



DECLARATION
ON THE OCCASION OF
THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

Acting together to eradicate extreme poverty in Europe

Strasbourg, 17 October 2012

The Presidents of the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe,

Reaffirming their commitment to human dignity and the protection of all human rights, which are universal, indivisible and interdependent;

Stressing that the effective enjoyment of human rights must be guaranteed to everyone without discrimination;

Concerned about the situation of people living in extreme poverty, which arises when the economic, social and cultural effects of poverty come together and are long lasting, depriving these people of any prospect of the effective exercise of their rights in the foreseeable future;

Observing that it is the people belonging to the most disadvantaged social groups who are the hardest hit by the economic crisis and often also by fiscal austerity measures;

Particularly concerned about the damaging effects of poverty of children and their families, which deprives children of equal opportunities for their development and leads to the intergenerational transmission of poverty;

Convinced that, in order to eradicate extreme poverty in all relevant policy areas at international, regional, national and local levels, an approach based on human rights should be applied;

Considering that a democratic society requires initiating policies that recognise and value every person's potential to improve the quality of life and to contribute to the common good;

Convinced that efforts to ensure access to rights and justice as well as practical and effective exercise of these rights by people living in extreme poverty will be fully effective only within a comprehensive, consistent and long-term policy with the participation of the people concerned;

Considering that through its legal instruments, including the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter, opened for signature in 1961 and revised in 1996, the Council of Europe has established a set of European standards relevant to the eradication of extreme poverty;

Considering that through recommendations and thematic resolutions, the Council of Europe has already established a European framework which should ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by all people living in extreme poverty in Europe;

Highlighting the relevance of the Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights of the United Nations Human Rights Council;

Aware of the need and urgency of taking further steps in the fight against extreme poverty,

Undertake, each within their respective competences and specific nature, to work together to:

- formulate and implement policies and measures to promote the eradication of extreme poverty, based on the values of dignity, freedom, participation, equality and solidarity, with a particular emphasis on children and their families ;

- create and develop the necessary conditions for people experiencing extreme poverty to participate effectively in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies and measures for the eradication of poverty,

- promote appropriate measures, in particular in the following areas, while following a multidimensional, structural, progressive and long-term approach:

1. participation in political and public life
2. autonomy and independence
3. family life
4. education and culture
5. housing and energy
6. health: prevention and care, food, water
7. employment and vocational training
8. social protection and proximity services
9. access to justice and protection against violence
10. awareness and solidarity of society

taking into account the circumstances and specific needs of each age group as well as family, social and territorial situations;

- establish effective mechanisms for the monitoring, evaluation and adjustment of policies and measures,

- strengthen cooperation within the Council of Europe by encouraging the involvement of all the relevant organs and entities, and by ensuring that the eradication of extreme poverty be included in the programmes and activities which promote human rights,

- mobilise all stakeholders, such as administrative bodies at national, regional and local level, parliaments, national human rights institutions and ombudsperson offices, the media, associations, universities, firms;

Call on Member States that have not yet ratified the Revised European Social Charter, including Articles 30 (right to protection against poverty and social exclusion) and 31 (right to housing), to consider doing so and to accept the system of collective complaints.

Council of Europe texts concerning the fight against extreme poverty and human rights

Committee of Ministers

- CM/AS(81)Rec893 Reply to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 893 (1980) on Poverty in Europe
- Recommendation Rec(93)1 on Effective access to the law and to justice for the very poor
- CM/Del/Dec/Act(93)486/23 Supplementary reply to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1196 (1992) on Severe poverty and social exclusion: towards guaranteed minimum levels of resources
- CM(2000)62 rev. 26 April 2000 Draft political message from the Committee of Ministers to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (Geneva, 26-30 June 2000) “Towards social development for all: a European strategy based on co-operation and partnership”
- Recommendation Rec(2001)12 on the adaptation of health care services to the demand for health care and health care services of people in marginal situations
- Recommendation Rec(2001)19 on the participation of citizens in local public life
- Recommendation Rec(2003)19 on improving access to social rights
- Final declaration of the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Social Cohesion, Moscow 26 and 27 February 2009
- Guidelines on Improving the situation of low-income workers and on the empowerment of people experiencing extreme poverty, 5 May 2010
- New Strategy for Social Cohesion, 7 July 2010
- Council of Europe Action Plan for Social Cohesion, 7 July 2010
- CM/AS(2010)Rec1912 Reply to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1912 (2010) Investing in family cohesion as a development factor in times of crisis
- Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the 50th anniversary of the European Social Charter, 12 October 2011
- CM/AS(2011)Rec1963 Reply to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1963 (2011) on Combating poverty
- CM/AS(2011)Rec1958 Reply to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1958 (2011) on Monitoring of commitments concerning social rights

- CM/AS(2012)Rec1976 Reply to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1976 (2011) on The role of parliaments in the consolidation and development of social rights in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

- Recommendation 893 (1980) Poverty in Europe
- Recommendation 1196 (1992)1 Severe poverty and social exclusion: towards guaranteed minimum levels of resources
- Recommendation 1355 (1998) Fighting social exclusion and strengthening social cohesion in Europe
- Resolution 1720 (2010) Investing in family cohesion as a development factor in times of crisis
- Recommendation 1963 (2011) Combating poverty
- Resolution 1800 (2011) Combating poverty
- Resolution 1824 (2011) The role of parliaments in the consolidation and development of social rights in Europe
- Resolution 1884 (2012) Austerity measures - a danger for democracy and social rights
- Resolution 1885 (2012) The young generation sacrificed: social, economic and political implications of the financial crisis

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

- Resolution 243 (1993) Citizenship and extreme poverty: the Charleroi Declaration
- Resolution 41 (1996) Health and citizenship: care for the poorest in Europe
- Recommendation 154 (2004) Fighting severe poverty in towns: the role of local authorities
- Resolution 182 (2004) Fighting severe poverty in towns: the role of local authorities
- Recommendation 210 (2007) The evolution of extreme poverty in European towns
- Resolution (2007) The evolution of extreme poverty in European towns

Conference of INGOs

- Recommendation du 25 June 2008 on the adoption of the Guiding principles « Extreme poverty and human rights (UNHRC) by the Council of Europe member States
- Recommendation CONF/PLE(2009)REC8 Combating poverty