

01 December 2022

CCS(2022)11

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL COHESION (CCS)

Second meeting

24 November 2022

**Hybrid Meeting – Room 10, Palais de l' Europe
Strasbourg, France**

Abridged Report

I. OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The European Committee for Social Cohesion (CCS) held its second meeting on 24 November 2022, in Strasbourg (France) and via videoconference. The agenda of the meeting is appended to this report (Appendix 1). The Chair of the CCS opened the meeting by welcoming the successful seminar “Social Cohesion: Challenges anew” held on 23 November 2022, where topical issues of Committee’s interest, such as post-pandemic recovery, social and economic consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine and transition to a green economy, were discussed (Appendix 2).

2. The Committee took note of the opening speech and welcoming address by Mr Jan Malinowski, Head, Department of Social Rights, DGI. Mr Malinowski emphasised that the second meeting of the Committee constituted an opportunity to think about the potential and enhanced visibility of the Committee. Special attention was paid to the review process of the Terms of Reference of the Committee, as undertaken by the relevant ad hoc working party on improving the European Social Charter system (GT-CHARTÉ).

II. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA AND ORDER OF BUSINESS

3. The Committee adopted the agenda and the Order of Business, as appear in documents CCS(2022)9 and CCS(2022)OJ2.

III. STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARIAT

4. The Committee took note of the concise information on matters of general information provided by Ms Margarita Galstyan, Secretary to the CCS. Particular interest was paid to the work undertaken on artificial intelligence, as of relevance to the CCS report on Digitalisation and IT Developments, adopted during the last CCS meeting.

IV. REVIEW OF PROGRESS: WORK PLAN FOR 2022-2023

5. The Committee took note of the Progress Review of the Work Plan for 2022-2023, as it appears in document CCS(2022)2-rev.

6. The Committee noted that the progress in the work of the Committee respected the timeline previously set in the work plan.

V. APPROVAL OF THE REPORT ON CHALLENGES RELATED TO SOCIAL COHESION IN IMPLEMENTING THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

7. The final draft of the Report on Challenges Related to Social Cohesion in Implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals was presented by Mr Lauri Leppik, the author.

8. The Committee approved the said Report, as it appears in document CCS(2022)5.

VI. DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT REPORT ON TRANSITION TO A GREEN ECONOMY: A REVIEW OF DISTRIBUTIONAL EFFECTS IN EUROPE

9. The draft Report on Transition to the Green Economy: a Review of Distributional Effects in Europe was presented by Mr Philip von Brockdorff, the author.

10. The Committee exchanged views on the draft report, as it appears in document CCS(2022)10. The draft report was positively received by the Committee.

11. The Committee decided to provide written comments to the report by 8 December 2022, with a view to adopting the report at the next CCS meeting in 2023.

VII. APPOINTMENT OF A MEMBER OF THE BUREAU, A RAPPORTEUR ON GENDER EQUALITY, A RAPPORTEUR ON ROMA AND TRAVELLER ISSUES AND RAPPORTEUR ON CHILDRENS RIGHTS

Appointment of a Bureau member

12. The Committee appointed Mr Alfredo Ferrante (Italy) as member of the Bureau for the period 2022-2025.

Appointment of a Rapporteur on Gender Equality

13. The Committee appointed Ms Kristina Hovhannisyan (Armenia) as Rapporteur on Gender Equality.

Appointment of a Rapporteur on Roma and Traveller Issues

14. The Committee appointed Mr Tamás Szondy (Hungary) as Rapporteur on Roma and Traveller Issues.

Appointment of a Rapporteur on Children's Rights

15. The Committee appointed Ms Evangelia Zerva (Greece) as Rapporteur on children's rights.

VIII. TRANSVERSAL ISSUES: THE RAPPORTEURS ARE INVITED TO PROVIDE UPDATES TO THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS.

A. YOUTH

B. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

C. RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

16. Mr Riccardo Venturini, Rapporteur on youth, and Ms Natalie Williamson, Rapporteur on rights of persons with disabilities, provided information on their respective fields. Particularly and following the suspension of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on the rights of persons with disabilities of the Council of Europe, the Rapporteur on rights of persons with disabilities focused on the work undertaken by the United Kingdom (UK) on supporting persons with disabilities into work.

17. The Committee took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the work undertaken by the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner on the rights of persons with disabilities and its relevance to the work of the Committee.

18. The Chair encouraged members of the Committee to update the Rapporteurs on matters of interest within the scope of social cohesion concerning their respective countries, on a regular basis.

IX. TOUR DU TABLE: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA OF SOCIAL COHESION

a. Recent developments within the Council of Europe

19. Information, relevant to the work of the CCS, was provided by the Secretariat of the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the field of Biomedicine and Health (CD-BIO). In particular, the draft CM Recommendation on equitable access to medical products and medical equipment in shortage situation, as well as the Guide to health literacy for equitable access to healthcare were presented.

20. The Committee took note with interest of the presentation by the representative of the Conference of INGOs and recognised the important role played by NGOs for social cohesion. The Committee stated that it looked forward to continued cooperation with the Conference of INGOs.

b. Recent developments in Member States

21. In addition to the document reflecting recent developments in member States, the Committee took note of the oral presentations by the Committee members on recent developments in the field of social cohesion and social rights, particularly in the light of the war in Ukraine.

22. The Committee suggested that members send written contributions on any developments in their respective States for inclusion in document CCS(2022)3-rev on recent developments by 8 December 2022.

X. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

23. The Committee took note of the possibility of holding an online event on social rights and social cohesion aspects.

XI. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT CCS MEETING

24. The Committee agreed to the proposal of the Chair to hold the next CCS meeting together with the Conference on transition of jobs: the platform economy and its impact on social cohesion in Malta, subject to any validation that may be needed.

25. Should the sanitary situation allow, the next CCS meeting will take place in hybrid or fully in person in June 2023, together with the Conference on transition of jobs: the platform economy and its impact on social cohesion in Malta.

XII. ADOPTION OF THE ABRIDGED REPORT

26. The Committee adopted the abridged report and invited to provide any additional comments to it by 8 December 2022.



Appendix 1

Strasbourg, 13 October 2022

CCS(2022)9

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL COHESION (CCS)

SECOND MEETING

Agenda

24 November 2022

Opening of the meeting: Thursday, 24 November 9:00
Closing of the meeting: Thursday, 24 November - 17:30

*Hybrid Meeting – Room 10, Palais de l'Europe
Strasbourg, France*

1.	Opening of the meeting	
2.	Adoption of the agenda and order of business	(CCS(2022)9 & CCS(2022)OJ2)
3.	Statement of the Chair and Secretariat	
4.	Review of progress: work plan for 2022-2023	(CCS(2022)2-rev)
5.	Approval of the report on challenges related to social cohesion in implementing the UN sustainable development goals <i>[with expert's participation]</i>	(CCS(2022)5)
6.	Discussion of the draft report on Transition to the green economy – social cohesion aspects: how the European green deal agenda interacts with the social cohesion <i>[with expert's participation]</i>	(CCS(2022)10)
7.	Appointment of a member of the Bureau, a Rapporteur on Gender Equality and a Rapporteur on Roma and Traveller Issues	
8.	<p>Transversal issues: The Rapporteurs are invited to provide updates on their respective fields.</p> <p>a. Youth</p> <p>b. Children's rights</p> <p>c. Rights of persons with disabilities</p>	
9.	Tour de table: Updates on latest developments in the area of social cohesion	(CCS(2022)3-rev)
10.	Any other business	
11.	Date and place of the next meeting	
12.	Approval of the abridged meeting report	(CCS(2022)11)

Appendix 2

Strasbourg, 23 November 2022

CCS(2022)8

Seminar

Social Cohesion: Challenges anew

Council of Europe, European Committee for Social Cohesion (CCS)

Hybrid Seminar, Strasbourg, France, and via videoconference

23 November 2022

Concept Note

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a very significant impact on the enjoyment of a wide range of social rights. The pandemic has posed new challenges to social cohesion in Council of Europe member states that will have lasting effects. This unprecedented crisis has shaken our countries' economy and put a strain on the social fabric of our societies, affecting labour markets, health services, education systems, among others.

This social and economic crisis has magnified systemic difficulties faced by healthcare systems in the vast majority of countries. It has also revealed that the states' response to the pandemic has sometimes brought about unintended consequences. For instance, lockdowns instituted for valid sanitary reasons, but without sufficient supporting and mitigating measures to accompany persons in vulnerable situations have had detrimental effects on them, such as a deepening of social isolation and difficulties in accessing basic health services. In addition, new working patterns (such as remote work, flexible working arrangements and digital economy jobs) introduced and/or accelerated during the pandemic have dramatically transformed our perceptions and the realities of labour relations. This has not gone without impacting families and communities, for example with increasingly blurred lines between professional and private lives and risks of working hours going unchecked. Certainly, the effects of the crisis have already shown to be uneven, with the persons in the most vulnerable situations (such as persons with disabilities, older persons, low-revenue and single-parent households, etc.) being disproportionately affected. All of this poses undeniable challenges in terms of social cohesion and, consequently, of governance in the social field at all levels, whether local or national.

At the same time, responses to the pandemic have triggered financial support plans in the areas of employment and healthcare on a significant scale in order to assist people in getting through this difficult period. The priority given to related social rights should serve as an inspiration for the development of bolder social cohesion policies that are rooted in the principles championed by the Council of Europe around human rights - including social rights -, democracy, and the rule of law, as well as the overarching values of respect and dignity. Investing in social rights and their delivery is instrumental to mitigating the adverse impact of the crisis and accelerating post-pandemic social and economic recovery and is therefore indispensable to social cohesion.

While still in the post-pandemic recovery stage, another crisis has hit Europe as a result of the Russian military aggression against Ukraine. The war in Ukraine has come with new challenges not only in Ukraine, but more widely on the continent. The conflict has triggered a new humanitarian crisis with millions of people fleeing the conflict, which raises significant social and economic challenges for neighbouring and other countries where large number of Ukrainians seek protection. Rapidly increasing prices of gas and disrupted import of wheat, sunflower oil and other basic products, which have resulted from the conflict, have had a significant economic impact in Europe. This has gone hand in hand with growing inflation and is placing persons in vulnerable situations at a particular risk as winter is upon us and energy prices are skyrocketing.

To mitigate the devastating consequences of the war, there is a need for immediate and targeted responses to guarantee refugees access to basic social rights, deal with economic challenges and preserve social cohesion.

At the same time, both the post-pandemic recovery and the energy crisis caused by the war in Ukraine open up opportunities for ambitious public policies to address climate change with a transition to a green economy. Climate change threatens us all but, as with the pandemic or the conflict, its most damaging impact is felt by persons in vulnerable situations. Human rights, not least social rights, offer some protection to guarantee a healthy environment for all and should be at the core of efforts to build a green economy from the ground up, including sustainable infrastructures. It is indeed crucial that this transition is done in a just manner that respects the human dignity of all and leaves no one behind.

Against this background, within the ambit of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CCS), the Council of Europe is organising a seminar, which will bring together national policy makers, civil servants and other stakeholders, to discuss the current challenges to the social cohesion in Europe and the possible responses thereto.

Objective

The main objective of the seminar is to discuss the current challenges to social cohesion, posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and the on-going war in Ukraine, and to suggest possible policy level responses to mitigate the social and economic consequences. It is also meant to be an opportunity for some forward-thinking about the benefits of the transition to a green economy as one of the ways of overcoming current and future crises.

It will consist of three successive panel sessions.

➤ Panel Session 1: Post-pandemic recovery: Challenges and prospects

During the first session, discussions will focus on the challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic and post pandemic recovery policies and practices. Participants will discuss (i) national policies, best practices and lessons learnt from the pandemic and (ii) challenges and prospects linked to the post-pandemic recovery phase and how to preserve social cohesion.

➤ Panel Session 2: Current challenges to social cohesion: the social and economic consequences of the russian aggression against Ukraine

During the second panel session discussions will focus on (i) the challenges to social cohesion resulting from the war in Ukraine. Participants will discuss social and economic problems emanating from this crisis. (ii) Discussions will also focus on the current situation of migration flows and how to integrate Ukrainians into receiving communities. Resilience, reconstruction and recovery plans will be discussed from the perspective of social and economic responses.

➤ Panel Session 3: Transition to a green economy

Third session will derive from the realisation, amplified by the energy crisis linked to the conflict, that (i) transition to a green economy has become a pressing need. But how do we ensure that transition to a green economy does not jeopardise social cohesion? (ii) Developing sustainable infrastructure for greening the economy is high on the agenda. In what way are countries and organisations responding to infrastructure development that is designed, implemented and maintained from a holistic perspective?"

Seminar

“Social Cohesion: Challenges anew”

Council of Europe, European Committee for Social Cohesion (CCS)

Wednesday, 23 November 2022, 9.00 – 17.00

Room 10, Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg, France
and via videoconference

PROGRAMME

9:00-9:15 **Registration of the participants**

9:15-9:45 **Opening and Welcome Address**

Mr Christophe POIREL, Director of Human Rights, Directorate
General Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe

Mr Joe GERADA, Advisor to the Minister for Social Policy and
Children's Rights, Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights
of Malta, and Chair of the European Committee for Social
Cohesion (CCS)

9:45-11:00 **Panel Session 1: Post-pandemic recovery: Challenges and
prospects**

*The main lessons learnt from the pandemic that will prepare us
better for the future in creating more resilient societies, with better
social cohesion, based on human rights – notably social rights -,
democracy and the rule of law. What are the challenges and
prospects for the post-Covid recovery? How can Council of Europe
member states embark on the path of recovery while fully
preserving social cohesion (e.g. by pursuing the Sustainable
Development Goals on poverty, health, education and
employment)?*

Moderator: Mr Joe GERADA, Advisor to the Minister for Social
Policy and Children's Rights, Ministry for Social Policy and
Children's Rights, Malta, and Chair of the European Committee for
Social Cohesion (CCS)

Speakers:

Dr Marie BRIGUGLIO, Senior Lecturer, University of Malta

Mr Olli E. KANGAS, PhD, Professor, Research Director,
Department of Social Sciences, University of Turku

Ms Mary DALY, PhD, Professor, University of Oxford

Dr Mario Thomas VASSALLO, Head of Department of Public Policy, Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy, University of Malta

Ms Tatiana PUIU, member of the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR)

11:00-11:15 Coffee Break

11:15-12:30 Panel Session 2: Current challenges to social cohesion: the social and economic consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine

The war in Ukraine has added another layer of disruption to our societies. Can the challenges of energy hikes, higher cost of basic foodstuff and migration flows be effectively addressed, alongside the measures that need to be taken as a result of the pandemic? Are we dealing with two different sets of challenges or are they different facets of a more global transition?

Moderator: Ms Rita SKREBISKIENE, Chief Advisor, Horizontal Policies and Projects Management Group, Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania and Vice-Chair of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CCS)

Speakers:

Mr Michael WINDFUHR, Deputy Director, German Institute for Human Rights / Expert Member of the United Nations (UN) Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Mr Maksym SHCHERBATYUK, Program Director and Director of Legal Aid Centers (LAC's) network, Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union

Ms Martina HUBER, Senior Migration Expert, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Ms Alla FEDOROVA, PhD, Associate Professor, Taras Shevchenko, National University of Kyiv, Institute of International Relations

Mr Massimiliano MASCHERINI, Head of Unit, Social Policies Unit, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)

12:30-14:30 Lunch Break

14:30-16:30

Panel Session 3: Transition to a green economy

The energy crisis that has erupted as a result of the war in Ukraine has also raised the global question of energy supplies. This goes hand in hand with the broader question of climate change and underlines the need to think in terms of transition to a green economy to make our societies more environmentally resilient. Such a transition must factor in the need to respect human rights, including social rights. What are the major policy decisions required from member states to ensure that transition to a green economy delivers for all and reinforces social cohesion? In what way are countries and organisations responding to infrastructure development, that is designed, implemented and maintained from a holistic perspective?

Moderator: Mr Jerzy CIECHANSKI, Counselor, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of the Family, Labor & Social Policy of Poland and Bureau member of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CCS)

Speakers:

Dr Philip VON BROCKDORFF, Professor, Council of Europe consultant

Mr Žiga ŽARNIC, Head of Country Reviews, SDGs and Impact Measurement, Centre for Well-Being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunities (WISE), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Mr Pierre KLEIN, All Together in Dignity, ATD Fourth World International

Ms Anna RURKA, Lecturer and Director of the Department of Education and Training Sciences, University of Paris Nanterre, and Outgoing President of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe

16:30-16:45

Closing of the Seminar

Mr Joe GERADA, Advisor to the Minister for Social Policy and Children's Rights, Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights of Malta, and Chair of the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CCS)

16:45-17:00

Networking & Coffee