyday violence. They also adopted a **final resolution**, which underlines not only the project conclusions' value as policy recommendations but also the high standard of all the discussion papers, summary reports and handbooks on practical implementation

of the general principles produced in connection with the project.

The ministers recommended widely disseminating all of the project's results. They also endorsed the recommendation, made in the **final report** "Confronting everyday violence in Europe: an integrated approach", that a European observatory of violence be set up. They gave their support to an initiative by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe aimed at implementing a **new interdisciplinary action programme on children and violence** in 2005 based on the integrated project's methodological and policy outcomes.

The ministers called on the Committee of Ministers to give the twelve principles adopted in Oslo the form of a recommendation to member states on policies for the prevention of violence in everyday life, and the Committee of Ministers has instructed the secretariat to prepare this draft recommendation in consultation with all of the steering committees that participated in the integrated project.

Further information can be found on the following website:

http://www.coe.int/t/f/Projets_Integres/violence/

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The Health Network

The recent WHO Ministerial Conference on Mental Health in Helsinki (12-17 January 2005) offered a separate session to present the first tangible results of the Regional Project on Community Mental Health, one of the initiatives of the South-east Europe Health Network, under the auspices of the Social Cohesion Initiative of the Stability Pact.

This project has become a flagship for other regional projects which have followed suit: on surveillance of communicable diseases and on food safety. Others are ready to be launched: on blood safety, emergency care and tobacco control. A project on occupational health and safety is in preparation. All of them fit into a policy reference framework for the health care of the vulnerable, as agreed by Ministers of Health in the Dubrovnik Pledge (2001) the first ever political document on regional health development. The Health Network was established jointly by the WHO and Council of Europe as an implementation tool. National coordinators meet twice a year in each country in turn. The declarations turned into deeds: health became the bridge to peace and has attracted so far about 4.5 million Euros.

The critical mass of local expertise and continued political support allowed the Health Network to reach a high level of maturity and sustainability. The Network has adopted its own statutes, developed a sophisticated project management methodology and evaluation

strategy, elaborated advocacy and communication strategies and agreed on a priority-setting approach. The principles of full transparency, equal participation, fair sharing of resources and benefits, consensus and dialogue have created a veritable democratic health agora.

From putting health on the agenda of the Stability Pact, through political commitment and successful implementation, the time has come for full regional ownership. The eight partner countries, eight neighbour and donor countries together with "the three tenors": WHO, Council of Europe and the Council of Europe Development Bank have agreed to convene a regional summit this year – the Ministerial Forum on Health and Economic Development. The Ministers of Finance are meeting together with the Ministers of Health, to take the full ownership and responsibility for the continuation of the Network. This alliance has reached a point of maturity having created a sustainable regional mechanism for cooperation in the health field on an unprecedented scale in Europe.

Success has usually many parents: the strong support by the Secretariat of the Social Cohesion Initiative, donors who decided to invest in health and peace, international organisations going beyond the usual rhetoric of cooperation.

The regional projects will allow the health systems in the region to catch up with the current level of development in Europe and contribute

SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

FROM COMMITMENT TO COOPERATION

towards the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy for Social Cohesion.

Thanks to the Social Cohesion Initiative, the notion of “balkanisation” is changing – from a synonym of fragmentation and conflicts towards a model of cooperation and healthy alliances. The rest of Europe may learn and follow.

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The Employment Network

The process of cooperation on employment in South-east Europe was launched in October 2003 at a Conference of Ministers responsible for Employment in South-East Europe. It is jointly coordinated and implemented by the Council of Europe and the International Labour Office, under the auspices of the Stability Pact/Initiative for Social Cohesion, with strong support from the Belgian Government. Countries participating in this process are the beneficiary countries of the Stability Pact. Following the ministerial conference, a Permanent High-Level Committee (PHLC) was set up, composed of the General Directors of Employment of the countries involved.

The overall objective of this cooperation process is to tackle unemployment and labour market challenges in South East European countries and promote sustainable growth and social cohesion through the improvement of employment policies, employment services, access to employment for vulnerable groups and vocational education and training. The countries involved seek to fully incorporate the Council of Europe's and International Labour Office's standards in their employment policies and to converge towards the objectives of the European Employment Strategy.

The process of assessment of national employment policies was launched for each country, inspired by the methodology applied between the European Commission and candidate countries in their cooperation on employment within the framework of the EU enlargement. Under this process, an in-depth analysis of the employment and labour market policies of two countries is undertaken every year (in 2004, the policies of Albania and Croatia were revised). Detailed reports on employment policies for those countries are prepared and submitted to peer-reviews with a view to further developing bilateral and multilateral cooperation, exchanges and technical assistance.

This way, countries learn from the experience of each other, with Romania and Bulgaria sharing with the other participants their experience as candidates to the EU. The peer-review exercise was successfully carried out for the first time at the end of 2004.

In 2005 the network will continue with another round of peer-reviews. Another Conference of Ministers responsible for Employment is planned for June 2005 in Sofia (Bulgaria).

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The Housing Network

The process of cooperation in the housing field was launched at a High-Level Conference on Housing Reforms in South Eastern Europe, held in Paris on 23-24 April 2003, organised by the Council of Europe, the Council of Europe Development Bank and the World Bank. Following the Conference, within the framework of the Initiative for Social Cohesion of the Stability Pact, a South East Europe Network of Housing Experts was set up with the

aim of consulting together regularly on sector issues and policies and of reviewing progress with other transition economies and sharing know-how.

The network meets once a year and in 2004 it began to prepare the regional report on Trends and Progress in Housing Reforms in South East Europe. This report is being undertaken by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in cooperation with the Council of Europe and the Council of Europe Development Bank. The report is expected to help streamline housing policies of the countries involved and to harmonise data collection with the practice of the European Union.

The report will examine factors influencing the performance of the housing sector including economic, social and political transition. It will look at housing reforms in South-East Europe, and in particular the development of housing policy, regulatory instruments and fiscal and financial instruments. It will examine the situation of the existing housing stock and trends in new construction, and in particular will help to assess housing distribution, quality, tenure, structure, costs and affordability, investment and provision of new housing. The report will also look into specific housing themes such as housing management and maintenance, social housing and housing finance.

The report will be finalised and approved at the network meeting of 2005.

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Repercussions for Council of Europe member States

On 29 April 2004, a few days before the enlargement of the European Union to 25 States, the European Parliament and the European Council adopted Regulation 883/2004 (OJ L 200 of 7 June 2004), reforming and simplifying the rules on the coordination of social security systems (Regulations 1408/71 and 574/72), in order to give citizens better protection and adapt the rules to Social Europe's future requirements.

This new Regulation will take effect as soon as the new implementing Regulation comes into force, for which a Commission proposal is due to be submitted at the beginning of 2005.

Some of the key changes which this Regulation 883/2004 will bring in comparison to the current Regulation 1408/71 are the following:

- The personal scope of the Regulation is extended to cover all nationals of member States who are covered by the social security legislation of a member State (not only employed workers, self-employed workers, civil servants, students and pensioners but also non-active persons)
- The material scope of the Regulation is extended to cover statutory pre-retirement schemes.
- Under the new rules all cash benefits are exportable except "special non-contributory cash benefits".
- The principles of equal treatment have been strengthened.
- The rules which determine which legislation is applicable in a cross border situation have become more coherent: workers are insured in the member State where they work, regardless of where they reside
- Insured persons staying temporarily in another member State will be able to benefit from health care judged to be medically necessary during that stay.
- Insured persons who seek authorisation to go to another member State to get medical treatment there should receive this authorisation if the treatment required cannot be offered in the competent Member state within a reasonable time-scale from a medical point of view.
- Members of the family of a frontier worker are entitled to health care in

the member State of residence but in principle also in the member State where the frontier worker works.

Furthermore, on 31 March 2004 Regulation (EC) No 631/2004 (OJ L 100 of 6.4.2004) was adopted aligning the rights to health care and simplifying the procedures. This Regulation is closely linked to the introduction of the European Health Insurance Card as a replacement for the forms used during a temporary stay in another member State.

Since the Council of Europe is composed by 46 member States (including the 25 member States of the EU), the problem lies now in how to coordinate the revised social security scheme in a wider Europe. For this purpose, the Council of Europe has drafted several instruments which have been opened for signature/ratification by all its member States. These instruments are mainly the European Convention on Social Security, the European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance, the European Interim Agreements on Social Security, the Social Charter and the Model Provisions for bilateral social security agreements. The main objective of these instruments is the granting of social security rights/protection to migrant workers within Council of Europe member States.

Apart from assistance activities organised every year in member States with a view to providing information on the value of the existing Council of Europe's instruments, the Council of Europe also organises annually a Social Security Training Seminar where representatives of all member States, the European Trade Union Confederation and ISSA have the possibility to learn about EU and Council of Europe regulations/conventions, and, above all, their practical value in the protection of social security rights in Europe.

For further information on Council of Europe social security activities, please visit following website:

http://www.coe.int/T/E/social_cohesion/social_policies/04.Activities/3.Social_Security/default.asp

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Socially responsible consumption and finance systems: what role can INGOs play?

As an INGO (international non-governmental organisation) that has held participatory status with the Council of Europe since 2003, we represented one of the four components of the quadrilogue that came together during session 4 of Forum 2004. Our involvement did not come about by chance. It reflected the importance of, and need for, regular dialogue between the authorities and civil society. After all, how can we adopt the proactive approach of citizens as players in sustainable development who share responsibility for social cohesion without a genuine forum for dialogue and, above all, an attitude that shows our ability to act through the examples we set?

Two particular examples should illustrate my point here: one shows the importance of making an active commitment to demonstrate the viability of an alternative that is essential for the sake of social cohesion, while the other confirms that we are able to act together with the authorities.

The first does not really cast the INGOs in a very good light, but we must have the humility to acknowledge that we all have some way to go in this area. Starting out from the premise that the values we defend fit in with an approach that should see us acting in a socially responsible manner, including by using ethical banks to manage our finances, we surveyed our INGOs in the member states to find out what kind of banks they used. The result was rather worrying, as only very few have opted for banks that offer solidarity-based saving. Given that fact, we have to accept that we are not very well placed for showing either the authorities or the public the viability of an alternative needed for the sake of social cohesion! Very active awareness-raising was therefore undertaken immediately in the hope that the idea would catch on among INGOs.

The second example, which concerns extreme poverty, underlines the need for active dialogue with the authorities as a means of contributing to social cohesion and avoiding exclusion. To achieve this end and expand such dialogue, we engage in discussions, as frequently as possible, with

Armenia

Vanadzor: an example of social services integration

Vanadzor, Armenia's 3rd largest city, is in the north-west of the country, not far from the zone devastated by the 1988 earthquake. Following the closure of factories in the region after the Soviet Union broke up, a large proportion of the population is unemployed. In addition, many welfare recipients and/or pensioners living in the surrounding villages find it difficult to get to Vanadzor (transport, state of the roads, etc.) in order to obtain the payments they are entitled to.

Consequently, a project aimed at grouping the main social services in one place to make life easier for their users was started up in March 2004. It was launched and supported by the ministries responsible for social security and health and the Armenia Social Transition Project (funded by USAID), and enjoyed the cooperation of the local authorities in the Vanadzor region.

An initial phase focused on studying the needs through surveys of user groups. These highlighted the following obstacles:

- access to social assistance hinged on obtaining numerous documents issued by different institutions;
- information on the eligibility criteria was inadequate;
- it was difficult to appeal against a decision rejecting an application;
- exchange of data between social services looking after the same people was non-existent;
- social services staff spent much of their working time drawing up certificates needed by users to lodge unemployment benefit claims for example, leaving them little time to provide other services to users.

The findings pointed to the need to group services to make these more accessible, particularly to the elderly, people with disabilities and residents of the surrounding villages. As a result, the following services were grouped in a one-stop shop: social assistance, social insurance fund (including payment of pensions, disability-related grants, etc.), job centre, medical board (which establishes degrees of disability or invalidity) and also various NGOs active in the social field. It is also planned to set up a legal advisory and psychological counselling service.

One of the project's key elements is the sharing of data between the different social services, using a new computer system for exchanging data between the database establishing the minimum income per family and the database used by the social insurance fund. This makes it possible to obtain the necessary data for the granting of benefits directly from any workstation: users no longer have to obtain certificates from various institutions and it is also time gained for social services staff, who can spend more time dealing with users' real needs.

On the ground floor of the integrated social services centre there is a one-stop reception and information desk covering the different services provided; the NGOs housed in the building also have a permanent information desk behind the main one. The different services (employment, social insurance fund etc) have offices upstairs. Access facilities for people with disabilities have been installed, together with a children's play area outside the building. Several information campaigns have also been run on users' rights, access to social services and the services available from the NGOs. The Council of Europe directly contributed to those information campaigns under the joint Council of Europe-European Commission Project on access to social rights in the South Caucasus region (completed in 2003).

The problems yet to be resolved include difficulties in covering certain running costs (such as heating) as the different social services come under different ministries.

The project is gradually becoming the centre of community life in Vanadzor. The local authorities are heavily involved in the centre's management, and their own day-to-day operations have benefited from no longer having to deal with a large number of requests for social assistance.

For further information, please visit following websites: <http://www.padco.am/> or <http://www.stp.am/>

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the relevant authorities at local, national and, above all, international level. The difficulty here lies in gaining recognition as well-informed discussion partners that act alongside and not in competition with the authorities.

In this connection, we actively lobbied the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to propose that Article 30 of the **European Social Charter** be included in the "core" provisions, making it binding on the signatory states. This bore fruit on 15 September 2004, when the Committee of Ministers adopted its reply to Congress **Recommendation 154 (2004)**, calling on member states to recognise the pressing need for the *right to protection against poverty and social exclusion* by amending the European Social Charter accordingly. This outcome shows the importance of this vital dialogue and of complementary action with the authorities if we, as the representatives of civil society, are to improve the world we live in.

To this end, we believe there is an essential need for a recognised pan-European forum for such dialogue, especially since the dominant economic forces unfortunately all too often regard those involved in alternative business schemes as utopians or humanitarian activists who are defending a just cause but do not actually understand the harsh realities of the market. We therefore need a paradigm shift here so as to demonstrate the great benefits of socially responsible consumption and finance systems as essential components of social cohesion.

Lastly, if we are to rein in rampant individualism and the consumption of cheap, short-lived goods, we must make urgent use of the leverage effect of education. Citizens have a duty to act and governments must also become involved, as it is they who lay down the rules of play and set out the relevant guidelines here. They must create an environment conducive to education in this area. If children are to become well-informed and active citizens rather than just careful consumers, we must offer them the tools needed for reflection and enable them to have more than one view of the world. Taking account of this dimension, our education systems must raise awareness among pupils - from the earliest age - of

Netherlands

Exemplary legislation for ethical finance

Since 1995, Dutch citizens are able to invest in green funds thanks to the Green Funds Scheme which was developed by the Dutch Government and the Dutch Bankers Association. The scheme is a government tax incentive instrument that encourages environmentally-friendly initiatives such as energy-saving, reducing the use of pesticides, organic farming and sustainable building. Projects can be in the Netherlands, in developing countries or in countries in transition.

Investing in the scheme means that individual investors lend their money to banks at a lower interest rate, which is then compensated by a tax incentive. The green banks can then offer cheaper loans to environmental projects. Since 2004 the funds are also open for social and cultural projects which can also be in the Netherlands or in developing countries.

The government issues certificates for projects that meet the required criteria thereby ensuring that the investments qualify for the funding. Criteria include high social, environmental or cultural benefits, no negative side effects, low economic return or economically self-supporting projects.

The different stakeholders have various reasons for their participation:

For the *government*, sustainable development goals are achieved under efficient conditions. It helps to create economic activities in the South that help people to be economically independent in the long term (loans are often long-dated better than subsidies). The government further benefits from the skills of the private financial sector which judges the economic potential of projects/entrepreneurs, and from the capital which is provided by the private sector. The involvement of private savers and the financial sector increases their awareness of sustainability and development.

Private savers support “good” projects and get normal returns at low risks. The involvement of the government convinces

them that the projects are “right” and the assessment “correct”. The *financial sector*, which is increasingly aware of social and environmental matters, cannot afford anymore to not offer the products. Moreover, participation in the system encourages a positive image for the banks and provides normal returns. The *project owner* gets access to capital, for example through micro-credits in developing countries under favourable conditions for the project.

The sustainable profits of the Green and Social Funds Scheme are not limited to *environmental benefits*, which refer to the positive impacts as a result of implementing green projects rather than standard projects (e.g. biodiversity). The innovative character guarantees also advantageous *technological benefits*, which consist of the faster development and market introduction of new technologies and products, for example solar energies. *Economic benefits* refer to the costs of environmental measures that are not longer necessary in order to achieve environmental targets. Finally *social benefits* refer, for example, to the improved awareness of environmental problems of the general public or to the active participation by private citizens, businesses and financial institutions.

The large number of participants in the Scheme – about 170 000 people – clearly shows that it is a successful form of public-private collaboration. The amount of money involved in the projects equals to about 3.5 billion euros. It is an effective and efficient instrument that furthers a sustainable and cohesive society and which is beneficial for all stakeholders and inexpensive for the government. A study undertaken by the consultancy group KPMG suggested that one euro of governmental money makes about 40 euros of private capital available.

Countries which seize the crucial role of financial players for social and environmental development are invited and well advised to transfer this type of policy instrument, with small adaptations, to their state.

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other people, the need for participation and the fact that every individual can act as a responsible consumer in his or her own way.

If INGOs wish to make a valid contribution to social cohesion, they have a heavy educational responsibility vis-à-vis their members and a duty to promote responsible consumption (as Mr Lévesque said), especially among young people. For choosing a more responsible and fairer economy in what Mr Di Stasi called a “broader environment with a desire to create a common identity” involves a political choice. And to make a choice you have to be properly informed and aware.

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Contribution of the INGOs to the Third Summit of Council of Europe Heads of State and Government

Following the granting of participatory status, the INGOs will take a very active part in the Third Council of Europe Summit in May 2005. To underline the importance and usefulness of civil society's contribution to the future of the organisation and, in particular, highlight this unique partnership, the INGOs drew up a specific declaration for the summit, which they debated and approved at their plenary conference in January 2005.

The text of the declaration is available at the NGOs' website:

<http://www.coe.int/T/E/NGO/Public/>

Further information on the Third Council of Europe Summit can be found on following website:

<http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/events/2005-Summit/default.asp>

ADOPTED TEXTS

- **Rec (2005)4** of the Committee of Ministers on improving the housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in Europe (adopted on 23 February 2005)
- **Rec (2004)17** of the Committee of Ministers on the impact of information technologies on health care – the patient and Internet (adopted on 15 December 2004)
- **Rec (2004)18** of the Committee of Ministers on teaching transfusion medicine to nurses (adopted on 15 December 2004)
- **Rec (2004)19** of the Committee of Ministers on criteria for the authorisation of organ transplantation facilities (adopted on 15 December 2004)
- **Rec (2004)15** of the Committee of Ministers on electronic governance (“e-governance”) (adopted on 15 December 2004)
- **Rec (2004)14** of the Committee of Ministers on the movement and encampment of Travellers in Europe (adopted on 1 December 2004)
- **Rec (2004)13** of the Committee of Ministers on the participation of young people in local and regional life (adopted on 17 November 2004)

RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

Publications

- *Recent demographic developments in Europe - 2004* (to be published in March 2005), Council of Europe publishing, ISBN 92-871-5665-4, 23 euros
- Trends in social cohesion, No.10, *Security through social cohesion – Proposals for a new socioeconomic governance*, Council of Europe Publishing, ISBN 92-871-5491-0, 17 euros
- Trends in social cohesion, No.11, *Security through social cohesion – Deconstructing fear (of others) by going beyond stereotypes*, Council of Europe Publishing, ISBN 92-871-5544-5, 10 euros
- Trends in social cohesion, No.12, *Ethical, solidarity-based citizen involvement in the economy: a prerequisite for social cohesion*, Council of Europe Publishing, ISBN 92-871-5558-5, 10 euros
- *The legal status of migrants admitted for employment*, Ryszard Cholewinski, Council of Europe Publishing, ISBN 92-871-5409-0, 13 euros
- *Guide to the preparation, use and quality assurance for blood components*, 11th edition, January 2005, Council of Europe Publishing, ISBN 92-871-5667-0
- *Health, ethics and human rights, the Council of Europe meeting the challenge*, Ed. Henriette Roscam Abbing and Karl-Friederich Bopp, The Hague/Strasbourg, November 2004

Reports

- Guidelines on the employment of marginalised groups (available in English, French, Armenian, Bosniac, Romanian, Polish, Russian)
- Guidelines on users’ participation in social services (available in English, French, Armenian, Bosniac, Romanian, Polish, Russian)
- Two country reports prepared by the ILO and the Council of Europe recently made public: *Country review of the employment policy of Croatia and Albania*
- Two reports written by Hilary Brown (U-K) and the Drafting Group on community living for people with disabilities in need of high level of support (P-RR-COLI) were adopted by the Committee on the rehabilitation and integration of people with disabilities (CD-P-RR): *Community living for people with disabilities in need of high level of support* and *Citizens not patients: developing innovative approaches to meet the needs of disabled people*

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FROM MARCH TO JUNE 2005

8 April: International Day for Roma

16-17 May: 3rd Summit of Council of Europe Heads of State and Government – Warsaw

Conferences:

7-8 April: European Population Conference “Demographic challenges fo social cohesion” – Strasbourg

11-12 April: Conference on Access to social rights and launch of the Joint Programme for the Russian Federation – Moscow

14-15 April: Conference on “Patient’s safety as a European challenge” – Warsaw

Seminars and other meetings:

9-11 March: 3rd session Drafting Group on disability Action Plan (P-RR-WGAP) – Strasbourg

7-8 March: Working Group for the preparation of a Guide on the development of policies for integrating young people from disadvantaged urban areas – Strasbourg

28-29 April: Working Group for the preparation of the Social Cohesion Forum 2005 – Strasbourg

May: Groupe de travail ad hoc sur le projet de recommandation sur les politiques nationales pour le Roms et le Gens du voyage – Madrid

Committee meetings:

10-11 March: 1st meeting of the Committee of experts on countries of emigration (MG-PE) – Strasbourg

18 March: 1st meeting of the Steering Committee of the CARDS Programme – Skopje (FYROM)

23-24 March: 1st meeting of the Committee of experts on associations and co-development (MG-AC) – Strasbourg

5-6 April: 14th meeting of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) – Strasbourg

7-8 April: Group of Specialists on Roma and Travellers (MG-S-ROM) – Strasbourg

20-22 April: 49th of the European Committee on Migration (CDMG) et la Plateforme politique – Strasbourg

26-27 April: 7th meeting of the Committee of Experts on Standard-Setting Instruments in the social security field (CS-CO) – Strasbourg

28-29 April: 7th meeting of the Committee of Experts for the coordination in the social security field (CS-CR) – Strasbourg

12-13 May: meeting of the Group of Specialists on housing policies – Strasbourg

19-20 May: 1st meeting of the Committee of experts on integration of migrant children (MG-EN) – Strasbourg

25-26 May: 2nd meeting of the Committee of Experts on Children and Families (CS-EF) – Strasbourg

26-27 May: 1st meeting of the Committee of experts on the minimum rights of irregular migrants (MG-AD) – Strasbourg

7-8 June: Group of Specialists on user involvement in social services and integrated service delivery (CS-US) – Strasbourg

7-8 June: 57th meeting of the European Health Committee (CDSP) – Strasbourg

14-15 June: 1st meeting of the Committee of experts on access of migrants to employment (MG-EM) – 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**