

Summary of the address by Giuliano Poletti, Minister of Labour and Social Policies, to the final session of the High-Level Conference on the European Social Charter (Turin, 17 to 18 October 2014)
(Translation from the original Italian)

The decision to hold this conference sends a message to Europe and to our citizens about a new departure for the social dimension, as indicated in the title itself of the conference.

I shall nevertheless, if I may, remind you that armed conflicts are still taking place on our continent and that everything possible needs to be done to put an end to those conflicts, which are in flagrant contradiction with social justice.

One of the conclusions which has to be drawn from our discussions is that the crisis has made it more difficult to tackle social problems, and that there is a need for dialogue and for coordination between budgetary and social cohesion policies with a view to inclusive and sustainable growth.

The European social model remains valid, but unless we manage to provide practical answers to the crisis and the increase in inequalities registered in recent years, then extremism, nationalism and xenophobia will gain in strength.

I invite all who have not yet done so to sign the agreements and commitments already in force, such as the Protocol on collective complaints, but I also observe that the legal basis for social rights largely exists already, so what we need to do now is concentrate on implementing and harmonising practice and case-law.

So I consider it appropriate and a matter of priority to forge good relations between the bodies responsible for monitoring the rights deriving from the European Social Charter and those active within the European Union.

The hope is therefore that a process will now begin to which all the players concerned – governments, parliaments, the competent courts and committees, the social partners and civil society – will contribute so as to follow up the productive discussions that we have had here in Turin.

Finally, I should like to express my gratitude to the Council of Europe, the City of Turin and all the participants who have contributed to the successful outcome of a debate which, for Italy, is absolutely consistent with our commitments during our six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union.