

[CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY]

The Future of the Protection of Social Rights in Europe
Brussels Conference 12 and 13 February
Belgian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe

INTRODUCTION by
Mr Tom AUWERS, Director General
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Mr Secretary General,

Ms the Commissioner,

Ms the Minister,

Thank you for your contributions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome in Brussels. Thank you for being here.

I will be brief in this introduction, about the objectives of our conference.

The contribution of the Belgian Presidency is to make possible the discussions on the theme of the future of social rights in Europe, as follow up of the Turin's process, which could be considered as an international alliance focused on the revival of the social rights in Europe.

The Belgian Presidency will strive to ensure that such processes continue notably through the conference of today.



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More than 34 Members States are represented, the Council of Europe, the European Union, the United Nations, the ILO and other international organisations are also represented at high level. Excellent academics, international ngo's and national ones are present (and students). We are all part of the club of social rights in Europe.

The objective of the conference is to raise several questions and trying to answer them:

1. what's the evolution of social rights in Europe in our socio-economic context ?
2. How can we build more coherence in our social policies ?
3. And what could be a possible Roadmap on these issues ?

Allow me present you our programme for these **two days**.

Our **first session** will expose the international situation related to social protection and labour law. It will give us the context necessary for the remainder of our programme.

Session 2 will assess the response of human rights bodies from the Council of Europe to the economic and financial crisis.

Session 3 is about mapping the developments related to social rights that go beyond the Council of Europe. What are the answers of the ILO, the UN and the European Court of Justice in this context ?



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Session 4 of Tomorrow will seek to stage a discussion on the relationship between the EU and the Council of Europe in the area of social rights.

The **Round Tables** will gather political and social actors soliciting their feedback on the discussions.

The **Conclusion session** will give the floor to the General Rapporteur of the Turin's conference and Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Mr Nicoletti and the concluding remarks will be given by Mr Kris Peeters, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Employment and Economy in Belgium.

We hope that all this work would contribute to the Brussels Document.

We encourage active participation of the audience whilst respecting the limited time before us (despite the fact that we already are delayed).

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Master of Ceremony, Manuel Paolillo, one of the source of inspiration behind this event.

Tweeting is encouraged : official hashtag is **#coe2015be**.

Have an excellent stay in Belgium and work and let's begin with session 1

Thank you.



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