

ERADICATE THE POVERTY

Commitments of States
within the framework of
the Council of Europe

Extracts of Texts adopted by the Committee
of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, and the
Congress of the local and regional authorities



COUNCIL OF EUROPE





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PRESENTATION

In the last decades a series of important resolutions and recommendations on poverty have been adopted by the main bodies of the Council of Europe.

On 17 October 2012 a joint Declaration "Acting together to eradicate extreme poverty in Europe" was signed together – and this is rather unusual - by the four "pillars" of the Council of Europe: the Committee of Ministers, the parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Conference of INGOs.

The present booklet gathers the most significant texts that had been adopted in the previous years for combating poverty; they underline the States' responsibilities and encourage them to act in different areas. Today, these commitments are existing in the texts and it is now crucial to check their effective degree of implementation whilst measuring the amount of efforts that still are to be made for reaching the goals fixed by the already adopted resolutions and recommendations.

This booklet is a precise reminder of the decisions that were made and of the resulting commitments for each State. It has been prepared with a view to be easy to read and useful and the texts and limits of quotations have been selected in this sense.

It is a tool for governmental officers or experts that may have difficulties in grasping the continuity of decisions and commitments made by their authorities, for advocates and actors in the society with a view to helping them in the actions to be promoted in this everlasting struggle for making that persons living in poverty have real access to the rights they have been recognised to be entitled to.

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FOREWORD

The inter-organisational Declaration of 17 October 2012 - International Day for the eradication of poverty - and other political documents of the Council of Europe collected in this brochure show the Organisation's commitment for the eradication of poverty in Europe. Despite this long list of texts, the Council is still not reaching the end of its troubles, and this for at least three reasons.

The first one is that the economic and social evolution does not show the eradication of poverty and disparities. It seems necessary, from now on, to analyse more in depth the reasons of this persistent evolution. Does it reveal the political lack of power mainly resulting from too many incantations and very few good analyses that could lead to better targeted proposals, better adapted to the context of each country? What kind of audacious step, what radical and well-coordinated approach would be more decisive? These are questions for the next 17 October.

The second reason is that the Organisation makes the unavoidable link between poverty and insufficient implementation of human rights. Without the Court, we would never have overtaken pious wishes in Strasbourg. It sometimes delivers spectacular judgements re-establishing human rights where it was thought that they had not to be taken into account. Too often the design of a law, actions undertaken by authorities or public bodies neglect the subjective rights conferred to all persons living on the territory of member States by the European Convention on Human Rights. All member States ratified it and several States measure more and more its radical influence. But not all member States already ratified the revised European Social Charter or one or the other article as its article 30 - the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion - which allows the European Committee of social rights to assess exactly how effective State's policies and undertakings are for implementing the rights provided for in this article. These missing ratifications are a scandal after so many recommendations, resolutions, judgements and reports that questioned the governments.

The third reason is that the Organisation is intergovernmental. It is up to the governments to follow up these texts. The problem is not that they are not doing something but that they all are overwhelmed by the task because poverty progresses everywhere.

The Council of Europe does its best, in collusion with state employees and NGOs committed to bring their contribution. But it cannot do everything. The key issue is not a so-called too easy, demagogic, politically incorrect or incomplete talk in Strasbourg. It is the organisation of priorities in urgent matters at the level of each national political agenda. It is maybe also the lack of a good effective working method in each country that cannot be replaced with measures quickly negotiated in the course of crises, strikes, demonstrations, scandals, accidents and abuse of power to be corrected. And unexpected judgements of the Court have to be considered too.

May this brochure help to strengthen the position of those who do not want to remain desperate.

François Vandamme,

Member of the Governmental Committee of the European social Charter

I. 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.

II. TEXTS OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

Effective access to the law and to justice for the very poor

Rec(93)1E, 8 January 1993

The Committee of Ministers,
Recommends that the governments of member states:

1. Facilitate access to the law for the very poor ("the right to the protection of the law") by:
 - a. promoting, where necessary, action to make the legal profession aware of the problems of the very poor;
 - b. promoting legal advice services for the very poor;
 - c. defraying the cost of legal advice for the very poor through legal aid, without prejudice to the payment of a modest contribution by the persons benefiting from such advice where this is required by domestic law;
 - d. promoting the setting up where the need seems to appear of advice centres in under privileged areas;
2. Facilitate effective access to quasi-judicial methods of conflict resolution for the very poor by:
 - a. increasing the involvement of non-governmental organisations or voluntary organisations providing support to the very poor in quasi-judicial forms of conflict resolution such as mediation and conciliation;
 - b. extending the benefit of legal aid or any other form of assistance to such methods of conflict resolution;
3. Facilitate effective access to the courts for the very poor, especially by the following means:
 - a. extending legal aid or any other form of assistance to all judicial instances (civil, criminal, commercial, administrative, social, etc.) and to all proceedings, contentious or non-contentious, irrespective of the capacity in which the persons concerned act;
 - b. extending legal aid to very poor persons who are stateless or aliens, in any event where they are habitually resident in the territory of the member state in which the proceedings are to be conducted;
 - c. recognising the right to be assisted by an appropriate counsel, as far as possible of one's choice, who will receive adequate remuneration;
 - d. limiting the circumstances in which legal aid may be refused by the competent authorities chiefly to those cases in which the grounds for refusal are inadmissibility, manifestly insufficient prospects of success, or cases in which the granting of legal aid is not necessary in the interests of justice;
 - e. simplifying the procedure for granting legal aid to the very poor, and considering the immediate granting of provisional legal aid wherever possible;
 - f. considering the possibility of enabling non-governmental organisations or voluntary organisations providing support to the very poor, to give assistance, in the context of access to the courts, to persons who are in a position of such dependence and deprivation that they cannot defend themselves; this appraisal should concern both proceedings before national tribunals and proceedings before the European Commission and Court of Human Rights and other international instances of judicial nature;

4. Consult whenever possible, in the framework of their general policy aimed at combating severe poverty, non-governmental organisations interested by the field covered by the present recommendation and voluntary organisations providing support to the very poor.

Towards social development for all: a European strategy based on co-operation and partnership

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)

The Council of Europe is and remains committed to Social Development. In the five years since the Copenhagen World Summit, European countries have reaffirmed their conviction that social development provides an essential basis for the development of inclusive societies, sound economic growth and the prevention of conflict.

In line with this conviction, the Council of Europe - a pan-European Organisation bringing together 41 states united by their commitment to democracy, respect for human rights, including social rights, and the rule of law - is developing a European Strategy for Social Cohesion as one of its main priorities (...)

Despite any guarantees offered by states' ratification of legal instruments, there are various obstacles to access to social rights for many people. Therefore, the Council of Europe has set up programmes on access to housing, employment, social protection and health. In this context, particular attention is paid to vulnerable persons or groups at risk of exclusion and to children.

Initiatives aimed at poverty eradication

National strategies against poverty and social exclusion must have clear objectives, targets and monitoring mechanisms. Civil society and people suffering from poverty and social exclusion should be involved in developing such strategies. The Council of Europe has relevant experience to offer in assisting governments further develop such strategies (...)

Adaptation of health care services to the demand for health care and health care services of people in marginal situations

Recommendation Rec(2001)12, 10 October 2001

The Committee of Ministers (...)

Considering that problems specific to persons living in marginal situations have serious consequences on their health and that this becomes a public health problem of growing importance and a serious and costly burden for the individual, the family, the community and the state;

Recognising that due to the growth of inequalities in health in the European countries, any relevant and effective health policy should not only consider the health problems of the

persons living in marginal situations but also those of the persons living in insecure conditions, health promotion being one of the key components of such a policy;
Noting that it is now largely documented that psychological stress experienced by persons living in such insecure conditions has an effect on their physical and mental health;

Recognising the need for policies designed to prevent health problems of persons living in marginal situations, while taking into account the need for protection of privacy of all persons concerned, and the respect of confidentiality;

Recognising the right of persons living in insecure situations to live in conditions favourable to their proper development free from physical and psychological overload, social isolation, psychosomatic symptoms related to stress and other forms of handicap; (...)

Aware of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
Recommends the governments of member states to:

- i. develop a coherent and comprehensive policy framework that:
 - secures and promotes the health of persons living in insecure conditions;
 - protects human dignity and prevents social exclusion and discrimination;
 - ensures supportive environments for the social integration of persons living in marginal situations or in insecure conditions;
- ii. strengthen and implement their legislation in order to ensure human rights protection, social solidarity and equity; (...)

I. Principles

Governments are encouraged to develop a social/health policy in the framework of the principles adopted by the World Health Organisation at the 1986 Ottawa Conference in order to prevent insecure conditions and therefore limit the risks of falling into marginal situations. When adapting the health care services to the needs of persons living in marginal situations or in insecure conditions, governments of member states should consider a certain number of principles:

1. The policy should be based on values propounded by the Council of Europe: human rights and patient's rights, human dignity, social cohesion, democracy, equity, solidarity, equal gender opportunity, participation, freedom of choice – balanced by the obligation to help strengthen one's own health.

To be efficient, any health policy, especially if oriented towards the needs of persons living in marginal situations, should be based on an integrated approach and begin with social protection measures. A minimal regular income should be given to these persons.

2. One of the best policies (apart from raising the standard of living) for improving their health and to prevent them from falling into marginal situations is to ensure equal access to social and health systems for everybody whatever his/her economic and legal status. It should take into account the fact that new groups and individuals may at any time find themselves in a marginal situation.
3. Social and economic prevention of the risk of falling into marginal situations should become a priority for governments and societies.
4. Long-term policies to improve social and health conditions for persons living in marginal situations or in insecure conditions cannot be implemented without their participation and agreement. They should, therefore, be considered as responsible

- persons, able to assume their own responsibilities and as much as possible involved in the decision process.
5. To ensure non-stigmatisation, member states, working in a long-term perspective, should endeavour to meet the needs of persons living in marginal situations within the existing health system. They should ensure an equal access for everybody to the national health resources, which may require positive discrimination in the form of well-targeted outreach measures, limited in time and scope and fully integrated into the normal health services. (...)
 8. The health systems have to be based on equity guaranteeing access to care according to need and financing of care regardless of the ability to pay.
 9. Prevention, health promotion and health care measures for persons living in marginal situations or in insecure conditions should be an integral and integrated dimension of national and local social/health policy. (...)
 12. Appropriate policies should be developed to adapt the health system to the needs of persons living in marginal situations or in insecure conditions. Further elaboration and implementation of these policies should take into account the decisive role of civil society and NGOs in tackling social inequalities.

Improving access to social rights

Recommendation Rec(2003)19, 24 September 2003

The Committee of Ministers (...)

5. Considering the Final Declaration of the Second Council of Europe Summit, in which the heads of state and government of the member states affirmed their resolve to promote social cohesion as an essential supplement to the promotion of human rights and dignity;
8. Aware of the indivisibility and the interdependence of human rights and affirming its commitment to the promotion of social rights as an integral part of human rights;
9. Aware that poverty and social exclusion are factors that, among others, undermine the enjoyment of human rights;
10. Recognising that some persons, in particular those in a situation of vulnerability, may encounter obstacles to the full enjoyment of their social rights; (...)
12. Affirming that effective access to social rights for all is essential to social cohesion and contributes to economic development (...);
14. Recommends that the governments of member states implement policies promoting access to social rights. Such policies should:
 - be guided by the values of freedom, equality, dignity, and solidarity;
 - be based on the principles of non-discrimination, partnership, quality, privacy and transparency;
 - devote particular attention to persons in situations of vulnerability;
 - strive to follow the guidelines set out in the appendix to this recommendation.

Improving the situation of low-income workers and on the empowerment of people experiencing extreme poverty

Guidelines of 5 May 2010

The Committee of Ministers (...)

Stressing the importance of implementing integrated policies in these areas, involving public authorities at all levels, as well as civil society and other relevant stakeholders;

Bearing in mind that low-income employment and precarious work have become increasingly widespread problems in many member states and that, for too many low-income workers, employment is not the only way to escape from poverty;

Acknowledging that some vulnerable groups are at risk of low-income employment, such as women, young and older workers, single-earner households, lone-parents, single people, those with a low level of qualification or no qualifications at all, migrants, internally displaced persons, members of the Roma and Traveller communities, people with disabilities and homeless people;

Recognising that prolonged unemployment, or prolonged low-income employment, can be a barrier to employment progression, with negative consequences;

Considering that extreme poverty, which prevents people from exercising their social and human rights, leads to social exclusion and endangers social cohesion, and that people experiencing extreme poverty have the right to live a dignified and independent life;

Recognising that empowerment of people experiencing extreme poverty requires tailor-made measures in a multidimensional, structural, dynamic and long-term approach and that action is needed on three levels: on building individual capacity, on supporting social networks, and on stimulating participation in policy-making processes; (...)

Invites member states to take into consideration the following guidelines when formulating or reviewing national policies.

New Strategy for Social Cohesion

Committee of Ministers, 7 July 2010

(...)

II. Acting for social cohesion

A. Reinvesting in social rights and a cohesive society (...)

8. The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights – ETS No. 5) and the European Social Charter (ETS No. 35) encapsulate the Council of Europe’s commitment to human rights, including economic and social rights. In order to make them a reference standard for the whole of Europe, all member states, which have not yet done so, are invited to consider ratification of the revised European Social Charter (ETS No. 163) and the Protocol providing for a System of Collective Complaints (ETS No. 158), as well as the European Code of Social Security (ETS No. 48) and its Protocol (ETS No. 48A). Social and economic rights reduce citizens’ fears, which are expressed in different ways, and guarantee a certain capacity to face the future. (...)

12. Policies must ensure that (...)

- members of groups potentially in a situation of vulnerability fully enjoy their social rights, by eliminating any source of double standards, discrimination and accumulation of difficulties; (...)
 - steps are taken to promote the well-being and empowerment of families, which are critical for the quality of life and the prevention of poverty, especially among children; (...)
 - sustainable solutions are found to ensure that everybody has a decent home while helping people in a situation of vulnerability to avoid excessive debt.
13. Public authorities must try to ensure that those emerging from exclusion and poverty do not fall back into the same situation. Citizens should have the right to innovate in key areas of community life.

Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the 50th anniversary of the European Social Charter, 12 October 2011

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe,(...)

Reaffirming that all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated;

Stressing its attachment to human dignity and the protection of all human rights;

Emphasising that human rights must be enjoyed without discrimination;

Reiterating its determination to build cohesive societies by ensuring fair access to social rights, fighting exclusion and protecting vulnerable groups;

Underlining the particular relevance of social rights and their guarantee in times of economic difficulties, in particular for individuals belonging to vulnerable groups; (...)

3. Recognises the contribution of the collective complaints mechanism in furthering the implementation of social rights, and calls on those members states not having done so to consider accepting the system of collective complaints;

Monitoring of commitments concerning social rights – Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1958 (2011). Reply adopted by the Committee of Minister

CM/AS(2011)Rec1958 final, 9 December 2011

(...)

3. In respect of the specific recommendations made by the Assembly, the 50th anniversary of the Charter provided an opportunity for the Committee of Ministers to reaffirm that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated (paragraph 4.1. of the Assembly recommendation). The Committee of Ministers also underlined the particular relevance of social rights and their guarantee in times of economic difficulties, in particular for individuals belonging to vulnerable groups. (...)
4. (...) On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Charter, it called on all those member states that have not yet ratified the revised European Social Charter, or have not accepted the collective complaints mechanism, to consider doing so (paragraphs 4.2., 4.3. and 4.4.)
- 5.

III. Texts of the Parliamentary Assembly

Poverty in Europe

Recommendation 893 (1980)

The Assembly, (...)

7. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

II. In the medium term

vii. prepare proposals for the attention of member states, for the purpose of overcoming ignorance and prejudice in respect of poor people, starting with public authorities who often tend to consider such persons as "maladjusted" or "social cases" ;

viii. give individuals the right to services and facilities in the area of social policy, by incorporating in Council of Europe normative instruments, such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the Social Charter, the right to a regular minimum income, to decent dwelling accommodation and to vocational training ;

ix. re-examine the contents of the right to education, and work out measures to ensure that it is effectively applied at the bottom of the social scale, by including, for instance, in the Council of Europe's medium-term plan, a programme to eradicate illiteracy in member states by different means ;

x. ask those states to ensure that needy parents are provided with adequate means for their children's schooling and that, in the training of teachers, there should be a special attention to the needs of children from poor families ;

xi. invite the member governments to stimulate and facilitate the social and political integration of disadvantaged groups in society and their participation in the democratic process ;

xii. urge member states to reconsider their development programmes, bearing in mind that, irrespective of its secondary reasons, poverty is largely a structural problem rooted in uneven distribution of wealth and inequality of opportunity.

Severe poverty and social exclusion : towards guaranteed minimum levels of resources

Recommendation 1196 (1992): (...)

3. The Assembly recognises that the general problem of poverty is best addressed by policies for economic growth, with broad and varied training and retraining opportunities for those without work -on the principle that unemployment is also an opportunity for investment in the skills and capabilities of individuals.

4. Today, however, in most European countries, irrespective of the implementation of such policies and their effects, it is clear that strong and distinct policies are required to address severe and persistent poverty.

5. Severe poverty -the focus of this recommendation -relates to the possibility of living and bringing up children in minimally decent conditions.

6. Relief of severe poverty, therefore, must often precede the possibility for those affected to be integrated into the community and to benefit from regular access to education, health care, social security and other services.

Fighting social exclusion and strengthening social cohesion in Europe

Recommendation 1355 (1998)

(...)

5. The concept of poverty refers to inadequacy or inequality of material resources, whereas social exclusion goes well beyond participation in consumer society and includes inadequacy, inequality, or total lack of participation in social, economic, political and cultural life. Exclusion extends from social isolation to a total rupture with society.

6. However, certain specific groups are the victims of poverty, which is condemning a considerable proportion of young adults, women, children, old persons, single-parent families, large families, refugees and asylum seekers, as well as members of ethnic minorities such as Gypsies, to social exclusion.

7. Poverty and exclusion must not be the price to pay for economic growth and well-being. Today, social exclusion is no longer a marginal problem in Europe: it is a painful and dramatic reality for millions of people.

8. Social exclusion not only offends against human dignity and denies people their fundamental human rights; it also leads, in conjunction with social and economic instability and worsening inequality, to phenomena of marginalisation, withdrawal or violent reactions, thereby creating conditions which undermine the democratic foundations of our societies.

9. Social exclusion clearly calls into question the principles underlying current security and social protection policies and structures, and underscores their inappropriateness.

10. Referring expressly to its [Recommendation 1196](#), the Assembly notes that the concerns it voiced at that time are unfortunately still topical.

11. It also draws attention to its [Recommendation 1290 \(1996\)](#) on the follow-up to the Copenhagen Summit on social development, which sets out the undertakings made by the heads of state and government to eradicate poverty through action at national level and international co-operation, to achieve social integration and the participation of all in society and to provide access for all to education and health care.

12. As industrial peace and a resumption of the social dialogue are prerequisites for democratic stability in Europe, it is urgently necessary today to give fresh impetus to the fight against exclusion and to take up the challenge of strengthening social cohesion.

13. In particular, social cohesion means promoting a Europe of social rights, these being fundamental human rights on an equal footing with civil and political rights.

Investing in family cohesion as a development factor in times of crisis

Resolution 1720 (2010)

6. (...) the Assembly encourages the member states of the Council of Europe to give consideration to the following:

6.6. tackling social exclusion, disruptions and poverty, particularly of single-parent families, families at risk, large families and migrant families. Discussions on different family models should focus on the consequences divorce has for children, including the risk of poverty, school failure, unemployment and other forms of social exclusion;

6.8. focusing on children in families which are disadvantaged or dysfunctional as a consequence of family breakdown: the increased risk of poverty among children in single-parent families is found to be reinforced by disadvantages at school, as well as poorer health and housing problems. These children are more likely to be exposed to risks that jeopardise their educational achievement, which then affect their future prospects;

Combating poverty

Recommendation 1963 (2011)

(...)

4. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

4.2. ensure, in particular, that Article 30 of the European Social Charter (revised) becomes part of its core provisions under Article A, paragraph 1.b, enabling policy formulation and progress review in combating poverty. All Council of Europe member states should agree to be bound by the provisions of Article 30; (...)

4.5. review the current structure of its programme of activities to improve the co-ordination of current measures and to introduce, as necessary, transversal actions aimed at combating poverty and improving access to all human rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural – for people affected by poverty; (...)

4.7. ensure that its policies and programmes in the field of poverty and social exclusion take into account the gender dimension; (...)

4.9. take urgent action to implement specific transversal measures aimed particularly at protecting the rights of families, children, women, people with disabilities, the elderly, and people from minority and migrant communities in situations of poverty, granting them the right to family reunion and the possibility of a normal family life;

4.10. design and establish non-bureaucratic, accessible and effective institutions such as a poverty ombudsperson, to whom people living in poverty can address their concerns, opinions and demands;

Combating poverty

Resolution 1800 (2011)

(...)

3. Poverty is a barrier to exercising human rights, whether they be political, civil, social, economic or cultural. The Assembly therefore fully endorses the principle according to which everyone has the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion.

4. Poverty, which creates and leads to a lack of access to human rights, can only be eliminated if poverty reduction strategies are based on these rights. The Council of Europe is thus a major actor in combating poverty, as it provides the most effective human rights protection mechanisms in Europe. (...)

6. The Assembly calls upon member states to:

6.1. Commit to ending poverty: after having committed to ending poverty by 2015 through the Millennium Development Goals, the moment has come to commit to ending child poverty and extreme poverty by 2025; (...)

6.3. Make the voice of people living in poverty heard: consider developing new forms of governance and participation to bring together and empower people and communities affected by poverty, and promote social inclusion for all;

6.4. Ensure that poverty reduction strategies are based on principles of human rights, securing, in particular, access to and full enjoyment of individual and community social rights by people and communities affected by poverty; (...)

6.8. Increase investment in early childhood development, education and schooling, with a view to raising the level of qualification of young people leaving the education system and reducing the school drop-out rate;

6.9. Take measures to enable, in particular, full access to employment opportunities, adequate medical assistance and housing, without discrimination;

6.10. Secure the right to fair remuneration through the provision of an adequate minimum wage, recognising the right of workers to a remuneration that gives them and their families a decent standard of living;

6.11. Provide minimum-income guarantees to ensure the social inclusion of people for whom employment is not an option or who do not have the capacity to work;

6.12. Ensure that strategies and actions meet the needs of those affected by poverty, prevent people from falling into poverty by providing them with support in critical situations, and assist those who are in poverty to recover; (...)

6.16. Prevent the intergenerational transmission of poverty, in particular through the promotion of intergenerational solidarity and family cohesion. The dissolution of the family is one of the main causes of poverty and the strengthening of family ties is a significant part of

integrated policies to combat poverty. Particular attention needs to be paid to large families because children from these families are very often poor; (...)

11. The Assembly invites its members to raise public awareness of the benefits of social inclusion and the need to combat poverty by promoting a more positive attitude towards people in poverty and avoiding their stigmatisation.

12. The Assembly stresses the need to regularly monitor the effectiveness of measures taken, including through topical Parliamentary Assembly debates and the effective use of monitoring mechanisms provided in the Council of Europe conventions and other legal instruments, to combat poverty and promote prosperity and social cohesion.

IV. TEXTS OF THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Citizenship and extreme poverty: the Charleroi Declaration

RES 243 (1993) E, 16 March 1993. Resolution of the Standing Conference of local and regional authorities of Europe

The Standing Conference, (...)

II. Notes and emphasises that: (...)

2. The living conditions of severely disadvantaged persons, families and groups constitute a flagrant breach of human rights and thus violate the fundamental right of citizenship, namely, the right of each person or group to join with others in the building and management of a shared world;

3. Fundamental rights are interdependent and the right to citizenship and its related benefits should be open to all;

4. Ignorance of circumstances and of the interlocking factors which bring them about, and the often fragmentary, sectorial, incomplete and indeed inconsistent nature of traditional policies may explain the persistence of poverty and exclusion;

5. This situation, far from improving, is getting rapidly worse, particularly in the wake of economic changes; the increase in unemployment; the consequences of the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe; the Yugoslavian tragedy; immigration from Eastern Europe, from Africa and even from Asia; societal "maladies" such as the decline in moral standards, the use of drugs, the upsurge in crime, etc.;

6. There is therefore a need to restore fundamental rights to those who are deprived of them, through an approach which, like that adopted by the French Economic and Social Council in 1987 following the Wresinski Report, is directed against the accumulation of different forms of insecurity whose effect is to crush individuals, families and groups within the European population beneath the burden of need;

III. Declares that: (...)

2. Violating the dignity and fundamental freedoms of a part of the population means violating the equal dignity of all members of a given political community; (...)

IV. Approves: (...)

2. In particular, the following **PRINCIPLES** and **O B J E C T I V E S**:

- Active solidarity with disadvantaged persons and groups by ensuring that their participation is at the very hub of the process that is to lead them out of their state of dependence;

- The most deprived sections of the population should be given the means to achieve freedom of expression and speech (for instance, through trusted social workers, appropriate training, opportunities for contacts and appropriate meeting places), and ways by which they can be represented on a municipal level should be tested;

- Support for a genuine community life for and with the poorest people, based on solidarity, the identification of significant initiatives, a policy geared to towns and to Europe, drawn up and implemented with them and subjected to regular appraisal;

- Adoption of a comprehensive plan to eradicate poverty and control the processes that generate it by enlisting disadvantaged persons, families and groups in order to reflect on the actual form of public schemes and structures;

- Introduction of a medium - and long-term approach at the very heart of "town projects" for implementation in the fundamental areas of existence (resources, housing, employment, training and health) in consultation with groups and their associations, precedence being given to the family approach and regular public appraisal.

Fighting severe poverty in towns: the role of local authorities

Recommendation 154 (2004)

The Congress, (...)

7. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe:

a. Encourage the member states of the Council of Europe to consider themselves effectively bound by the urgency of the "right to protection against poverty and social exclusion", by incorporating Article 30 of the revised Social Charter into Part III, Article A.1.b. of the said Charter;

b. Accordingly, to encourage member states, in consultation with the local authorities, to draw up national strategies to reduce extreme urban poverty comprising measures to promote the effective access to employment, housing, training, education, culture, and social and medical assistance by persons who are or run the risk of being in a situation of social exclusion or poverty, and their families; (...)

V. APPENDIX

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

Committee of Ministers

- CM/AS(81)Rec893finalE 11 September 1981
on poverty in Europe - Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 893 (1980)
Reply adopted by the Committee of Ministers
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/AS%2881%29Rec893&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=final&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383>

- Rec(93)1E 08 January 1993
on effective access to the law and to justice for the very poor
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec%2893%291&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383>

- CM/AS(93)Rec1196finalE 10 September 1993
on severe poverty and social exclusion: towards guaranteed minimum levels of resources - Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1196 (1992) (Reply adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 September 1993 at the 497th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=621057&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383>

- CM(2000)62 rev. 26 April 2000 106 Session Strasbourg, 10 - 11 May 2000
Towards social development for all: a European strategy based on co-operation and partnership

Draft political message from the Committee of Ministers to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (Geneva, 26-30 June 2000)
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM%282000%2962&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=rev&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383>

- Recommendation Rec(2001)12, 10 October 2001, on the adaptation of health care services to the demand for health care and health care services of people in marginal situations
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec%282001%2912&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383>

- Rec(2001)19^E, 6 December 2001, on the participation of citizens in local public life

<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec%282001%2919&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383>

- Recommendation Rec(2003)19, 24 September 2003, on improving access to social rights

<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec%282003%2919&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383>

- Final declaration of the 1st Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Social Cohesion, Moscow 26 and 27 February 2009

<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM%282009%2957&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864>

- Guidelines of 5 May 2010 on improving the situation of low-income workers and on the empowerment of people experiencing extreme poverty

<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Del/Dec%282010%291084/6.2d&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=app5&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383>

- New Strategy for Social Cohesion, Committee of Ministers, 7 July 2010

<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Del/Dec%282010%291090/6.1&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=app12&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383>

- Council of Europe Action Plan for Social Cohesion, Committee of Ministers, 7 July 2010

<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Del/Dec%282010%291090/6.1&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=app13&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383>

- CM/AS(2010)Rec1912, 14 December 2010, "Investing in family cohesion as a development factor in times of crisis" – Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1912 (2010)

Reply adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 8 December 2010

<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/AS%282010%29Rec1912&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=final&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383>

- Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the 50th anniversary of the European Social Charter, 12 October 2011

<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Decl%2812.10.2011%29&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383>

- CM/AS(2011)Rec1963 final 18 November 2011

"Combating poverty" – Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1963 (2011)

Reply adopted by the Committee of Ministers

[https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/AS%282011%29Rec1963&Language=lanEng
lish&Ver=final&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&Bac
kColorLogged=F5D383](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/AS%282011%29Rec1963&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=final&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383)

- CM/AS(2011)Rec1958 final 9 December 2011

“Monitoring of commitments concerning social rights” – Parliamentary Assembly
Recommendation 1958 (2011)

Reply adopted by the Committee of Ministers

[https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/AS%282011%29Rec1958&Language=lanEng
lish&Ver=final&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&Bac
kColorLogged=F5D383](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/AS%282011%29Rec1958&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=final&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383)

- CM/AS(2012)Rec1976 final 16 March 2012

“The role of parliaments in the consolidation and development of social rights in
Europe”

Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1976 (2011)

Reply adopted by the Committee of Ministers

[https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/AS%282012%29Rec1976&Language=lanEng
lish&Ver=final&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&Bac
kColorLogged=F5D383](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/AS%282012%29Rec1976&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=final&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383)

Parliamentary Assembly

- Recommendation 893 (1980) Poverty in Europe

<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewPDF.asp?FileID=14927&lang=en>

- Recommendation 1196 (1992)¹ Severe poverty and social exclusion : towards
guaranteed minimum levels of resources

<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewPDF.asp?FileID=15230&lang=en>

- Recommendation 1355 (1998) Fighting social exclusion and strengthening social
cohesion in Europe

<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewPDF.asp?FileID=16581&lang=en>

- Resolution 1720 (2010) Investing in family cohesion as a development factor in times
of crisis

<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewPDF.asp?FileID=17839&lang=en>

- Recommendation 1963 (2011) Combating poverty

<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewPDF.asp?FileID=17975&lang=en>

Resolution 1800 (2011) Combating poverty

[http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-DocDetails-
EN.asp?fileid=17974&lang=EN&search=MTgwMHx0eXBIX3N0cl9lbjpsZXNvbHV0aW9u](http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-DocDetails-EN.asp?fileid=17974&lang=EN&search=MTgwMHx0eXBIX3N0cl9lbjpsZXNvbHV0aW9u)

- Resolution 1824 (2011) The role of parliaments in the consolidation and development
of social rights in Europe

[http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-DocDetails-
EN.asp?fileid=18012&lang=EN&search=MTgyNHx0eXBIX3N0cl9lbjpsZXNvbHV0aW9u](http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-DocDetails-EN.asp?fileid=18012&lang=EN&search=MTgyNHx0eXBIX3N0cl9lbjpsZXNvbHV0aW9u)

- Resolution 1884 (2012) Provisional version
Austerity measures - a danger for democracy and social rights
<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewPDF.asp?FileID=18916&lang=en>

- Resolution 1885 (2012) Provisional version
The young generation sacrificed: social, economic and political implications of the financial crisis
<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewPDF.asp?FileID=18918&lang=en>

Congrès

- RES 243 (1993) E 16 March 1993 Resolution of the Standing Conference of local and regional authorities of Europe on citizenship and extreme poverty : the Charleroi Declaration
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Res243&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=CACC9A&BackColorLogged=EFFA9C>

- Resolution 41 (1996) on "Health and citizenship: care for the poorest in Europe"
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=RES%281996%29041&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864>

- Recommendation 154 (2004)1 on fighting severe poverty in towns: the role of local authorities
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=REC%282004%29154&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=CACC9A&BackColorLogged=EFFA9C>

(rec conc art. 30 ESC, rec to INGO Conference)

- Résolution 182 (2004) on fighting severe poverty in towns: the role of local authorities
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=RES%282004%29182&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=CACC9A&BackColorLogged=EFFA9C>

- Recommendation (2007) 27 March 2007 The evolution of extreme poverty in European towns
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=REC%282007%29210&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679>

Résolution 229 (2007) 27 March 2007 The evolution of extreme poverty in European towns
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=RES%282007%29229&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679>