

Speech of Petia MOEVA  
Vice-Chair of the European Platform of Social Cohesion (PECS)  
to the GR-SOC  
27 September 2016

Madam Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I would first like to thank you for inviting me to present the work of the European Platform of Social Cohesion and to exchange views afterwards.
2. As Vice-Chair of the Platform, I replace the Chair, Mr Alexander Preobrazhenskiy, who has given up his mandate following a change of functions.
3. You have received the abridged report of the first meeting of the Platform, which took place in June earlier this year, and I would like to highlight three points:

I. Participation

4. From the point of view of participation, the implementation of the terms of reference of the Platform started very positively: 44 Member States were present at the meeting, as were two observer States.
5. I would like to recall that social cohesion is, according to the Council of Europe,<sup>1</sup> the ability of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members; it is based on four pillars: 1/ Reinvesting in social rights and a cohesive society; 2/ Building a Europe of responsibilities that are both shared and social; 3/ Strengthening representation and democratic decision making and expanding social dialogue and civic engagement; 4/ Building a secure future for all.
6. As you know, one of the goals of the Platform is to ensure the mainstreaming of social cohesion in all activities of the Council of Europe and virtually all relevant institutions and committees listed in the terms of reference attended and demonstrated a real desire for cooperation.
7. To close the chapter 'participation', the European Union - including Eurofound and FRA - and UNHCR, were also present and expressed their interest in collaborating with the Platform, particularly on issues of common interest.

II. Work Programme for 2016-2017

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<sup>1</sup> New Strategy and Council of Europe Action Plan for Social Cohesion, 2010.

8. The Platform held an exchange of views on recent developments within member States and discussed in detail the best way to implement its terms of reference, within the limits of the resources allocated, with a special focus on mainstreaming within the Council of Europe. Promoting Social cohesion remains a challenge for all the member states. We made a joint effort to capture the air of time and to meet the needs. This is the expression of our responsibility and good will to work for the implementation of the European Social Charter (revised); to identify the main obstacles faced in terms of access to and enjoyment of economic and social rights with particular attention to youth, vulnerable or disadvantaged, and to communicate with committees concerned the results of this work.

*A targeted and concrete approach has necessarily been taken.*

9. The Platform has therefore opted to organise its work around three areas directly linked to its mandate, each supported by a working group. These are:

- ⇒ Mainstreaming social cohesion in the Council of Europe (Group 1), aiming in particular to assess the impact of the activities of bodies and committees of the Council of Europe in order to achieve social cohesion and enjoyment social rights;
- ⇒ Promoting the exchange of good practices and innovative approaches (Group 2), which (through a questionnaire) should identify good practices and innovative approaches not only in the Member States but also in relevant international institutions and other stakeholders;
- ⇒ The examination of new trends and challenges in specific areas such as those outlined in the mandate (Group 3), in particular to address the future prospects and the role of the Council of Europe in this domain.

### III. Working methods

10. The next meeting of the Platform will take place in September of next year. In the meantime, the working groups will advance their work through the use of collaborative IT workspaces.

11. The participation of representatives of the Platform as observers in the relevant committees of the Council of Europe may facilitate the implementation of its mandate on the mainstreaming approach to social cohesion. This afternoon, for example, I will attend the Seminar on the implementation of the Recommendation on the access to social rights of young people of disadvantaged neighborhoods [CM/Rec (2015)3] ; tomorrow and the day after tomorrow; I will take part in the first meeting of the Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF).

12. The first edition of the Newsletter has been submitted to the Platform at its first meeting and was officially out on 1 July. It will be issued monthly on the 1st day of every month (except for August due to summer break). The second issue was therefore published on 1 September and the third will be released on 1 October. You are probably aware of this as all Permanent Representations are normally included in the mailing list.

13. A web page on the European Social Charter of the site is dedicated to the Platform; the relevant information and documents will be available there as well as a collaborative space for working groups.

14. Finally, through this, the Platform will of course also contribute to the interim report of the Secretary General on progress and results achieved in this area - after the end of the first year - and to the final report at the end of 2017, as foreseen in its mandate. Another outcome would be a Declaration to the Committee of Ministers on future prospects and the role of the Council of Europe in this domain.

15. The outcomes of the work of the Platform are expected to bring added value to the Council of Europe's policy in favour of social cohesion.

Thank you for your attention and I look forward to answering your questions.