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## **Fresh start for Europe in Turin: High-level conference on the European Social Charter as a tool for employment and social inclusion**

Strasbourg/Rome, 31.07.2014 – A high-level conference on social rights: in the context of the Italian Presidency of the European Union, and with the co-operation of the City of Turin, the Council of Europe is holding an event at the city's Teatro Regio on 17 and 18 October focusing on the [European Social Charter](#), an instrument which provides Europe with a true social constitution.

The [Charter](#) establishes a system of legal standards which help to reduce economic and social tensions while facilitating sustainable and mutually beneficial development in the States Parties.

The main aim of the conference is to bring together European policy-makers and reaffirm the importance of social rights in times of crisis.

The main subjects to be discussed will be:

- 1) Synergies between the law of the European Union and the European Social Charter;
- 2) The contribution made by the Social Charter's collective complaints procedure to respect for social rights in Europe;
- 3) Austerity measures in times of crisis: impact on social rights, participation by citizens, and the European Social Charter's contribution to overcoming the crisis.

**Quote for the media by Gabriella Battaini Dragoni**, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

"The social and economic rights guaranteed by the European Social Charter are fundamental rights which parallel and complement the civil and political rights enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights. Now that socio-economic rights are less well-protected in Europe, as highlighted in the recent human rights report by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the Charter represents a vital guarantee in terms of upholding the European social model and safeguarding the exercise of democracy in Europe".

**Quote for the media by Giuliano Poletti**, Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Rome.

"Europe has gone through difficult years in terms of employment and social policies, with increases in poverty and exclusion that could jeopardise our countries' social stability. The response must not just be confined to carrying out the necessary structural reforms. Alongside financial and budgetary stability, growth and employment must be the focus of our thinking and, above all, our action so that we pursue integrated macroeconomic policies which foster employment and social inclusion, starting with young people, women and disadvantaged groups."

### **Background:**

The European Social Charter is a Council of Europe treaty signed in Turin on 18 October 1961 which safeguards day-to-day freedoms and fundamental rights: housing, health, education, employment, legal and social protection, freedom of movement for individuals, non-discrimination. The substance of the Charter was supplemented by a revised version of 1996.

The European Committee of Social Rights has two procedures to ensure that States Parties comply with their commitments under the Charter: national reports and collective complaints. A Protocol opened for signature in 1995, which came into force in 1998, allows national and international trade union organisations, employers' organisations and non-governmental organisations to submit to the Committee their complaints about violations of the Charter.

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