



International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

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European Day against trafficking in human beings

on the theme:

Precariousness or slavery is not a job!
Decent and freely undertaken work for ALL, is it possible?

Introduction

On the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, on October 17th, the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe expresses its concern that people in a situation of poverty and vulnerability should have full access to all their social rights.

This is also the meaning and the action of our new Committee "Action for Social Rights".

This is why we have chosen the theme of decent work and built this Day, together with associations fighting for the rights of the most excluded, against poverty and against human trafficking.

A. Concept

Guaranteeing decent work for all, a Sustainable Development Goal and a European commitment:

In the context of the 2008 global financial and economic crisis, a sense of urgency has developed among policy makers at the global level: it is imperative to provide quality jobs, with the guarantee of social protection and respect for labour rights, in order to achieve sustained, sustainable and shared economic growth and to eradicate poverty.

During the UN General Assembly in September 2015, decent work and the four pillars of the decent work agenda - job creation, social protection, rights at work and social dialogue - became central elements of the new [2030 Sustainable Development Agenda](#). This is very explicit in Sustainable Development Goal 8: "Promote sustained, shared and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all." The UN insists in the description of this SDG #8: "Society as a whole benefits when more people are productive and contribute to the growth of their countries. Productive employment and decent work are key elements essential to achieving a fair globalization and reducing poverty. Moreover, if left unchecked, unemployment can lead to instability and disrupt peace."

Productive and decent employment for all is therefore a key factor in achieving a fair, sustainable globalization in a peaceful and poverty-free planet.

This also ties in with MDG1: "Eradicate poverty in all its forms everywhere in the world."

Articles 6, 7 and 8 of the [UN International Covenant Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) also go in this direction. And similarly, exclusion from the world of paid work and the poor quality of work threaten the realization of human rights, such as the right to health and housing, and respect for the dignity of each person.

As for **the revised European Social Charter**, it aims at guaranteeing to everyone living in the member countries of the Council of Europe the respect of their economic and social rights, and for them to lead a dignified and decent life. **Articles 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Charter** demand fair working conditions, equal opportunities and treatment, and a fair wage, which is essential for a decent life. In addition, **Article 30** states that "everyone shall be protected from poverty".

Guaranteeing a minimum income for the respect of the fundamental rights and dignity of each person

As human rights are universal and indivisible, all conditions for a decent life must be maintained in the absence of paid work: States must therefore, according to the revised European Social Charter, "ensure that any person who does not have sufficient resources and who is unable to obtain them by his own means or from other sources [...] receives adequate assistance."

The absence and/or inadequacy of this assistance is a source of anxiety and a feeling of inferiority that leads to despair. In these situations, people may be forced to accept any paid activity to survive. This undeniably reinforces and perpetuates their precariousness.

Prohibition of forced labour

"States shall guarantee the protection of persons from forced labour, servitude and slavery" (ILO Convention on Forced Labour). Similarly, in article 1 § 2 of the ESC(r), governments commit themselves "to protect effectively the right of the worker to earn his living by work freely undertaken". This commitment is consistent with the European Convention on Human Rights in its Article 4: "Prohibition of slavery and forced labour: §1. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude. §2. No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour."

Slavery and servitude are thus commonly recognized as criminal offences and are prohibited by numerous international legal instruments: the prohibition of forced labour as a right cannot be derogated from by the State party, and at the national and local levels, the competent public authorities have an obligation to investigate allegations of forced labour, without this being the subject of a complaint by the victim.

Numerous violations of these rights

However, in too many cases the situation of excluded, poor and precarious people is far from these values and standards protected by the ECHR and the ESC(r).

Regular and irregular migrants, people with disabilities, travellers, people living in poverty, school dropouts, etc., continue to lack access to decent work, to be exposed to abuse and exploitation. Their living conditions and misery lead them to feel useless for some, to enslavement for others: leading to spirals of shame and submission, contrary to the respect of human freedom and dignity.

B. On the program for October 18, 2021, at the Palais de l'Europe :

12:30-13:15 Celebration in front of the Commemorative Slab

14h30-17h (or 18h ?) A seminar/webinar

on the theme:

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To prepare this event, the Conference of INGOs is calling for testimonies and contributions (**see attached document**) on positive or not experiences around the theme of decent work, for the respect of the rights and dignity of all.

During the event, experts, witnesses and committed people will exchange on this theme, in order to establish recommendations and to move the whole society forward on a path of respect for the rights of all.

Initiatives and experiences aimed at reducing vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation, and at enabling access for all to decent work - such as insertion companies, or experiments like "Territoire Zéro Chômeur de Longue Durée" (France) - will be presented.

And the dialogue will focus on what needs to be put in place to allow all people present on European soil access to decent employment and a dignified life:

- to generalize these initiatives, and others, coming from the States, local and regional authorities,
- to have all the member states of the Council of Europe ratify the revised European Social Charter and the collective complaints procedure, or other texts and make them more binding.