

Editorial

Operationalise the "right to work"

There is wide consensus about the importance of employment for achieving socially cohesive societies. It is clear that the lack of employment not only denies income to those without work; it also fails to recognize their productive role as human beings in society. Employment is multi-dimensional: it provides social legitimacy and status as well as access to material well-being. It brings with it human dignity and entitles individuals to economic rights and social recognition that are essential for full citizenship.

The Social Cohesion Strategy of the Council of Europe (2000) emphasises that "decent and adequately remunerated employment is one of the main ways of promoting social cohesion. The promotion of employment should be at the heart of a social cohesion strategy involving appropriate economic policies that are integrated with social protection and employment support measures."

Advice to member States on how to operationalise the "right to work" in a market economy has been among the principle objectives of the Council of Europe. The European Social Charter and the Revised Social Charter provide that the right to work means access to maintaining employability through the right to vocational guidance and training services throughout working life. The Charter and Revised Charter guarantee an appropriate legal and institutional framework relating to the right to work including free employment services, non-discrimination in employment and the prohibition of forced labour, access to a safe and healthy workplace and to protection in cases of termination of

employment and recognises the right for women and men to equal pay for work of equal value. An article in this special issue shows how the European Committee of Social Rights, which monitors compliance with the Charter and the Revised Charter, assesses employment policies from a human rights perspective (see page 5).

The Council of Europe has been a pioneer in stating that an active employment policy should, as a matter of priority, enable all workers to enter into a socially rewarding occupation. As early as 1992, it noticed that policies in this area are often fragmented and that integration of persons with difficulties depends not only on economic and political factors (for example a governments' willingness to give priority to programmes for persons experiencing integration difficulties), but also sociological factors (agreement within society on the need to reduce exclusion and combat inequality) and institutional factors (the way in which various authorities operate, the distribution of responsibilities between local and central authorities and relations between the authorities and private, voluntary and charitable institutions). (Recommendation No. R (92) 4).

Regarding the particular difficulties of transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has said that in order to create an efficient labour market, a new balance should be struck between the state and private sectors, and market forces should not be liberated entirely without taking measures to protect the most vulnerable sections of the population, that is the unemployed, pensioners and the sick (Resolution 1056 (1995)).

The recognition of cultural identity as a source of employment generation and the principle of equal opportunity for migrants and minorities has also been at the core of

Council of Europe actions in this area and information on activities in these spheres is given in the articles on 'Migrant workers: towards equal opportunities' (page 7) and on 'Cultural Enterprise and Cultural Diversity' (page 8).

The wide variety of activities described in this special employment issue of the Social Cohesion Developments Newsletter reflect the legal instruments, recommendations, and the recent inter-governmental and assistance activities of the Council of Europe in the employment field. If a constant principle running through them can be identified, it is that assuring the right to work for all those seeking employment is a challenging and complex issue but that effective action can be taken at international, national and especially at local level.

The right to employment is concerned not only with sound economic policies but also with the capacity of institutions to work in partnership with each other and non-governmental organisations, to stimulate entrepreneurship whilst maintaining decent working conditions and social protection and to decentralise, but in an effective way, and to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of measures and programmes. In this the role of public employment services is key. The right to work also involves the recognition of the diversified needs of individuals and dialogue with those seeking decent employment. Achieving the right to work for all can only be reached with the support of every actor in society and calls upon the social responsibility of all of them: local and national governments, employers, trade unions, cooperatives and non-governmental organisation as well as citizens themselves.

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Kevin O'Kelly, Research Manager with the European Foundation for Living and Working Conditions in Dublin, has worked on a number of Council of Europe projects since the late 1980s. He was appointed the consultant to the Committee on Access to Employment (CS-EM) in 1999.

Bulletin: Why is access to employment such an important issue? Is it a social right?

Employment is the key to social cohesion. Not having a job results in poverty, exclusion, inequality and an unemployed person is more likely to suffer from low self-esteem and to lack self-confidence. It is a social right – but it can't be a guaranteed right. Governments can't give a job to everyone, but they can certainly provide the conditions in which employment can be created.

Bulletin: Why is it crucial to create local employment and how is it related to employment on the national level?

Job creation happens very much at the local level – the micro level. To be successful, policies and campaigns need to be based at local level. Local people and local agencies are best placed to know about local human and material resources, possibilities, problems and needs.

The case studies on which the work of the CS-EM was based looked at employment initiatives with an emphasis on disadvantaged rural areas but the Committee also pinpoint other vulnerable regions – such as the mining regions of Romania and Russia and 'sunset' industrial areas of Italy, giving governments a pointer as to where they need to concentrate support for job creation projects.

Bulletin: Does Central and Eastern Europe need separate handling, or can access to employment be tackled at pan-European level?

Access to employment is a problem in all member States but the countries from Central and Eastern Europe have special problems rooted in the transition from the former centralised economies, for exam-

ple and unemployment is especially severe in some transition countries and regions. The main aim of our work was to focus on the "transferability" of projects, so that experiences and solutions that work could be shared at a pan-European level to help Central and Eastern European countries gain experience in creating employment in a market economy.

Bulletin: The Guidelines have five headings – local partnership, gender equality, non-discrimination towards disadvantaged groups, entrepreneurship, and education, training and life-long learning. Why were these chosen?

Local partnership is the key to providing effective access to employment, a prerequisite for successful strategies and integration of social needs. In the case studies we looked at, we could see how important it was to have structures – a network that worked in local communities, between trade unions and employers, between local voluntary and public services – and of course between local and national government, especially for funding.

Gender equality in access to the labour market is often sadly lacking, especially in central and eastern Europe. For example, there is still not enough done to provide good quality, accessible and affordable facilities to care for children and older people. Women also miss out on training programmes because they often have to juggle their time to fit them in with their caring responsibilities. We urged governments to "mainstream" gender equality in all policy areas.

Our studies showed some good attempts to bring women into the job market – for instance the 'femmes en mouvement' project in the Paris Region (France), where special efforts have been made to bring marginalised women back into the work force through training programmes and work placements. In Poland, women have brought "added value" to family farming – for instance, by diversifying into agri-tourism, egg production and other forms of food processing.

Another major problem is that most of the jobs for women are poorly paid and, in central and eastern Europe, it is often difficult for women to find employment in managerial roles.

Discrimination takes many forms – young and old, minorities, particularly the Roma, and people with disabilities all suffer. Our studies showed a good example from Slovakia, where a factory, which practised positive discrimination for disabled people shut down but the former workers, took it over and diversified into other work. Our conclusion is that positive discrimination can sometimes be necessary, to ensure an opening to the job market.

Entrepreneurship and innovation are keys to creating jobs, but the conditions for them to flourish are rare. Most potential entrepreneurs face red tape, taxation and a lack of funds. Without seed money to bring the business idea to fruition, it is impossible to get the business idea off the ground.

Education, training and life-long learning are of obvious importance, but what is perhaps not so obvious is that training should be tailored to the local labour market. Life long learning is also important to overcome discrimination - especially for people who had bad experiences in their formal education. For them, non-formal education techniques, which include work experience modules, are often the best route.

Bulletin: Why is monitoring and evaluation important to the process?

If we are going to make progress, there needs to be benchmarking of good practice. We have to make sure that the projects are working, that experiences are shared and also ensure that there is a 'multiplier' affect, so that successful methodologies can be improved and applied in other disadvantaged communities, as has happened in Hungary with one such local employment initiative.

Bulletin: What are the main obstacles to employment?

Bureaucracy, taxation, centralised policies, a culture of dependency and a lack of delegation from central to local government – and that's not to forget the areas we have already covered of lack of opportunity for women and disadvantaged groups.

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But the two areas that overarched everything – coming up again and again in all discussions – were sustainable funding and inadequate infrastructure. Poor transport could effectively stop people taking up job opportunities, and rigid housing markets in central and eastern Europe can prevent worker mobility.

Bulletin: How did you identify good practice in your case studies?

Our methodology was very precise, with each country asked to draw up two or three case studies around local projects against a specification that should be as far as possible comparable and transferable, and most of them did so. We ended up with in excess of sixty case studies from twenty-two member States.

Bulletin: Where does the work on Access to Employment go from here?

It is part of a larger Council of Europe project on access to social rights bringing together work done in on access to social protection and housing, health and education. This will, I understand, result in a major report and a conference in Malta in November 2002.

Bulletin: There has been a lot of discussion recently about the concept of decent work. What is your definition?

There are so many ways of defining it, but some of the conditions are very clear. For instance – a safe environment with good working conditions, including physical, psychological and social aspects of work, are essential. Job sustainability is also very important - while it's easy to create jobs for a month or six months, it is not so easy to make them sustainable. Also very important is a living wage – and a reasonable taxation level to ensure that families have decent disposable income. Europe needs to avoid the experience of the US where there are large numbers of working poor.

Interviewer: Cathie Burton - Council of Europe Press Officer

On 30 January 2002, dissemination and publication of the report and guidelines of the Committee of Experts promoting Access to Employment (CS-EM) was agreed by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The CS-EM Committee was set up in Autumn 1999 to provide a forum for national administrations to share information on good practice with regard to promoting the integration of socially excluded groups and individuals into the labour market, including those at risk of exclusion. It was an important part of the Council of Europe's strategy on social cohesion on accessing social rights. The main aim of the Committee was to develop guidelines on how local development initiatives can help the integration of the long-term unemployed. In many member States, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe long-term unemployment is a widespread problem facing many people especially those living in economically and socially deprived areas.

The activity of the CS-EM drew inspiration from Council of Europe legal instruments such as the European Social Charter and the Revised Social Charter which contain a 'right to work' as a key element of social rights. Special consideration was also given by the CS-EM to developing local employment; for example, through encouraging new micro enterprises and also the social economy or other community employment initiatives which could help prevent and reduce long-term unemployment.

The Committee brought together employment experts from all the Central and Eastern European member States of the Council of Europe and from Western European States. Experts from Bulgaria and Poland chaired the Committee. In addition, OECD, EU and ILO were closely involved in the work as well as NGOs in the employment field and relevant Council of Europe Committees. The Committee was assisted by Kevin O'Kelly (Research Manager European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in Dublin), who acted as its consultant.

Good practice examples

Each member country was asked to present two examples of "good practice" on local employment initiatives, including so-

cial economy or other community employment initiatives that could help to avoid long-term unemployment in order to share experiences and learn from each other.

To quote the CS-EM Final Activity Report¹⁾ "the good practice examples covered a wide range of approaches to dealing with the problems of socially excluded groups in a number of deprived locations within each country. The locations focused on were, in many cases, rural. A number of cases also concentrated on old industrial and mining areas where employment is declining and there are problems involved with the re-generation (of these areas).

Many of the projects focused on the particular needs of the more vulnerable groups that are often more susceptible to long-term unemployment, such as women, young people and ethnic minorities. Other programmes were of a more general nature, designed to implement national employment policies at a local level."

Guidelines on Local Partnerships for the Development of Employment

Based on the examples of "good practice", a list of Guidelines was identified with the objective of maximising access to employment to reduce social exclusion.

Although most of the examples are from the local or regional level, as the CS-EM activity report highlights, the measures need to be set in a national framework. There need to be clear and transparent linkages between local employment initiatives and national priorities and legal standards on labour market issues and employment conditions.

The Guidelines were grouped under five headings as follows, with, in addition, Guidelines on monitoring and evaluation.

Local partnerships

Local partnerships are a valuable response for dealing with problems of poverty, workplace and social exclusion. At local level, it is easier to reach the specific groups targeted. However, partnership should be seen as complementary and not a replacement of mainstream national policies. For best results, it is essential to have adequate and sustainable funding. It

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**REPORT AND GUIDELINES
OF THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS PROMOTING ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT
(CS-EM)**

is also important to include a wide range of relevant organisations: employment and social service agencies, employer and business organisations, trade unions, NGOs and civil society organisations and those representing the unemployed and ethnic minorities.

Equal opportunities between Men and Women

Equal gender opportunities are a vital element in any local employment initiative and a mainstreaming approach should be adapted to this issue. Women are considered to be at a greater disadvantage than men in most member States, in particular among those living in economically deprived areas. Often there is a double disadvantage for women from ethnic minorities, such as Roma. The Guidelines highlight the necessity, especially for economically disadvantaged women, of access to good quality, affordable caring facilities and special training and support programmes.

Non-discrimination towards Disadvantaged Groups

Access to and participation in local employment programmes should be non-discriminatory on grounds of disability, ethnicity, age or other forms of discrimination. This also goes for access to facilities such as training, housing, employment, health and social services. The Guidelines recognise the need for targeted programmes on occasion to positively discriminate in favour of certain groups in order to combat their long-term unemployment.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is recognised as an important way of tackling unemployment. Many new opportunities exist for those with the flair and temperament for self-employment or to start-up small enterprises to provide contracting services to larger firms. They can also provide jobs for others as their businesses develop. Therefore, entrepreneurship needs to be encouraged and supported. Easy access to adequate, affordable and sustain-

able funding is recognised in the guidelines as vital for the long-term success of any business.

Entrepreneurship skills are particularly applicable in the CEE countries. Many opportunities linked to the end or privatisation of state owned enterprises exist but there are also many challenges for new entrepreneurs to overcome, such as excessive bureaucracy, high taxation and red tape.

Education, Training and Life-Long Learning

Resources such as self-confidence, personal and social skills are valuable on the employment market, not to mention basic job-search and job-application skills. Training and re-training consequently form vital elements of any local employment initiative.

As far as education, training and life-long learning are concerned, it is essential to take account of the changes in technology and the market as well as in the nature of work. Adequate funding is again an issue of major concern for the effectiveness and sustainability of education, training and life-long learning initiatives.

The Committee recommends in the Guidelines that it is essential that public works and community employment programmes include an element of skills training, so as to provide participants with the opportunity to find employment at the end of such programmes.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The CS-EM agreed that local employment programmes should include a requirement for monitoring and evaluation to ensure the longer-term review and sustainability of programmes.

The barriers to employment

The second part of the work of the CS-EM focused on barriers or obstacles to employment, identified under each of the five above-mentioned

main headings. In addition, general barriers with particular relevance to the CEE countries were identified, for example, the lack of a coherent approach to address the inter-linked problems of the black economy, low wages and poorly targeted social benefits. In addition, lack of effective regional and local development policies and high levels of corruption can be barriers to successful local partnerships. Cultural barriers and stereotyping of occupational roles are other obstacles. Labour mobility is reduced because people are reluctant to move from their present accommodation because of the uncertainty of finding suitable accommodation in a new location.

Future impact of the Guidelines

The Guidelines and the report are available on the Council of Europe's website and copies have also been distributed to all CS-EM Committee members. They have been encouraged to distribute it widely in their countries and organisations and to translate into national languages. The Guidelines will certainly provide a basis for the future work of the Council of Europe's activities in the employment field; in particular, the guidelines will be of value in the assistance projects on employment and entrepreneurship. They will also form a key component of the work currently being undertaken on access to social rights on which there will be future updates in this Newsletter.

1) CS-EM (2001) 7 (Rev.) Final activity report of the Committee of experts on promoting access to employment - Guidelines on local partnership for the development of employment, p.14 Paragraphs 26 and 27

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New employment activity on marginalised groups

On 25 and 26 of April 2002 the first meeting of the Group of Specialists on employment for marginalised groups (CS-MA) took place in Strasbourg. Specialists with extensive experience in the field, coming from different member States, participated in the Group's work, as well as representatives from NGO and Research bodies, such as the European Anti-Poverty Network and the European Foundation for Living and Working Conditions.

The Group will act as a forum of exchange of good or interesting practice on a pan-European level on labour market access for marginalised and disadvantaged groups. The Group of Specialists is focusing on promoting access to employment and vocational training for groups, such as people released from custodial and psychiatric institutions, homeless people, people with disabilities or suffering physical or mental health problems, and people with alcohol or drug problems or who are living in extreme isolation. The Group might develop possible guidelines or even a recommendation to Council of Europe member States on the subject.

The establishment of the specialist CS-MA Group, forms part of the framework of social cohesion activities initiated and overseen by the European Committee on Social Cohesion to which CS-MA reports.

The Secretariat presented at the first meeting the work to be undertaken and the proposed working methods of the CS-MA Group over the next 2½ years (the terms of reference expire at the end of December 2004). A provisional work-plan of the CS-MA Group was adopted. As a first step, members would be asked to send, by the end of June, information about programmes and policies for integrating marginalised groups into the labour market of which they had direct or close experience. This information would be then used to develop a Questionnaire in liaison with a consultant. The Questionnaire would seek to obtain as much information as possible, about policies and programmes (and as far as possible statistical information) in Europe on access to employment for marginalised groups.

The Questionnaire would be circulated widely but it would also be carefully targeted to organisations, particularly NGOs involved with access to employment for marginalised people.

The participants emphasised the need to find ways of obtaining employers' view points and attitudes and to develop strategies to convince them to employ marginalised people.

The results of the meeting were very encouraging. Members appreciated the diversity of the Group and agreed on the necessity to learn from each other by sharing experiences and exchanging examples of good practice on employment initiatives for marginalised groups. They spoke about work with marginalised people in their own country or organisation.

The next meeting will take place in November 2002 in Strasbourg.

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Employment of people with disabilities

As employment is a key factor in social integration and independence, the Council of Europe has concerned itself with all forms of vocational integration of people with disabilities. *Recommendation No. R (92) 6 on a coherent policy for people with disabilities*, the main instrument as regards the rehabilitation of disabled people, contains a section on vocational integration as well as vocational rehabilitation. Since then, various committees have sought to amplify and extend the scope of the Recommendation, focusing first on sheltered employment and then on ordinary employment.

Alongside a study conducted in 1992 by the European Commission, then composed of twelve Member States, the Council of Europe carried out a comparative review of sheltered employment which was published under the heading "*Sheltered employment in five member states of the Council of Europe*" (1997). Sheltered employment institutions, which cater for different target groups, under a wide variety of legal and financial arrangements, fulfill their basic purpose, which is to provide the individuals concerned with paid employment. In all countries, however, the move from sheltered employment to ordinary employment is still the exception rather than the rule.

The debate has thus focused on this transition, with calls for more flexible institutional

Assessing employment policies from a human rights perspective

The first right in the European Social Charter is the right to work. Among the obligations assumed by Contracting Parties bound by Article 1 of the Charter is "to accept as one of their primary aims and responsibilities the achievement and maintenance of as high and stable a level of employment as possible with a view to the attainment of full employment" (Article 1 para. 1).

During its most recent examination of national situations relating to this provision of the Charter¹⁾, the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR)²⁾ decided to publish for the first time since 1981 its conclusions on state compliance with Article 1 para. 1. ECSR abandoned its normal practice of reaching conclusions on state compliance at a time when high unemployment levels had become a generalised phenomenon and where it lacked the method and the means to assess the adequacy of the multi-faceted efforts made by states to combat unemployment.

The change of approach results from two main considerations: first of all, ECSR has renewed its emphasis on Article 1 para. 1 as a legal obligation on states despite the very general wording of the provision. Secondly, the quality and the quantity of information on employment policies at the Committee's disposal has increased dramatically in recent years. Instrumental in this respect has been the information generated in the context of the OECD Jobs Strategy and not least the European Employment Strategy.

In ECSR's interpretation, the requirements of Article 1 para. 1 are straightforward: states must pursue the objective of full employment and given the dynamic nature of the provision they must in principle demonstrate progress in the situation. At the same time, ECSR considers Article 1 para. 1 to be an obligation as to means rather than as to result and failure to achieve full employment does not as such pose a problem of compliance. However, it follows that the efforts made by states must be adequate in the light of the economic situation and the level of unemployment³⁾.

In making the assessment, ECSR examines a wide range of indicators relating to the national economic situation (eg. GDP growth, inflation, job growth), to patterns of employment (eg. the employment rate, part-time and fixed-term employment) as well as to unemployment where special attention is paid to vulnerable groups such as youth, the long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities

arrangements, while avoiding rigid distinctions between sheltered employment and ordinary employment. These proposals, along with periodic individual assessments and the opportunity to return to sheltered employment if the move does not work out, are described in the report entitled *"The transition from sheltered to ordinary employment" (1996)*.

In keeping with the general principle of inclusion, new types of sheltered employment more closely integrated into the ordinary workplace are emerging. One example is assisted employment, an Anglo-Saxon concept meaning a package of support measures focused on the individual. This and other examples of good practice and innovative measures are described in *"Employment strategies to promote equal opportunities for persons with disabilities on the labour market" (2000)*.

Special attention is being given at present to disabled women, who suffer discrimination on two counts, both gender and disability. Such women, who have less access to employment than men, and are more dependent on welfare benefits, are asserting their right to work, and demanding better, more stable jobs.

A drafting group on discrimination against women with disabilities is preparing a set of proposals to secure equal opportunities for disabled women, which will be presented at the Second European Conference of Ministers responsible for Integration Policies for People with Disabilities in Malaga in May 2003. Some of the proposals will deal with vocational integration, which has been identified as a major theme.

Also worth noting are the efforts to shift the focus of vocational assessment, in order to highlight the potential and skills of the individual concerned. Resolution ResAP (95) 3 *on a Charter on the vocational assessment of people with disabilities* calls for assessments to be based on people's abilities rather than their disabilities, and for these abilities to be matched to specific job requirements.

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Employment services

Employment services play a key role in the employment assistance programmes under-

taken by DG III – Social Cohesion: either as a beneficiary of technical assistance or as a partner in their implementation.

Partnership development is one of the key elements of the social cohesion strategy, and local employment services should have the capacity to act as an initiator of local partnerships, particularly in the context of improving employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups in their local labour markets. Much of the emphasis, therefore, of the employment assistance programmes is on capacity building for employment service personnel as agents of local partnership development.

Other programmes concentrate on improving how employment services deliver their services – for example in improving their relations with local community groups and employers (see below the example of the projects on Roma and Employment Services), in introducing equal opportunities in both their own recruitment as well as in the programmes they deliver, in improving their techniques in programme design, implementation and evaluation.

The promotion of employment services reflects the importance that is given to them in the European Social Charter (Article 1).

Management training

One of the major employment assistance programmes is a multilateral project on management training for staff working in employment services and other public and voluntary services in the social cohesion field (for example health, social services). The countries participating in this project are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The objective of the project is to develop a model training programme in co-operation with the relevant national administrations and to be implemented by them nationally. The training programme will cover such state of the art management techniques aimed at improving the quality of the programmes and services provided by them, particularly in favour of disadvantaged groups. The training programme will be accompanied by a training manual for the attention of national trainers to help them implement the training programme.

As a preliminary stage in the development of the training programme, local pilot management training projects have been undertaken over the last two years in four of the participating countries. These local projects have consisted of a series of training work-

and the disabled. In the light of this information ECSR then proceeds to examine indicators of state effort such as the scope of the employment measures implemented (eg. number of participants as a proportion of all unemployed, average duration of unemployment spells before being offered participation in a measure), the amount of resources devoted to the various measures (eg. total expenditure as a share of GDP, balance between active and passive measures). Although not an indicator of state effort as such, ECSR also examines the output side of employment policy, notably the effects of different active measures (training, guidance, subsidised jobs, etc.) in terms of creating lasting employment.

The interplay between all these indicators is evidently complex and assessment is a delicate exercise. ECSR has proceeded with prudence reserving findings of non-compliance for the extreme situations where the effort made is manifestly inadequate given the extent of the unemployment problem and the capacity of the state concerned. ECSR has recognised that the information basis may be improved further, but here the prospects are encouraging not only due to the work currently carried out by EU, OECD, ILO and by the states themselves, but also thanks to the activities taking place within the framework of the Council of Europe social cohesion strategy. There is no doubt, for example, that the projected guidebook on social indicators will become a valuable tool also for ECSR in the future.

All in all, the new approach adopted by ECSR strengthens the Charter's role as a safeguard that unemployment is not accepted by states as a price to pay for achieving other ends, that the policies pursued by states are effectively (i.e. not only at a declaratory level) geared to creating employment and to ensuring that those hit by unemployment are offered adequate assistance enabling them to exercise their right to work.

- 1) Supervision cycle XVI-1. The conclusions of ECSR concerning the states parties to the Revised Charter may be consulted at <http://www.esc.coe.int/> and will be forthcoming as a Council of Europe publication in Spring 2002.
- 2) The Committee of independent experts charged with assessing the compliance of national situations with the obligations arising from the Charter.
- 3) It should be noted that other issues which may arise from the implementation of employment policy, for instance non-discrimination, forced labour and unemployment benefits, are addressed under other provisions of the Charter.

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shops for staff covering a variety of subjects – improving management performance, improving quality through client participation, strategy development, interagency co-operation and project development. The workshops have provided an opportunity to introduce the local staff to these techniques. However, more importantly they have provided invaluable information on their training needs for the model training programme.

The focus of the local projects have been on social services in Armenia, employment services in Azerbaijan, nursing homes for children and elderly people in Georgia and on social services and interagency co-operation between residential homes, state social services and NGOs in Moldova.

The project should be completed in 2003.

Employment services and Roma

Another major element of the employment assistance programmes has been on helping employment services, particularly in South East and Central Europe, improve their role in promoting equal opportunities for Roma jobseekers in local labour markets. This has included assistance to the National Employment Service of Bulgaria and the regional employment service of Rousse in the setting up of a partnership centre to promote job opportunities for local Roma. Other activities have included training workshops for local employment staff.

A particular emphasis of these programmes is to assist local employment services in developing their relations with local employers and representatives of local Roma communities.

With the support of the Austrian Government, the Council of Europe is currently organising a series of regional seminars and local training workshops for the representatives of employment services and Roma organisations in South East Europe. This activity is a sub-project of the joint OSCE-Council of Europe project on Roma/Gypsies within Working Table I of the Stability Pact for South East Europe.

The specific objectives of the project are to (i) improve the role of local employment services in the job search for Roma, (ii) develop regional networks, and (iii) capacity building. The four elements com-

posing the project are:

- 1st local training workshop (3-5 October 2001, Novo Mesto, Slovenia)
- 1st regional seminar (22-23 February 2002, Bucharest)
- 2nd local training workshop (Cakovec, Croatia)
- 2nd regional seminar (1st week of July 2002, Sofia)

The project brings together representatives from employment services and Roma organisations of the following countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Slovenia and "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia".

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Workplace democracy

Participation is a key element of cohesive societies. It ensures inclusion, encourages the expression of individual needs and wishes, and facilitates their satisfaction. It is therefore also a major factor in promoting stable societies. Moreover, participation is an important political and legal right recognised in domestic and international law.

Workplace participation through trade union membership is recognised by Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights. It is also recognised by Article 5 of the Revised European Social Charter and Conventions Nos. 87 and 98 of the International Labour Organisation. Article 6 of the Revised European Social Charter also recognises other forms of participation, necessary to support collective bargaining: joint consultation, voluntary negotiations, and conciliation and arbitration services.

Strengthening participation in trade unions and other forms of workplace participation should have a direct impact on the inclusion of vulnerable, unorganised and disenfranchised workers in the workplace. Moreover, the acquisition of skills and confidence engendered by such a process should have a positive impact on their participation in the wider local community.

The employment assistance programme includes a series of local projects in South East Europe to promote both the workplace participation of vulnerable groups with low levels of participation in

workplace organisations and the diversity of workplace organisations.

It is hoped that the local projects will cover one or more of the following topics:

- Changing the internal procedures of trade unions to facilitate participation of vulnerable, unorganised and disenfranchised people. For example by making meetings more accessible to members through changes in their venues and procedural rules.
- Developing horizontal links between trade unions and non workplace organisations which represent people marginalised by society.
- Improving internal vertical links within trade unions to improve communication between leaders and members in order that vulnerable, unorganised and disenfranchised workers can better express their wishes and be listened to.
- Improving the participation of vulnerable, unorganised and disenfranchised workers in the decision-making process of local trade union branches.
- training programmes targeted to meet the needs of particular groups on such topics as participation and dialogue skills, advocacy and leadership skills
- promoting organisational skills among vulnerable, unorganised and disenfranchised groups in order to support the development of new local forums for participation (trade union branches, organisations for unemployed workers etc).

The first of these local projects has been in Hungary. This is aimed at promoting and improving the role of works councils in Hungary. The project is based in Martfu, on the industrial site of the former State-owned shoe-making factory, TISZA. It is undertaken at the request of the Ministry of Economic Affairs (Social Dialogue Department). The specific objectives of the local project are to improve participation in works councils and clarify their role and operation as well as improve the quality of the communication between work council members and the ordinary workers, trade union representatives. The experience of a series of workshops will be used to provide the Hungarian authorities with a training model for application throughout the country.

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MIGRANT WORKERS: TOWARDS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

European Committee on Migration (CDMG)

The European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers was opened for signature by the member States of the Council of Europe in November 1977. It came into force on 1 May 1983, has since been ratified by eight member States (Italy, France, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Turkey) and has been signed by a further four states (Belgium, Germany, Greece and Luxembourg). Designed to supplement the protection afforded by the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter, it is based on the principle of equality of treatment between migrant workers and nationals of the host country.

The provisions relate to the legal status of migrant workers, in particular to recruitment, medical examinations and vocational tests, travel, residence and work permits, family reunification, housing, working conditions, the transfer of savings, social security, social and medical assistance, expiry of the contract of employment, dismissal and re-employment, and preparation for return to the country of origin.

Equality of treatment with regard to conditions of work and the right to organise is provided for in Articles 16, 21, 24 and 28 of the Convention.

Another significant provision of the Convention is the right of migrant workers who are involuntarily unemployed to remain in the territory of the receiving state for a certain period in order to look for another job (Arts. 9 and 25).

This Convention is the only legally binding instrument in the field of migration but the Council of Europe has devised different tools (recommendations, policies, workshops, memoranda, etc) to achieve equal opportunities for migrants and ethnic minority workers.

Resolutions adopted as early as in 1974, for example Resolution (74) 15 on equal treatment of national and migrant workers in the following sectors: working conditions, remuneration, dismissal, geographical and occupational mobility, illustrate that equal treatment and equal opportunities have always been the guiding principle in our policies for migrants and minorities.

Previous Council of Europe activities in this field are still referred to today. They include:

The integration of immigrants: towards equal opportunities

The aim of this project was to promote exchanges of experience between people and organisations involved in action to promote integration and equal opportunities for migrants and populations of immigrant origin.

Through such exchanges, practical guidelines have been drawn up for the use of governments and others concerned with questions of integration. The guidelines stated that training should be flexible and based on the needs of the individual. It should enhance the trainees' self-esteem and build links with the immigrant communities, where possible involving people from these communities in management and as trainers. These principles are still valid today and they are taken into account when devising 'tailor-made' programmes for newcomers, such as the one currently underway in Norway.

Another activity was the meeting on the role of management and trade unions in promoting equal opportunities in employment, held in December 1993. In their conclusions, the participants stressed the importance of involving management and trade unions in the implementation of measures to promote equality of opportunity in employment. They also drew attention to the role of managerial staff in offering guidance and support. This is still seen as an important issue almost 10 years later.

"Tensions and tolerance: building better integrated communities across Europe"

This CDMG project aimed to promote networking and exchanges of experience between practitioners in the various fields of integration policy, including employment.

As part of this project, the following meetings were held:

Seminar on Initiatives by Employers to promote Employment and Integration of Immigrants (November 1996): Connections between companies and the surrounding communities were considered vital elements to emphasise diversity for all parties involved. A balance between customer satisfaction, financial goals and management accountability is needed in order to achieve good results.

Exchange of experience on initiatives taken by governments on a national, regional or local level with a view to promoting recruitment and employment of immigrants/ethnic minorities in the public service (March 1998): The differ-

ent approaches to equal opportunities of work for immigrants and ethnic minorities carried out in several countries in recent years led the Council of Europe to launch a project on:

The role of employment services in promoting equal opportunities in the labour market for disadvantaged ethnic minorities and immigrants

The project has given rise to a "Training and guidance memorandum for the staff of employment services working with ethnic communities". The memorandum provides a model for local employment services to improve their service delivery for local disadvantaged ethnic minority and immigrant communities. It has provided the framework for a series of pilot training workshops with local and regional employment services in member States for staff with special responsibility for Roma job-seekers.

Public employment services often have only a small share of placement in the job market. Nonetheless, the role of employment services and the importance of improving their service delivery should not be underestimated. Firstly, they represent a public statement of the commitment of governments to combating discrimination in the workplace and, secondly, they can play an active role in modifying the recruitment patterns of employers.

Most of the examples of good practice come from public employment services. They tend to be active and innovative simply because of their disproportionate share of disadvantaged job-seekers (in particular the long-term unemployed) who are hard to place. In a number of countries, public employment services are supported by NGOs working on behalf of particularly disadvantaged groups or areas.

The model for improving employment service delivery comprises several elements, including training staff in equal opportunities, staff recruitment and policy, working with employer and job search and job skills training for jobseekers. However, perhaps the most important elements are the need to develop working partnerships with both the local community and local employers. This is particularly important with a view to consulting them on service delivery and involving them in the evaluation of new measures.

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ELSEWHERE AT THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

THE PROJECT "CULTURAL ENTERPRISE AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY"

'Cultural Enterprise and Cultural Diversity' is one of four pilot projects being developed in the context of the flagship project 'Cultural Policy and Cultural Diversity' of the Council of Europe Cultural Policy and Action Department.

The pilot project on enterprise and diversity was initiated in Bulgaria with the full support of the Ministry of Culture and with moral and financial support from the Ministry of Culture in Luxembourg.

The overall goal of the project is to foster creativity and creative enterprise at the local level in culturally diverse societies. The project is founded on a belief that culturally diverse societies have enormous potential for creative enterprise and that broad recognition of this fact will develop from a positive identification with diversity at the local level. Moreover, successful creative enterprise has a demonstrably positive impact on a range of areas, including economic development, employment and urban and rural regeneration and in this way can contribute to social cohesion.

One of the functions of the project is to encourage governments to recognise that in order to succeed in the new economy, they must create an environment in which creativity can flourish. For this they must be willing to engage in development partnerships, which are transversal, are organically democratic and which express a deep-seated respect for diversity.

This project will develop a strategy for cultural enterprise in the context of cultural diversity. It will attempt to empower both established and emerging local cultural producers to contribute to the economic prosperity of their region and to access national, regional and global markets.

In order to achieve this, a central objective is to put into place 'cultural development agencies' (CDA's). These CDA's will have three essential functions: the promotion of cultural enterprise, the channelling of resources and funding and the development of national and international networks. These agencies will also actively engage in outreach work and will involve new

sections of the population who might not in the past have seen the 'arts' as an employment option for themselves.

The success of such a venture depends largely on the capacity of governments to re-envision the meaning and place of culture. Cultural products, cultural skills, especially those engaged with contemporary culture, are not only assets in their own right, but also one of a country's most important economic resources.

It is clear from the successful beginnings of the pilot project that this new vision of culture and economy exists in Bulgaria. Phase one of the three phase pilot project was carried out during 2001.

Concrete Achievements of the Pilot Project in Bulgaria in Phase one

Firstly, the pilot project: proposed a new model and a new set of relationships for the development of creative enterprise, in the context of cultural diversity. This model is based on the notion of a "cultural development agency" which works in an innovative public and private partnership and acts as a stimulus between the creative practitioner and those who might purchase, commission or otherwise provide financial recognition for their activities.

It explored the potential of this model and the new contingent relationships through a series of seminars and workshops held with a variety of practitioners and other interested personnel;

It also provided additional support and stimulus through research in Bulgaria and the provision of contacts and models of good practice from outside;

It then provided training in cultural enterprise;

Finally, it created an international dimension to the model by creating links with agencies in other states.

Phase Two of the Pilot Project is being carried out in 2002 and its objectives are to:

- Consolidate the first phase;

- Provide more in-depth training and support relevant to the development of the proposed model;
- Undertake practical research into all aspects relevant to the successful establishment of the proposed model.

The practical steps in this phase are as follows:

- Research undertaken by both the team of foreign experts and experts from within the host country, will establish specific requirements and other factors in that country relevant to the proposed model (including, for example, the most appropriate structure and staffing, and the financing options);
- Two visits by the team of experts to undertake a programme of in-depth training sessions on aspects relevant to the successful operation of the proposed model (including project management, developing relationships with artists and cultural organisations, export initiatives, marketing, financial management, etc.);
- One visit by key individuals from the project country: an opportunity for these individuals to travel and spend a few days with one or more agreed 'model' cultural development agencies in the UK or another host country, to have an opportunity for hands-on experience and face-to-face dialogue with those directly involved in this area of work – this may include a workshop in the UK with a panel of experts who present additional information and training to the participants;
- A final seminar that presents the results of this phase, to both those who have participated in the pilot activities and to other opinion formers and decision makers whose support would be crucial in the implementation of the final phase.

On the basis of a successful conclusion to phase two, a third and final phase of the project will be implemented. This last phase should result in a fully functioning cultural development agency.

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Strategic Review "Making South-East Europe a region of social cohesion": the Employment Network

The South-East Europe (Strategic) Review on social cohesion is an important element of the programme of assistance activities for 2002 and a contribution of the Council of Europe to the Stability Pact for South-East Europe. It represents an opportunity to apply the work of the Social Cohesion Strategy within the specific context of South-East Europe – in particular the work on standard setting and access to social rights. Its primary objective is to examine the possibilities for current and future sustainable social development in the region and to outline a social agenda for achieving long-term stability and sustainable development.

The activity is being implemented through a series of thematic networks in the field of housing, employment, and health. The networks are composed of national experts from the relevant specialised Ministries, assisted by a consultant and the Secretariat. Each task force begins its work by consideration of an issues paper dealing with specific problems, in most cases linked to access to social rights for vulnerable groups. The national experts are assisted by the consultant in collecting national information to supplement the issues paper. From an analysis of this information, the task force identifies priority areas for policy development at both regional and national level, and formulates relevant policy proposals.

The South East Europe Employment Network, organised with a contribution from the Ministry of Employment and Labour of Belgium, met twice in 2001 and will meet again in the autumn of this year. During this first meeting, participants from Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs of six South-East European countries and social partners held a detailed exchange of views on the choice of theme for the proposed review to be undertaken by the network. The participants agreed that the review should examine the problems of access to employment. During the 2nd Meeting (Sofia, 24 – 26 October 2001), the participants discussed their current methodologies and practices in identifying the problems of access to employment, in analysing these problems and in developing appropriate remedial policy actions.

The seminar drew upon the findings of the expert's issues paper reviewing the major problems of labour supply and demand in the region, prepared by Mrs. Irena Zareva (Bulgarian Academy of Science, Sofia). Based on the paper's findings, themes discussed during the meeting included:

- The transformation of the labour market in South-East Europe;
- Identifying vulnerable groups and their labour market needs and
- Policy responses to improve access to employment.

The Consultant submitted her finalised paper in April 2002. The full text will soon be available on the Internet. It contains a wealth of information on the topic, and includes a variety of country-specific examples, statistical information and policy recommendations. Among the topics identified, the study looks in particular at the macroeconomic situation, the evolution of labour legislation, the mobility and migration of the labour force, the various labour market policies present in the various SEE countries, as well as the new role of social partners.

The Employment Network will meet again in the autumn of this year and is expected to identify the needs (in terms of training, methodological tools, knowledge of successful experience, etc.) of the countries involved in order to improve access to employment for their most vulnerable populations. On that occasion, the possibility of organising in 2003 a high-level tripartite conference involving ministers at which the results of this work would be presented and priorities identified for more precisely targeted follow-up projects will be finalised.

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The Guidebook on social indicators for social cohesion: employment issues

A Guidebook on using indicators for social cohesion is presently being prepared and will be published at the end of 2002. One of the aims of the Guidebook is to make the concept of social cohesion, as set out by the Council of Europe in its Strategy for Social Cohesion, more operational.

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe: employment and vulnerable groups

In 2001, the Committee on Social Cohesion of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) decided to prepare a report on the role of local and regional authorities in promoting employment for vulnerable groups. Ms Marie-Renée Brodron (France) and Ms Cigdem Mercan (Turkey) were appointed rapporteurs, for the Chamber of Regions and the Chamber of Local Authorities respectively.

This initiative is linked to the work of the Group of Experts on Promoting Access to Employment (CS-EM), and the rapporteurs and members of the Congress Secretariat have been able to attend the CS-EM's meetings. The Conclusions and Guidelines on local partnerships for the development of employment adopted by the CDCS in November 2001 have been used as a springboard for the Committee on Social Cohesion's work. The Committee now wishes to explore this topic further by situating it in the particular context of local and regional authorities.

The report will consider five areas of research (local partnerships, equality between men and women, non-discrimination against disadvantaged groups, enterprise creation and life-long education, training and apprenticeship) and will focus on the following vulnerable groups: disabled persons, formerly unemployed persons who have set up their own business, migrant workers and ethnic minorities.

In preparing its report, the Committee decided to use the services of an expert, Mr Francisco Gonzales from Seville University, Spain. In co-operation with the CLRAE Secretariat, Mr Gonzales has prepared a questionnaire which will identify examples of good practice by local and regional authorities in promoting access to employment for the three categories selected. The intention is also to emphasise the transferability of such experiences, and to consider how they can best be replicated in other contexts.

This questionnaire was sent to members of the Committee on Social Cohesion, members of the Congress and Associations of Local and Regional Authorities in the CLRAE's member and observer states in November 2001. Successful co-operation with the CS-EM Secretariat and the Liaison Committee of NGOs enjoying consultative status with the Council of Europe enabled the questionnaire to be sent to CS-EM experts and NGOs working in the social field. The replies flooded in during February and March 2002.

As emphasised in another article in this Newsletter, the first right under the European Social Charter is the right to work. This is further underlined in the Strategy for Social Cohesion, which states that decent and adequately remunerated employment is one of the main ways of promoting social cohesion. The promotion of employment, it says, should be at the heart of a social cohesion strategy involving appropriate economic policies that are integrated with social protection and employment support measures.

Further references to the intentions of the Council of Europe regarding Employment can be found in key recommendations from the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly and in actions taken by the Committee on experts on Promoting Access to Employment (CS-EM).

With all this in mind, employment and good working conditions will have a key place in the Guidebook. Taking account of the ambitions expressed in the sources mentioned above, the Guidebook's proposed indicators reflecting employment and good working conditions will cover three different aspects:

- access to employment – i.e. the capability or possibility of integration into the labour market without discrimination;
- job quality and security – i.e. the nature of the integration into the labour market,
- employment policy – i.e. the involvement of the state in promoting decent jobs for all.

Employment indicators are used as social indicators as well as economic indicators and for that reason they can be found in many international organisations such as the ILO, the OECD and the European Union. The employment indicators proposed in the Guidebook, as well as indicators in other areas, will in part draw on these sources.

However, the Council of Europe's special concern with the human rights aspect of social cohesion – and the broader commitment of the Council of Europe in this area – demand more specific indicators than many of those in use today.

The most crucial point in this context is whether the indicators can be disaggre-

gated into useful sub-indicators (such as gender, age groups, socio-economic groups, regions, ethnic groups etc). It is inevitable in the case of employment to use key indicators such as "Unemployment rate" or "Number of jobless households" or different measures of public spending. Nevertheless, if these indicators are not disaggregated into smaller segments they do not reveal any details of the actual situation in a country from a social cohesion point of view. Unemployment rate in age groups, between men and women, in different regions in the country or between people with different education levels etc. are far more interesting from the Guidebook's perspective than over-all figures on a national level.

In many cases this kind of detailed information is, in fact, collected in many member States. However, since conditions often vary quite substantially between different countries and the definitions of various sub-groups etc. may differ, this country specific information is not often presented in international sources.

Consequently, the Guidebook will recommend indicators, which are relevant for social cohesion and possible to disaggregate into useful sub-indicators in most member States. The Guidebook will not recommend a compulsory set of common indicators in the area of employment or in other areas, nor will it encourage cross-country comparisons through the use of the proposed indicators.

The Guidebook will also recommend the implementation of new indicators as in some areas useful indicators do not exist, at least not in common sources or databases. These new indicators should be able to be developed relatively simply.

A complete draft of the Guidebook will soon be presented. An expert panel will meet in Strasbourg at the end of May to review this draft and the choice of indicators. The final version will probably be presented to the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) at their meeting in November 2002.

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On 18 March 2002, the Committee on Social Cohesion held a public hearing on the report's topics. Francisco Gonzales (the expert) presented the draft report and discussed the work's progress.

The methodology adopted for this report is based on four main axes:

1. Explaining and introducing the contexts and geo-political aspects that have led local and regional authorities to adopt employment strategies for vulnerable groups;
2. Analysis of the various parties' involvement, and the multi-disciplinary nature of the policies implemented;
3. The role of local and regional authorities in employment policies;
4. General conclusions and final recommendations.

Mr Gonzales also emphasised the need a) to take account of cross-disciplinary approaches (representation of both sexes, income levels, type of political authority, urbanisation or rural contexts and regions) and b) to carry out a comparative analysis in studying the groups and the policies applied. He believes that it would be worth examining the impact of European initiatives on the particular cases described and trying to establish a typology of profiles (case X in country Y), which would allow for inter-country comparison. This would then make it easier to select and apply the best strategy in a given situation.

Further to the replies to the questionnaire (72 useable replies to date), some preliminary results have already been identified:

- 107 case studies have been listed, representing about 1.5 case studies per questionnaire rather than the three anticipated (one per vulnerable group). These case studies are currently being analysed.
- The number and distribution of case studies correspond to the general information received: 45 case studies on disabled persons, 35 on previously unemployed persons who have set up their own business, and 27 on migrants and ethnic minorities. The highest number of replies concerned disabled persons, and the lowest concerned minorities and migrants. This is explained by the fact that policies for the first group (disabled persons) are more clearly defined (and that local and regional authorities are particularly involved with policies for this group).
- Local policies are well represented.
- The geographical distribution is relatively good.

The report on the role of local and regional authorities in promoting employment is due to be adopted by the Committee on Social Cohesion at its next meeting in October 2002. It will then be submitted to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe for approval in March 2003, and be made available in the CLRAE's five working languages (English, French, German, Russian and Italian) in spring 2003.

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Activation policies, measures and actors in the Federal Volga District: main lessons for access to employment of vulnerable groups

This project has been set up in the light of the preliminary findings of the Council of Europe Network of social researchers¹⁾. The network was established to stimulate debate on how to improve policymaking in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. The first meeting of the Network took place in Strasbourg in June 2001 and highlighted policy issues to be addressed and offered useful insights into social diagnoses and policy.

Following this, a further meeting of the Network was held in October 2001 in the Hague to discuss activation policies to fight social exclusion in Eastern Europe. It was agreed by the participants of the Network that policy research should start with an exhaustive evaluation of achievements, obstacles and challenges in the field of activation policies for a given region. The region selected was the Volga Federal District of the Russian Federation which for the last ten years has been considered to be a laboratory of reforms with active involvement of researchers in the policy debate. The project received political support from Mr. Sergey Kirienko, Plenipotentiary Representative of the President of the Russian Federation in the Volga Federal District. This project will also be linked to an existing Council of Europe assistance project on Access to employment in the Pskov Region of the Russian Federation.

The starting point of the project is that in Western Europe there is a growing consensus towards active policies for vulnerable and excluded individuals. Policy makers in Central and Eastern Europe have also come to accept the need for an "active" rather than a "passive" approach to fight social deprivation and unemployment. This is especially important in helping the disabled to obtain decent jobs. In this context, Directorate General III – Social Cohesion of the Council of Europe has identified the following key research areas to be analysed from a comparative perspective:

- the adequacy of the concept of *activation* – or, in other words, active social (re)-integration measures - in the Central and Eastern European context;
- the nature of the policy and measures related to it that are emerging progressively in the region;
- the actors – public authorities, private sector, civil society organisations, social partners - involved in activation programmes;
- the ways in which the different actors and initiatives interact.

The project will be based on the broad definition of activation referring to active measures for social integration of disadvantaged individu-

als trapped in a multi-dimensional process of social exclusion. It will aim at answering questions such as:

- What are the key active measures and policies to be implemented in the social and employment field to fight poverty, unemployment and social exclusion?
- What is the nature and how effective is co-operation between social and employment public services, in particular as far as the disabled are concerned?
- What are the organisations - private and public – involved in (re) integration programmes for vulnerable groups: employment and social services, NGOs, associations, Trade Unions, employers' associations, churches/faith organisations?
- How are the different types of actions – training, social assistance, psychological assistance, job and personal counselling – interacting to facilitate social integration?
- What are the main obstacles and needs, especially at the local level, to the development of effective activation policies?
- Is the "western" definition of activation meaningful in the Volga District context?
- Does the concept of activation need to be developed/changed/promoted in the region?
- By what means?

The main beneficiaries of the project will be:

- The political authorities and public administration. The report will make recommendations for policy development and capacity building addressed to the political authorities of the region. Academic researchers will be sensitive to the different needs of policy makers and be prepared to translate research findings into policy-oriented conclusions and recommendations. So that it will be useful to them.
- Vulnerable groups which will benefit from a more effective institutional framework encouraging access to employment. This is particularly lacking for disabled people in Russia.
- Other Eastern European regions which could benefit from the experience of the Volga District

The first stage of the activity is a preliminary report prepared by a local expert on the Volga District which will provide a broad overview of the nature of the existing activation framework in the Volga District, the actors involved in it and the problems and challenges related to fighting unemployment and social exclusion. A mid-term evaluation expert meeting will follow in Nižnij Novgorod in Autumn 2002 where this report will be discussed at a seminar bringing together local and international experts and policy makers on activation policies to assess the report from a comparative perspective. The follow-up activities will aim at formulating a set of policy recommendations to increase the effectiveness of the institutional framework for activation. The project will end with a conference bringing together academics, decision makers, the private sector, civil society organisations, social partners and NGOs to discuss

The fundamental aim of the ILO: to make decent work a worldwide reality

Since 1999 the International Labour Organization (ILO), whose main objective is to improve the lot of all human beings in the working world, has taken on the fundamental task of guaranteeing that all men and women have access to "*decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity*".

For the ILO decent work comprises three closely interrelated components:

- fulfilling the aspirations of individuals, families and communities everywhere to find productive work in the conditions mentioned above;
- pursuing the political objectives set by societies, countries and the international community;
- devising an integrated framework for the development of policies promoting decent work worldwide.

"The goal of decent work is best expressed through the eyes of people. It is about your job and future prospects; about your working conditions; about balancing work and family life, putting your kids through school or getting them out of child labour. It is about gender equality, equal recognition, and enabling women to make choices and take control of their lives. It is about your personal abilities to compete in the market place, keep up with new technological skills and remain healthy. It is about developing your entrepreneurial skills, about receiving a fair share of the wealth that you have helped to create and not being discriminated against; it is about having a voice in your workplace and your community. In the most extreme situations it is about moving from subsistence to existence. For many, it is the primary route out of poverty. For many more, it is about realizing personal aspirations in their daily existence and about solidarity with others. And everywhere, and for everybody, decent work is about securing human dignity."¹⁾

While taking advantage of the prosperity globalisation brings, the ILO warns against its dangers. In these times of global transition, decent work is an essential global demand. It involves "*creating jobs of acceptable quality*" and "*devising social and economic systems which ensure basic security and employment while remain-*

the conclusions of the report, to draw some lessons, and to make policy recommendations. The entire project will be policy and future oriented and its results will be presented in a form accessible and useful to political authorities and civil society organisations.

1) The results of this network have been published in the *Trends in social cohesion Volume N°1 – Promoting the policy debate on social exclusion from a comparative perspective*

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The Pskov partnership

This assistance project, which was the subject of an article in Newsletter no 3 (2001), « Promoting employment opportunities in the Pskov Region of Russia » has now entered its third, and final phase, the dissemination phase. The project is the largest Council of Europe assistance project in Eastern and Central Europe to date on employment. It is being undertaken in partnership between the Council of Europe and the Russian Ministry of Labour and the Russian Federal Employment Service.

To sum up, the first phase of planning, preparation and fact-finding took place in 2000 and the second phase of seminar and workshops in 2001. The final training workshop on local labour market intelligence, of a series of four was held in Pskov in November 2001. Subjects dealt with during previous workshops were partnership (March), staff development (June) and programme design and evaluation (September).

The Pskov region, in North West Russia, is a region that has suffered industrial decline and high unemployment levels, especially among women (70 per cent of unemployed). Therefore this region was identified by the Russian Federal Government (Ministry of Labour and Social Development) to pilot the project.

The aim of the project is to improve the functioning of local labour markets in Russia and the professional capacity of the Russian Federal Employment Service to deal with employment issues. It will also develop expertise in connection with future ratification by the Russian Federation of the Revised European Social Charter which is one of the key legal instruments of the Council of Europe and contains an important "right to work".

The programme aims at improving access to employment for all but in particular it targets three vulnerable groups: women particularly women returning to work after raising a family; young people particularly the less well qualified and ex-military re-entering civilian life. The main goals and the tasks are to acti-

vate women's role in the labour market, to increase the quality of vocational training in education institutions for young people and to help the ex-military to adapt to civilian life. Although the overall economic situation has improved to some extent in recent years in the Pskov Region, the three vulnerable groups identified still face particular difficulties finding suitable employment.

The results of the training workshops were very satisfactory and appreciated by the participants who have designed and undertaken similar events in other parts of the Pskov Region.

An important part of the dissemination phase is the preparation of a video and a Training Manual for wider dissemination of the project results in the Russian Employment Service across the Russian Federation. The video is aimed to be a promotional and professional training tool for people working primarily in the Russian Federal Employment Service. It is designed to equip them in turn to help the unemployed find sustainable jobs by marketing their skills to the job market, and by working in partnership with local training and education institutions, employers, local government and NGOs to improve skills to promote job creation.

The objective of the Training Manual is to communicate to people working in the Employment Service across Russia the main outcomes and techniques which arose from the training workshops and to provide a written tool to enable them to replicate and adapt the concepts of the project, the "Pskov" method, in their Region or locality.

During June 2002, a study visit and a seminar programme for 16 Russian participants (mainly those who participated in the workshops) will be organised in Finland. The programme will include a review of the project in Pskov and a presentation of Finnish experience of local partnership in dealing with long-term unemployment. It will also include visits to central authorities in Helsinki (for example the Ministry of Labour, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities) and South Savo Province in East Finland where the main programme of visits and training sessions would take place. Moreover contacts with local employment services and training sessions on subjects covered in the seminars and in the workshops will be part of the programme.

The programme will be concluded late 2002 or early 2003 with a seminar in Pskov involving a large number of partners to disseminate the project both regionally and nationally.

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ing capable of adaptation to rapidly changing circumstances in a highly competitive global market"²⁾.

When presenting his report "Reducing the decent work deficit – a global challenge" at the 89th session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva in 2001, ILO Director-General Juan Somavia reiterated his call for a world coalition for decent work: "We need to reduce the global decent work deficit. We must make decent work a reality in our countries and embed this goal in the global economy. (...) I think it is now time to focus with the same energy on strategies to bring down the decent work deficit. That is a goal that all of us at the ILO cannot deliver on our own - but we can and must be the catalysts to create an expanding global consciousness for decent work. We must lead by example, by showing that there are policies through which the goal can be progressively achieved".

He also stressed that it is difficult to address social issues in a context where economic, commercial and financial questions always take priority. "To move forward we need to confront the widespread perception that we in the ILO and in other places who address social issues are playing in the minor league of the global economy, while the hardball actors in the world of commerce and finance occupy a superior sphere of policy. This orthodoxy should be, and is being subverted", he explained.

"All of this effort of bringing the decent work agenda to the reality of a country is designed to explore how the decent work framework can be mapped onto a practical policy agenda, adapted to the concerns and circumstances of each country."

He concluded with these words: "The aim is coherent policy packages which can reduce the decent work deficit, developed through partnership between workers, employers and governments. We will use and multiply these experiences, so as to offer methods and options, advice and cooperation, to countries which wish to participate in this endeavour."

The Global Employment Forum held in Geneva at the beginning of November 2001 was an opportunity for Juan Somavia to reiterate the International Labour Organisation's aims, incorporating the concept of decent work. The November Forum concluded with the launch of the Global Employment Agenda, a ten-point programme aimed at reversing the tide of rising unemployment and poverty in a crisis-bound world.

1) Report of the Director-General of ILO, "Reducing the decent work deficit – a global challenge", June 2001.

2) Report of the Director-General of ILO, "Decent Work", June 1999

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Bulgaria: **Developing women's entrepreneurial spirit with a view to combating unemployment**

For the past ten years or so, there has been a high rate of unemployment in Bulgaria: it reached 17.1% in 2001¹⁾. This is partly the result of the transition to a market economy and of the socio-economic changes that have taken place during this period.

Low-skilled and unskilled employees are, of course, the most vulnerable in these circumstances. In 2001, around two-thirds of Bulgarian women were economically active. It should also be noted that this proportion is higher than in OECD countries (81% in Bulgaria compared to 68% on average in OECD countries²⁾). One of the possible explanations for this situation may be the existence of many training and assistance programmes for women who decide to start up a business

"Help a woman" is the name of the appeal launched by the Foundation for the Development of Entrepreneurial Spirit. Its main activity is organising training for women who wish to or have already set up their own business.

In Bulgaria entrepreneurs of both sexes now encounter the same problems: shortage of capital and know-how, high overheads, low demand, and bureaucracy. Nevertheless, more women have succeeded in setting up their own business than men. The explanation given for this by the Foundation for the Development of Entrepreneurial Spirit is probably that women are more cautious and make a more careful assessment of the risks and problems involved in launching their business. Antonina Stoyanovska, the President of the Foundation, also points out that studies on working women do not reveal any notable differences in the financial barriers or problems of know-how encountered by men and women entrepreneurs. The Foundation's studies show that the barriers that working women have to overcome are mainly psychological. Men are still expected to be the breadwinner in the family while women are expected to provide a comfortable home. Women who set up business are therefore moving away from traditional family values and practices.

Women are not aware of any sexual discrimination against female entrepreneurs in Bulgaria and are convinced that men and

women have the same opportunities and the same chances of success. There are, however, many prejudices which make it difficult for women to enter the world of business. Women therefore need not only sound professional training but also courses to strengthen their motivation.

The Foundation for the Development of Entrepreneurial Spirit has set up a pilot project, which will be carried out simultaneously in the capital (Sofia) and in a provincial town (Vratza). Forty women from Sofia and sixty women from Vratza will be selected to take part in a free training course. Candidates may have no professional experience but they must be determined to work both on their own behalf and for their company. At the end of the course, each participant will be expected to draw up a plan for setting up their own business and will be given any individual advice they may require. Promising projects will receive funding.

The realisation of these projects should thus allow the creation of a variety of employment opportunities and lead to a women's co-operation network.

The Foundation also wishes to set up a national inter-institutional board to co-ordinate the implementation of various projects devised by women. This would facilitate access to information and the co-ordination of various support projects for working women everywhere in Bulgaria.

1) National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria – www.nsi.bg
2) World Bank, Bulgaria: Country Economic Memorandum – <http://www.worldbank.org>

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Italy - Emilia-Romagna **Business start-up centre**

Emilia-Romagna, Province of Parma, Northern Italy, is one of the wealthiest regions in Europe with a GDP per capita of €23,000 and unemployment at 4%.

An Italian agency promoting the local economy (SOPRIP) came up with the idea of opening a business start-up centre in the early 1990s to increase the number of new innovative technology businesses in economic sectors which are experiencing difficulties.

Social partners and vocational guidance for lower-paid workers

The project "Social partners and vocational guidance for lower-paid workers" is a European partnership which seeks to gather and disseminate examples of good practice in delivering guidance to lower-paid workers and to develop a set of methods and solutions that can be used by employers, trade unions and guidance services. The University of Glasgow is co-ordinating the project with the support of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme of the European Commission. Ten countries are involved: Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom (promoter and co-ordinator).

The project emphasises the role that employers and trade unions can play in providing guidance in the workplace in a way which would benefit both employees and employers.

The Glasgow team has prepared national reports on the availability of educational guidance for lower-paid workers. Although there has been a great emphasis on increasing skills of the workforce in Europe, vocational guidance is usually targeted at the unemployed. Lower-paid workers often have difficulty gaining access to guidance as well as a reluctance to take up opportunities for education and training.

Some of the participating countries are evaluating existing initiatives: Germany is looking at a scheme to help young people remain in employment; Italy is assessing the help available to atypical workers; Luxembourg is evaluating a project aimed at unskilled women; and the UK is looking at two guidance initiatives, one carried out by a trade union and one by a city council.

The other countries are carrying out pilot projects on new ways to give guidance to lower-paid workers, the great majority of whom have few educational qualifications. The

The centre was built in Ricco di Fornovo. Public authorities provided the finances to construct a multi-functional building to house new firms. The aim of the centre is to help turn ideas into micro or small-sized enterprises capable of becoming established outside the centre within three years. The centre has already repaid the loans provided and is now economically independent.

The administration of the centre was assigned to Euro Business Innovation Centre Emilia-Romagna (BIC ER), which is an EU initiative to promote economic development and increase employment in SMEs of its member states. BIC ER guarantees a high rate of company survival in the centre via its detailed selection process and its ongoing support for the new businesses.

The companies housed in the centre have preferential access to various services in terms of quality and cost. BIC ER is also helping companies with promotion and communication, project management, training and apprenticeships. It manages a network of specialist consultants, technological resources, outside contacts and investors. BIC ER has signed an agreement with local authorities to set up a fund to help with the cost of locating companies in the centre.

In 5 years of activity the centre has accommodated 14 businesses (10 of which remain located there) with a total of 60 jobs. The sectors represented by the businesses located in the centre are manufacturing, the agro-food industry and services. The survival rate of the businesses located in the centre is 100%.

Furthermore, the centre's impact should not be assessed solely in terms of businesses and jobs created. It has helped to develop new production technologies and new products in the region and has therefore strengthened the local economy.

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Hungary

Villány-Syklós Wine Road: partnership in regional development

Effective local government depends on maximising inherent resources. The Villány-Syklós Wine Road, a public-private

partnership, has done exactly this by establishing wine roads based on examples in the countries of the European Union which are micro-regions that can be visited in a day. The activity began in 1994 with a partnership of municipal governments, NGOs, entrepreneurs and the general public. Initially seven small towns and villages in the southern part of Hungary (Pecs region) were involved. This grew to ten in 1998.

Previously, this area of Hungary was characterised by a worsening social situation and poor infrastructure, making it difficult to attract capital to the area. However, there was potential for growth in terms of wine and rural tourism. This tourism benefits the local economy, promotes quality wine production and enables the establishment of family businesses. Specifically, in this part of Hungary, the objectives of the partnership were to: stop out-migration; create jobs, develop business; boost the image of the area as a good place to live; protect the natural, architectural and cultural heritage; mobilise local capital and attract external investors; and to foster co-operation between local governments and populations.

The association co-ordinated and harmonised the various initiatives, as well as distributing funds. Training was a key feature in the attempt to meet its objectives. The aim of the training was to boost the professional competence of the project managers. Cost free, locally organised courses covered a range of topics, such as wine culture and environmental management. Other initiatives included interest free loans, which were offered to participating entrepreneurs. Marketing was another key domain of project action, facilitated through the establishment of a special non-profit tourism office.

As a result of the project, there are now over 100 members in the association, operating a total of 76 qualified wine road services in the ten settlements. Tourism is now very much a year-round phenomenon. The association, through its support of new wine roads, has enabled the establishment of the South Transdanubian Wine Road Network. The Villány-Syklós Wine Road is a good example of sustainable development based on making the most of local resources, both human and environmental.

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workers involved include office clerks in Spain; cleaners in Finland; workers in a fish factory and power plant in Iceland; and employed people registered with the Swedish Employment Service. The Czech Republic is running two pilot projects, one for hospital workers and one for trade union representatives.

One example of the work of the project can be found in Professor Peter Plant's evaluation of two projects that have been carried out in Denmark (<http://www.gla.ac.uk/wg/danrep2e.htm>). Firstly, he gives the example of 'guidance corners', targeted at low-paid female workers, which were set up by KAD (the Women's Trade Union). In this case, guidance was brought directly into the workplace, whereby a 'corner' of a canteen or a rest area was set aside for information (in pamphlets or on a computer) and personal guidance from KAD representatives. The second Danish example is that of 'educational ambassadors', such as those set up by HK (The Commercial and Clerical Employees' Trade Union). Here some HK members were trained to take on a peer guidance role, encouraging colleagues to take up educational possibilities. These initiatives have had some success, but face the problem of overcoming barriers which prevent potential participants from benefiting from learning options (such as transport problems and a lack of self-confidence).

The project "Social partners and vocational guidance for lower-paid workers" is still in progress, and updates are posted on the website (www.gla.ac.uk/wg). Information can also be provided in print format on request. The contact details of the partners can be found on this site and applications to join their e-mail lists are welcome, as is any feedback on the project and examples of any experience in this field.

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ADOPTED TEXTS

- European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers (STE No. 93)

Recommendations:

- Recommendation Rec (2002)6 on the Committee of Ministers *on higher education policies in lifelong learning* (adopted on 15 May 2002)
- Recommendation Rec(2001)17 of the Committee of Ministers *on improving the economic and employment situation of Roma/Gypsies and the travellers in Europe* (adopted on 27 November 2001)
- Recommendation Rec (1995) 2 of the Committee of Ministers *on the role of employment services* (adopted on 11 January 1995)
- Recommendation Rec (1992) 6 of the Committee of Ministers *on a coherent policy for people with disabilities* (adopted on 9 April 1992)
- Recommendation Rec (1992) 4 of the Committee of Ministers *on the co-ordination of employment, social and educational services for the integration and reintegration into employment of persons with difficulties* (adopted on 10 February 1992)

Resolutions:

- Resolution ResAP (1995) 3 of the Committee of Ministers *on a Charter on the vocational assessment of people with disabilities* (adopted on 12 October 1995)
- Resolution 1056 (1995) of the Parliamentary Assembly *on social policies and political stability in central and eastern European countries* (adopted on 3rd February 1995)

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Reports:

- Final activity Report of the Committee of Experts on Promoting Access to Employment (CS-EM) - *Guidelines on local partnerships for the development of employment*
- *The role of employment services for the promotion of equal opportunities for the migrants and disadvantaged ethnic groups* - training and guidance memorandum on equal opportunities for the staff of employment services

Publications:

- *European Social Charter - Collected texts 3rd Edition* (2001) - ISBN: 92-871-4718-3
- *Europe's population and labour market beyond 2000 - Vol 1* (Population studies No. 33) (2000) - ISBN: 92-871-4273-4
- *Europe's population and labour market beyond 2000 - Vol 2 : Country case studies* (Population studies No. 34) (2000) - ISBN: 92-871-4399-4
- *Employment strategies to promote equal opportunities for persons with disabilities on the labour market* (2000) - ISBN: 92-871-4216-5
- *Colloquy on employment - New initiatives on youth employment - Proceedings*, Naples, March 1998 (2000) - ISBN: 92-871-4193-2
- *The European Social Charter, its protocols, the revised Charter* (1999) - ISBN: 92-871-4052-9
- *Initiatives by employers to promote employment and integration of immigrants* (1998) - ISBN: 92-871-3786-2
- *The transition from sheltered to ordinary employment* (1996) - ISBN: 92-871-3144-9

CALENDAR

- 3-20 June 2002: International Labour Conference (Geneva)

Conferences:

- 16-17 September 2002: Conference of European Ministers responsible for migration questions (Helsinki - Finland)
- 14-15 November 2002: Conference on Access to Social Rights (Malta)

Seminar:

- July 2002: Regional training seminar for representatives of employment services and Roma organisations in South-East Europe (Sofia - Bulgaria)

Meetings:

- Autumn 2002: Employment Network - Strategic review "Making South-East Europe a region of social cohesion"
- Autumn 2002: First meeting of the project "Activation policies, measures and actors at regional level in some selected Eastern European countries: main lessons for the access to employment of vulnerable groups" (Nižnij Novgorod - Russian Federation)
- 17-18 October 2002: Committee on Social Cohesion - Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (Strasbourg)
- 7-8 November 2002: 2nd meeting of the Group of Specialists on Employment for Marginalised Groups - CS-MA (Strasbourg)

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