A new strategy for Social Cohesion

Revised strategy for Social Cohesion
approved by the Committee of Ministers
of the Council of Europe on 31 March 2004

Part I – Social Cohesion:
a priority for the Council of Europe

1. As understood by the Council of Europe, social cohesion is the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means.

2. All societies have to live with the strains and stresses caused by divisions and potential divisions. For example, there are in all societies disparities of wealth between richer and poorer people; when these disparities are excessive, or tending to increase, cohesion is put at risk. Again, no society is without ethnic and cultural diversity; the question is how to manage diversity so that it becomes a source of mutual enrichment rather than a factor of division and conflict. A cohesive society is one which has developed satisfactory ways of coping with these and other strains in an open and democratic manner. This means taking action to reduce inequalities and restore equity so that these various divisions remain manageable and do not grow so as to threaten the stability of society.

3. No society is fully cohesive. Social cohesion is an ideal to be striven for rather than a goal capable of being fully achieved. It constantly needs to be nurtured, improved and adapted. Each generation has to find afresh a manageable equilibrium of forces. This is a constantly shifting equilibrium which has to adapt to changes in the social and economic environment, in technology and in national and international political systems.

4. Social cohesion is not only a matter of combating social exclusion and poverty. It is also about creating solidarity in society such that exclusion will be minimised.

At the same time, in so far as poverty and exclusion continue to exist, there is also a need to take specific measures to help vulnerable members of society.
A social cohesion strategy must therefore tackle exclusion by means of both prevention and cure.

5. During the twentieth century, Western European States came to accept responsibility for achieving a balance between economic growth and social justice. Despite the considerable variations from country to country, the European approach is sufficiently distinctive when compared with other world regions that it has often been referred to as the "European social model". The European approach now faces a series of questions and strains, however. The challenge for Europe in the twenty-first century is to find ways of adapting these social policy achievements to changing needs and changing circumstances without losing their essential character.

6. Present-day Europeans are aware of a number of potential threats to social cohesion. For example, changing employment patterns and doubts about the sustainability of social security systems give many the feeling that their future welfare is becoming more uncertain. Social and crime problems in run-down areas of cities may make people feel less secure in their daily lives. Others again see growing multiculturalism as a threat to traditional identities. At the same time, new risks of poverty and exclusion are emerging, such as inadequate access to new information and communication technologies or to privatised utilities (water, electricity, etc.).

7. For these and other reasons, social cohesion is currently perceived by many as being at risk.

8. This is what led the member states of the Council of Europe to give priority to social cohesion. The Heads of State and Government of the Organisation's member states, meeting in Strasbourg in October 1997, identified social cohesion as "one of the foremost needs of the wider Europe and [...] an essential complement to the

promotion of human rights and dignity" (Final Declaration). As its 45 member states now cover practically the whole of geographical Europe, the Council of Europe has a special and distinctive role in promoting social cohesion across the whole continent. Just as the member states want to avoid the emergence of "two-speed societies" divided between a prosperous majority and an increasingly marginalised minority, so they also want to avoid the emergence of a "two-speed Europe".

Building social cohesion on a basis of human rights

9. The fundamental commitment of the member states of the Council of Europe is to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. The aim of the Organisation is to achieve greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding their ideals and principles and "facilitating their economic and social progress" (Article 1a of the Statute of the Council of Europe).

10. The full range of civil, political, social and economic rights are protected by the Organisation's two fundamental human rights instruments, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Revised European Social Charter. The European Court of Human Rights and the organs of the European Social Charter are responsible for ensuring that Contracting Parties fully respect these rights. The rights set out in the Revised European Social Charter form, in particular, the starting-point for the social cohesion strategy.

11. As stated above (see paragraph 1), social cohesion is about the capacity of society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation. Welfare implies not only equity and non-discrimination in access to human rights but also:

➜ the dignity of each person and the recognition of their abilities and their contribution to society, fully respecting the diversity of cultures, opinions and religious beliefs;

➔ the freedom of each individual to pursue their personal development throughout their life;

➔ the possibility for each person to participate actively as a full member of society.

12. It is natural, therefore, that the Council of Europe seeks to develop a rights-based approach to social cohesion. Rights provide the firmest foundation for social policy. Rights put all members of society on an equal footing. With a basis in human rights, the action of the State in the social policy field is no longer a matter of charity or welfare directed at the less fortunate members of society; it is a question of guaranteeing rights that are the same for all.

13. However strong the legal protection of rights, it is never a simple matter to ensure that all members of society, especially those in the weakest position, in reality benefit from their rights. Paradoxically, those who most need the protection of their rights are often least well equipped to claim them. This is why legal protection of rights has to be accompanied by determined social policy measures to ensure that everyone in practice has access to their rights.

14. Equality between women and men is also a fundamental Council of Europe commitment that is highly relevant to the social cohesion strategy. Continuing efforts will be made to keep alert to the gender implications of all social policy interventions and to integrate a gender mainstreaming perspective into the activities in this field.

15. The Council of Europe's rights-based approach implies a particular commitment to making a reality of the rights and needs of those individuals and groups in society which are at particular risk of becoming vulnerable. These include, for example:

➔ children as defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights;

➜   young people in general, who must play an essential part in any vision of social cohesion which is concerned for the welfare of future generations from the point of view of sustainable development;

➜   families in precarious life-situations, especially single-parent families;

➜   migrants and ethnic minorities, whose integration into society is of utmost importance to social cohesion;

➜   people with disabilities, whose specific needs must be fully integrated into the pursuit of the welfare of all;

➜   elderly people, especially those who are living alone or who no longer have the support of a family.

16. The Council of Europe has always considered that access to social rights must be based on the following principles:

➜   equality of rights for all, without discrimination;

➜   availability of quality services affordable by all;

➜   giving special attention to the needs of the vulnerable members of society;

➜   avoiding stigmatisation of those with special needs;

➜   maintenance of equitable and sustainable fiscal policies;

➜   participation of users.

At the same time, everyone should be aware of the need to exercise responsibility in the way they make use of social protection and social services.

Social cohesion as a responsibility shared by all

17. The capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all must be seen as a responsibility for all sectors of society. During the twentieth century it was often considered that, apart from the role of the family and other traditional social relationships, welfare was the responsibility of the State (the "Welfare State"), while business was responsible for economic development. The economic problems of recent decades and the globalisation of the economy have shown that this model is no longer adequate and that the welfare of all must become a goal shared by all social actors, the State, business and the individual (a "welfare society"). This new situation does not imply a withdrawal of the State but leads to its seeking more varied means of action involving new partners.

a) Clarifying and maintaining the essential role of the State and other public bodies

18. At a time when the proper role of the State is the subject of much debate, it is necessary to clarify and reaffirm the essential responsibilities of government in the area of social policy.

19. In the first place, the State acts as guarantor of human rights and participatory democracy.

20. Secondly, the State restores a sufficient degree of equity in the distribution of wealth through mechanisms of solidarity such as redistributive

taxation and social security. Social security systems, indeed, are one of the most powerful institutional expressions of social solidarity. The establishment or maintenance of a well developed social security system, based on solidarity is seen as one of the principal means of fostering social cohesion. A strategy for social cohesion must therefore have as a main aim the strengthening of sustainable social security systems, especially at a time when many questions are posed about their future development and financing.

21. Thirdly, the State acts to protect vulnerable groups at risk of social exclusion. Social protection systems therefore provide not only social security, which is designed to protect all members of society against life's risks, but also social services for all and social assistance for those in particular need.

22. Although these responsibilities of the State remain essential, the manner in which the State fulfils them is changing. In many countries there is a tendency to bring social services closer to the people by devolving responsibility to regional and local authorities. In addition to this, governments increasingly find that the best way of facilitating access to social rights is by working in partnership with civil society in order to achieve shared goals of social cohesion. The well-established tradition of dialogue with the social partners needs to be maintained and adapted to changing circumstances. A newer development is the growing partnership between government and non-governmental organisations in dealing with social problems. In identifying and meeting new social needs, NGO's can often play a valuable complementary role alongside official bodies in ensuring access to social rights for the more vulnerable members of society.

23. These various changes in concepts and methods of governance imply a move away from the omnicompetent State to new concepts of governance through partnership, or government as a form of contract between citizens and the State. It is necessary, however, to agree on ethical principles to ensure that partnership genuinely contributes to social cohesion.

b) *Integrating the social dimension into economic life*

24. Economic growth makes it easier to achieve social cohesion. Economic development must, however, be seen as a means of achieving the more fundamental goal of human development. In this spirit, the international community has committed itself to eliminating poverty and to achieving sustainable development. Particularly since the Johannesburg Summit, it has been increasingly recognised that sustainable economic development depends on sustainable social development as well as a sustainable environment. For these reasons, economic policy and social policy need to be brought into a much closer relationship with one another than has been customary.

25. Sound macro-economic policies are of crucial importance in establishing stable conditions for growth. They cannot, however, be directed solely by market mechanisms without risking damaging social consequences. Market economies, like any other economic system, produce inequalities in wealth and social status and at present we see a growth of such inequalities in many European countries. Such disparities will be tolerated as long as people feel that they have equality of opportunity to improve their situation. If, however, the differences become too flagrant, and if, above all, the less privileged feel that they have little real hope of bettering themselves, that they are trapped in a situation of poverty and social exclusion, that they have no stake in society because society has nothing to offer them, then socio-economic disparities will start to put social cohesion seriously at risk.

26. In a globalising economy, all countries, but especially those undergoing macro-economic stabilisation programmes, may come under pressure to cut social protection. While social protection needs to be economically sustainable, it must also be recognised that social expenditure, by creating the basis for stable and sustainable societies, is a wise investment for future economic sustainability and not just a burdensome cost.

27. Social cohesion also contributes to economic development. A stable society is a favourable environment for business enterprise. The market economy depends on having people with money to spend; poverty is not a sound basis for economic development. In other words, what is good for social cohesion is also good for business.

28. The right to work is a basic human right and a key element of participation in society. Access to employment for all and the promotion of decent employment are important factors in combating poverty and exclusion. Moreover, social protection systems, in addition to their traditional role of replacing income now try to assist as many people as possible to move from a situation of passive welfare dependence to active participation in the economy. In a knowledge-based economy, investment in human resources is one of the most crucial areas of investment for future economic growth. However, a succession of precarious, short-term jobs cannot be considered as being conducive to social cohesion if it results in social exclusion.

29. The social responsibility of economic actors is emerging as a crucial question for post-industrial societies. There is growing interest in the question of the social responsibility of business and numerous instruments are being developed to put this responsibility into practice. It is important to develop ways of measuring the impact of economic activity on social cohesion as well as legal and financial mechanisms for recognising and encouraging such contributions (e.g. certification, tax advantages).

30. We are also beginning to see a concern on the part of individuals to develop new forms of economic action capable of contributing to social cohesion. People are using the means of action that are open to them as individuals such as their power as consumers and the way in which they use their savings.

31. In all this, the challenge is to find ways of ensuring that the market economy contributes to social cohesion and does not function so as to exclude those who are least attractive as consumers. This is a vital issue at a time when more and more areas of life, including in some cases utilities formerly provided as public services, are governed by market mechanisms.

c) Developing a new ethic of social responsibility

32. A society is cohesive when people accept responsibility for one another. The values of present-day European society are not always conducive to this. Thus, an exclusive stress on the rights of the individual cannot form a sufficient basis for social cohesion. Individual rights will be best protected in societies where people feel a shared responsibility for the rights and welfare of all. Moreover, the market economy puts a high value on competition and may tend to neglect the social virtues of cooperation. An exclusive preoccupation with market values leads people to look to their own interests rather than to the interests and needs of others; it fails to teach the values of trust and solidarity that are fundamental to social cohesion.

33. All have a part to play in developing the sense of mutual responsibility and interdependence that is necessary for social cohesion. Civil society organisations, the education system and parents all need to develop and put into practice a new kind of active citizenship. Thus, in bringing up children, parents should pass on to them a sense of social responsibility, which should indeed be demonstrated in family life. Business and the media should recognise a responsibility for the social consequences of their activities. Banks and financial institutions need to be alive to the ethical implications of investment.

34. This is a matter of rebuilding a sense of society, of belonging, of commitment to shared social goals. This is not always easy in a culture which places such emphasis on the personal fulfilment of the individual and where market

values and consumerism, powerfully promoted by sections of the media, tend to erode broader solidarities. Through its social cohesion strategy, the Council of Europe will seek to contribute to reflection on these issues.

d) Supporting families and encouraging family solidarity

35. Human beings find their fulfilment above all in relationship with others. A social cohesion strategy, while fully respecting the autonomy of the private sphere and of civil society, must therefore seek to be supportive of families and other networks and relationships which bring individuals together into wider circles of solidarity.

36. Families are the place where social cohesion is first experienced and learnt. They play a crucial part in preparing children for life in society. They are often called upon to support elderly people as they become more dependent. They are also the place of last-resort social protection in time of need. Changes in values and behaviour are resulting in a much greater variety of family patterns than in the past, but this does not in any way detract from the social role of families, which remains as fundamental as ever. In a complex and changing society, it is necessary to support families in fulfilling their functions. In particular, parents need help in counteracting harmful social and market pressures, in reconciling the demands of work and family life and in adapting to a situation in which children are seen as bearers of their own rights as individuals.

37. Society has a special responsibility towards those who, for one reason or another, cannot count on the support and protection of a family or other social network. The rights and dignity of children or elderly people in need of care have to be the subject of special attention. Traditional care institutions play a diminishing role and it is important to develop alternative means of care wherever possible.

e) Encouraging participation in civil society

38. Individuals participate in many other networks and institutions that help to knit society together. Despite a lessened propensity on the part of many to commit themselves to group activity, political parties, trades unions and religious bodies continue to engage many people in broad social networks. Charitable, sports and cultural associations, together with organisations for children and young people, play a particularly important part in building social cohesion and engage many people in socially useful voluntary activities. Governments should create a favourable environment for encouraging such bodies and activities, which often make suitable partners for government-sponsored programmes to build social cohesion.

39. Non-governmental organisations need to be recognised and provided with support in order to help them play a more active part in strengthening social cohesion.

Part II: Putting the Strategy into practice

40. Building and maintaining social cohesion in Europe is, first and foremost, the duty of member states. The role of the Council of Europe is to inspire and support their efforts by means of its standard-setting instruments, its intergovernmental cooperation machinery and targeted activities designed to assist individual states or groups of states in putting Council of Europe standards and recommendations into practice.

41. Primary responsibility for developing and implementing the Council of Europe's social cohesion strategy was given to a new intergovernmental body, the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS), which was set up at the end of 1998. Building on the first five years work of the CDCS, the Committee of Ministers has now approved this revised strategy to guide the Council of Europe's social cohesion work during the next few years.

42. Recognising that social cohesion can only be built by means of integrated measures involving many partners, the CDCS has worked closely with other Council of Europe bodies such as the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Regional and Local Authorities of the Council of Europe, other intergovernmental committees, the organs of the European Social Charter and international non-governmental organisations with participatory status. Moreover, good working relations have been developed with other international bodies working in related fields. In particular, some work has been pursued as part of Joint Programmes with the European Commission, and the ILO is closely associated with the work on social security.

43. As an international financial institution working for social development, the Council of Europe Development Bank plays a major part in giving practical effect to the strategy for social cohesion.

Principal achievements
of the first five years

44. The CDCS considers that the key to eliminating poverty and social exclusion is providing real access to basic social rights, in particular to social protection, employment, housing, health and education. All too often it is those who are in greatest need who have the most difficulty in benefiting from these rights. A major programme of work on access to social rights has led to the adoption of policy guidelines on access to social protection, access to employment and access to housing; a comprehensive Report on access to social rights; and a recommendation of the Committee of Ministers. The CDCS sees this work as a central part of its programme.

45. The CDCS has major responsibilities in the field of social security. It has in particular the task of monitoring the application by Contracting Parties of the European Code of Social Security and, when it comes into effect, the (revised) European Code of Social Security. A big effort is under way to prepare for ratification of the Code by the newer member states. It is likely that several countries of Central and Eastern Europe will ratify the Code in the next few years. In countries where ratification seems a more distant prospect, the emphasis has been on trying to ensure that reforms of social security are compatible with ratification at some time in the future. The CDCS also attaches much importance to the co-ordination of social security systems and helps member states in this field.

46. The CDCS also collects comparative information on social security systems and serves as a forum for debate on current issues and challenges in this field. This is done through the work of the Committee of Experts on Standard-Setting Instruments in the Field of Social Security (CS-CO) and through the MISSCEO information system, which has been greatly improved and coordinated with the MISSOC network of the European Union.

47. A Programme for Children was successfully completed and led on to the creation of a new body, the Forum for Children and Families. The Forum brings together a very wide range of actors in this field in order to examine such topics as child labour, corporal punishment of children and the role of Ombudsmen for children. A two-year programme of work, concentrating on child day-care, children at risk and in care, and children, democracy and participation has just been completed.

48. The CDCS is also seeking to develop operational tools for monitoring progress in social cohesion. A Methodological Guide for the use of social cohesion indicators has been presented to member states. Work is now in progress to test out this methodology in selected countries and regions.

49. The Committee has organised forums for reflection on the following aspects of social cohesion:

➜   Forum 2001: New social demands and governance
➜   Forum 2002: New social responsibility in a globalising world:
       the role of the state, the market and civil society
➜   Forum 2003: Social cohesion or public security:
       how should Europe respond to collective feelings of insecurity?

These annual events, bringing together a large number of eminent speakers, have enabled the Committee to refine considerably its concept of social cohesion.

50. Alongside these intergovernmental activities, an extensive programme of bilateral activities has been developed, essentially for transition countries, in order to provide advice and assistance in applying the social cohesion strategy of the Council of Europe in the particular circumstances of individual member states or sub-regional groups of states. In connection with the Stability Pact Initiative for Social Cohesion, an extensive cooperation programme has been developed with the countries of South-East Europe. Numerous activities have been implemented in the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the countries of the South Caucasus. Emphasis has been placed on access to social rights (especially employment and social protection), children in care and vagrant children, and dependent elderly people.

Priorities for the coming years

51. In order to assist the member states in strengthening social cohesion and combating poverty and social exclusion, the European Committee for Social Cohesion considers that its work during the coming years must concentrate on the following priority areas.

52. Improving access for all members of society to fundamental social rights as laid down in the Revised European Social Charter will remain at the centre of the social cohesion strategy. This goal will be pursued by promoting the ratification by member states of the Revised European Social Charter (including the collective complaints procedure) and by developing intergovernmental activities in the following areas:

a. Social protection

Efforts will continue to extend the coverage of the standards laid down in the European Code of Social Security and the revised European Code of Social Security to all member states which are in a position to accept them. At the same time, the CDCS will monitor reforms in social security and consider what kind of changes are

required in order to meet demographic and financial challenges without damaging social cohesion.

b. Social services

The CDCS will draw up recommendations designed to ensure that personal social services become more effective in meeting the complex needs of people in situations of social exclusion or at risk of exclusion.

c. Employment

Work will continue on promoting access to employment, and on improving the performance of public employment services, the quality of employment and cooperation with the social partners as one of the key methods of preventing and combating exclusion.

d. Housing

The CDCS will extend its work on access to housing, with a particular concentration on those member states where housing problems are especially acute.

53. The work on *children and families* will continue within a perspective of integrated approaches to children's rights in accordance with Council of Europe conventions and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The emphasis of the activities within the Strategy for Social Cohesion will be on good, effective parenting for the full and harmonious development of the child in modern society.

54. Likewise, the needs of *elderly persons* will be the focus of specific activities. The CDCS will also be looking to examine the broader implications of ageing for sustainable social development in European societies. This will raise issues in many fields, such as employment, social protection and social services.

55. ● Throughout its work, the European Committee for Social Cohesion will be looking for effective ways of:

a. *mainstreaming social cohesion into the programmes of other Council of Europe bodies.* It will look for opportunities of cooperation with several other intergovernmental bodies but especially those responsible for health, migration, population, people with disabilities and gender equality. Given the stress in the social cohesion strategy on partnership, links with the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and NGO's will be maintained and strengthened.

b. *applying the results of the Strategy for Social Cohesion in member states.* Intergovernmental cooperation in each of the priority fields mentioned above will be accompanied by activities designed to assist member states in applying the recommendations of the Council of Europe and testing out their validity in the situations of particular countries and regions. In this connection, every effort will be made to build on existing cooperation with the Council of Europe Development Bank as a means of developing and financing projects on the ground.

c. *continuing to develop the concept of social cohesion.* By means of seminars and expert panels, and drawing too on the socio-demographic studies carried out by the European Population Committee, the conceptual basis of the Strategy for Social Cohesion will be continually refined and extended so as to respond to new challenges and to integrate innovative methods and approaches. For example, further work will be carried out in order to help citizens, the business and financial worlds and civil society to assume greater responsibility for developing more cohesive societies.

d. *hearing the voice of the excluded:* NGO's working directly with people in situations of poverty and exclusion have shown how the voice of the powerless can contribute ideas of real value to the policy-making process. The CDCS will seek ways of bringing this about in the context of its own work and of facilitating citizen participation in general.

e. *sharing the European approach to social cohesion with other parts of the world:* the CDCS will look for opportunities of participating in major international conferences and cooperating with the United Nations and regional intergovernmental organisations and interested non-member states.

Evaluation and revision of the Strategy for Social Cohesion

56. The European Committee for Social Cohesion will each year re-examine this list of priorities, evaluate progress so far, and consider whether the priorities need to be revised. On the basis of this assessment, it will draw up its proposals for activities to be included in the next year's intergovernmental programme. The Strategy for Social Cohesion will be thoroughly reviewed in not more than five years time on the basis of an in-depth evaluation of results and their impact in member states.

Measuring social cohesion

57. The social cohesion indicators resulting from the methodological work carried out by the Council of Europe in recent years will be put into practice on a voluntary basis in order to provide both the Council of Europe and its member states with practical means of measuring the progress of social cohesion.

Appendix

Publications and main reports

- *Diversity and cohesion: new challenges for the integration of immigrants and minorities*
  (Jan Niessen). July 2000, ISBN 92-871-4345-5

- *Innovatory social policies in the city, proceedings.*
  Oslo Conference, 22-24 June 2000, Volumes 1 and 2, publication - July 2001, Council of Europe.

- *Access to social rights in Europe,* Report drafted by Mary Daly and adopted by the CDCS in May 2002[1]. ISBN 92-871-4985-2.

- *Improving the quality of life of elderly persons in situations of dependency,* Report and conclusions of the Group of Specialists (CS-QV) - (August 2002) ISBN 92-871-5000-1.

- *Conference on access to social rights*
  (14-15 November 2002, Saint Julian, Malta), final documents, July 2003.

- *Access to social rights for people with disabilities in Europe*
  (Marc Maudinet, 2003). ISBN 92-871-5328-0.

- *" We ought to be giants " - Promoting access to employment.*
  Manual published by the Ministry of Employment and Social Development of the Russian Federation and the Council of Europe (available only in English and Russian). Manual drafted by Bertil Oskarsson (2003).

- *Final activity report of the Group of Specialists on Access to Housing*
  (CS-LO), CDCS(2001)61.

- *Final activity report of the Group of Specialists on Access to Social Protection*
  (CS-PS), CDCS(2001)62.

1 Available in 18 languages: Armenian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croat, Czech, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Moldovan, Polish, Portuguese,Romanian, Russian and Spanish.

- *Final activity report of the Committee of Experts on Promoting Access to Employment*
  (CS-EM), CDCS(2001)63.

- *Report: expert reflection on pathways to social development,*
  28-30 May 2001, Portugal (organised by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in collaboration with the Council of Europe's Directorate General III - Social Cohesion - and the North-South Centre).

- *Report: seminar on the corporal punishment of children within the family*
  CS-Forum (2002)13 Addendum.

Series of publications: Trends in Social Cohesion

Promoting the policy debate on social exclusion from a comparative perspective,
Volume No. 1, December 2001, Council of Europe, ISBN 92-871-4920-8.

Trends and development in old-age pension and health-care financing in Europe during the 1990s, Volume No. 2, March 2002, Council of Europe, ISBN 92-871-4921-6.

Using social benefits to combat poverty and social exclusion – opportunities and problems from a comparative perspective. Matti Heikkilä and Susan Kuivalainen, Volume No. 3, September 2002, Council of Europe, ISBN 92-871-4937-2.

New social demands: the challenges of governance, Volume N. 4, November 2002, Council of Europe, ISBN 92-871-5012-5.

Combating poverty and access to social rights in the countries of the south Caucasus: a territorial approach,
Volume No. 5, March 2003, Council of Europe, ISBN 92-871-5096-6.

The state and new social responsibilities in a globalising world,
Volume No. 6, June 2003, Council of Europe, ISBN 92-871-5168-7.

Civil society and new social responsibilities based on ethical foundations,
Volume No. 7, November 2003, Council of Europe, ISBN 92-871-5309-4.

Electronic Bulletin *" Social cohesion: developments "*
published since end 2000 – 11 Ordinary editions and 3 special editions (migration, employment, people with disabilities).

European Social Charter (selected recent publications)

Conclusions XVI-2 – European Social Charter, European Committee of Social Rights, Vol.1, 2003, ISBN 92-871-5243-8 and Vol.2, 2003, ISBN 92-871-5245-4.

Conclusions 2003 – European Social Charter (revised), European Committee of Social Rights, Vol. 1, 2003, ISBN 92-871-5338-8 and Vol. 2, 2003, ISBN 92-871-5341-8.

Collective complaints procedure – Decisions on admissibility, 1998 - 2003, European Committee of Social Rights.

Collective complaints procedure – Decisions on the merits, Vol. 1 (1999-2000) and Vol. 2 (2001 – 2003), European Committee of Social Rights.

Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to member states

Rec(99)9 on the role of sport in furthering social cohesion, 22/04/99.

Rec(2001)1 on social workers, 17/01/2001.

Rec(2001)12 on the adaptation of health care services to the demand for health care services of people in marginal situations, 10/10/2001.

Rec(2002)8 on child day-care, 18/09/2002.

Rec(2003)2 on neighbourhood services in disadvantaged urban areas, 13/02/2003.

Rec(2003)19 on improving access to social rights, 24/09/2003.

Major Events

Conference of European Ministers responsible for family affairs.
Towards a child-friendly society. Stockholm, 14-16 June 1999.

Conference: *Towards social development for all: a European strategy based on co-operation and partnership.*
Irish Presidency / Council of Europe, 17-18 January 2000.

Conference: *Innovatory social policies in the city,* Oslo, 22-24 June 2000.

Conference: Programme for children. *Children at the Dawn of a New Millennium,* Cyprus, 27-29 November 2000.

Conference of European Ministers responsible for family affairs. *Reconciling working and family life.* Portoroz (Slovenia), 21-22 June 2001.

FORUM 2001 *New social demands and governance,*
Strasbourg, 18-19 October 2001

Conference on *The role of social services in sustainable social development,*
Berlin, 25-26 October 2001 (co-organised with the German authorities).

8th Conference of European Ministers responsible for social security
- *Implications of labour migration for social security systems in European countries,*
- Bratislava, 21-23 May 2002.

FORUM 2002 *New social responsibility in a globalising world: the role of the state, the market and civil society,* Strasbourg, 2-3 October 2002.

Conference on *Access to social rights,* Malta, 14-15 November 2002.

FORUM 2003 *Social cohesion or public security: how should Europe respond to collective feelings of insecurity?* - Strasbourg, 23-24 October 2003.

Conference of European Ministers responsible for employment in south-east Europe, Bucharest, Romania, 30-31 October 2003.