



International Day for the Eradication of Poverty:

a Webinar on 16 October 2020

Introduction

Every year, on the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, 17 October, the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe expresses its concern that people living in poverty should have full access to social rights. Next year the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) will examine articles related to [health, social security and social protection](#) of the European Social Charter¹. The Conference of INGOs is using this opportunity to underline the importance of this work and to contribute to the follow-up of the ECSR conclusions.

In addition, our attention is drawn to two specific points:

- In "ordinary" times, the rate of non-take-up of social services varies from one country to another but is often well above 30% of those entitled to this right;
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, an ever-increasing proportion of the European population has been forced to resort to humanitarian aid, even if only for food.

Doctor Philippe de Botton, President of Doctors of the World [stated recently](#) : "It is imperative to envisage a whole range of measures aimed at putting health and all its determinants at the heart of the commitments of States. There is an urgent need for a response from the population, from health care providers and from health structures if we want to avoid the collapse of the health status of populations, as well as that of the most precarious health systems. »

In this context where several simultaneous crises threaten all populations of the world, we can only endorse the words of Giuseppe Palmisano, President of the European Committee of Social Rights:

"The Covid-19 crisis is a stark reminder of the importance of ensuring sustainable progress in the enjoyment of social rights, in particular through the development of universal public health services. The pandemic is a concrete demonstration of the indivisibility of Human Rights. It is essential that the European Social Charter, also known as the Social Constitution of Europe, be used to shape

¹ 11 "Right to protection of health", 13 "Right to social and medical assistance", 14 "Right to benefit from qualified social services", 30 "Right to protection against poverty and social exclusion".

responses to the Covid-19 pandemic that respect Human Rights and to take stock once the crisis is over. The Charter and its monitoring mechanisms - of reports and collective complaints - are excellent tools for the reconstruction efforts that will follow ».

Today, more than ever, we are asking that the set of social rights included in the European Social Charter be put at the centre of European public policies. To do so, we urge all Council of Europe member States to ratify the European Social Charter in its entirety, as well as the collective complaints procedure which allows civil society to challenge States in the event of violations of social rights.

To this end, and in order to respect the commitments made in 2012 by the Council of Europe member States and all Council of Europe bodies to “Act together to eradicate extreme poverty in Europe”², the Conference is organising an event on 16 October 2020 to recall that no one should be left out and that the voice of the most deprived and excluded must be taken into account by the policy-makers.

To mark the Day, the Conference of INGOs transversal working group “Poverty: Inequalities and the Enjoyment of Rights” is organising, on 16 October 2020, a Webinar on the theme:

**Access to social and medico-social services for ALL:
a springboard out of poverty**

During this event, diverse stakeholders will present different perspectives:

- People experiencing poverty will present their experiences related to access to services and to their rights. What vision and feelings do they have about social services? What difficulties they meet? What proposals for improvement can be made?
- The European Committee of Social Rights and other bodies of the Council of Europe will share their analysis and observations.
- Social workers, national, local and regional elected representatives, INGOs and members of civil society will present their experiences in the field, the participatory action-research: difficulties, good practices...

Following this Webinar, a recommendation³ will be proposed for adoption by the Conference of INGOs. It will be transmitted afterwards to the Council of Europe bodies for information.

² [Declaration of the Presidents of the Committee of Ministers, Parliamentary Assembly, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and Conference of INGOs at the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty](#)

³ The Group and the Conference of INGOs were at the origin of several other recommendations:

[CONF/PLE\(2019\)REC1: Recommendation on the right to decent housing for all](#)

[CONF/PLE\(2019\)REC2: Recommendation on poverty and precarity amongst students in Europe](#)

[CONF/PLE\(2019\)REC4: Recommendation on Climate Change, migrations and Human Rights](#)

[CONF/PLE\(2018\)REC1: Recommendation relating to the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights](#)



Webinar Programme

16 October 2020, 14:30-17:00

(with English/French interpretation)

Access to social and medico-social services for ALL: a springboard out of poverty

Moderator: Peter VERHAEGHE, Caritas Europe

14.30-15.00

Introduction by Anna RURKA, President of the Conference of INGOs

Opening address:

Ambassador Panayiotis BEGLITIS, Chairman of the Ministers' Deputies

Gabriella BATTAINI-DRAGONI, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Giuseppe PALMISANO, President of the European Committee of Social Rights

15.00-15.40 Access to rights and the reasons for non-uptake of social and health services

- Hélène ROZET, ATD Fourth World, reading of testimonies of people living in poverty
- Michel MERCADIÉ, National Secretary of European Anti-Poverty Network France
- Moraene ROBERTS (UK) (video) and Chantal CONSOLINI (France), ATD Fourth World, co-researchers of the international research project on the hidden dimensions of poverty
- Christine MAHY, Belgium, Secretary General of the Walloon Anti-Poverty Network (video)
- Paula PACO IAC, European Social Action Network (ESAN) Portugal, social worker
- Prof. Dr Frank Ulrich MONTGOMERY, President, Standing Committee of European Doctors: Access to health, experience and impact of Covid-19 (tbc)

15.40-15.50 Testimonies, question / answer session

15.50-16.25 Examples of good practice and proposals

- Peter VERHAEGHE, Caritas Europa: presentation of the conclusions of a study carried out by Caritas Europa with 16 of its member organisations in Europe
- Ana RADULESCU, International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)
- ATD Fourth World Poland: working with people with experience of poverty in order to create the function of ombudsman - defender of users of social services (video)
- Frédéric BIERRY, President of the Departmental Council of Bas-Rhin, France: access to RSA (welfare benefit, *revenue de solidarité active*) for all those entitled to it. Question of RSA for 18-25-year-olds

16.25-16.45 Testimonies, question / answer session

16.45-17.00 Conclusions and perspectives

Elisabeth MARIE (Caritas Europe)

Anna RURKA

Reading of the text from the commemorative stone in memory of the victims of poverty