

**Speech of Piero Fassino, Mayor of Turin**

*(Translation of the transcription of the recording of the speech made during the Conference)  
(Translation from the original Italian)*

It is now for me to express my thanks, above all because, following the statements made at this conference, I think that the issues have been well-examined over the last two days and are clearly reflected in our conclusions.

I sincerely thank Speaker Boldrini for having accepted the city's invitation to this conference.

I also thank Minister Poletti and the Italian Government for their assistance with the preparation and organisation of this event.

I thank the foreign delegations, the ministers, secretaries of state and their staff gathered together here.

I naturally convey special thanks to Secretary General Jagland and Deputy Secretary General Battaini-Dragoni, as well as all the officials of the Council of Europe who worked with us on this conference.

Permit me, as is only normal, also to thank my own colleagues, beginning with Dr Gianfrate, the head of my private office, and all the other members of our administration who worked on this conference.

I of course thank all the other people who have assisted us in our work, for example the interpreters.

For two days we have been discussing a vital topic, and we have been told that we have to reckon with a scenario in which the implementation and application of the European Social Charter cannot be regarded as self-evident, as Mr Nicoletti pointed out. This is a time of economic and social crisis, which has resulted in greater uncertainty and insecurity for millions of individuals and families and a weaker rate of development in many countries. It is clear that all this has also undermined the possibilities for full assertion of rights. We should perhaps make this connection more evident, pointing out that there is an inseparable link between the full implementation of rights and growth and development policy.

It is not true that rights can be asserted without regard for the economic and social situation. An economic context in which uncertainty and insecurity prevail regarding development dynamics also becomes a situation of uncertainty and insecurity for rights. From this standpoint, the central focus of the European Union's debate - the debate on how to re-launch growth and investments policies, how to re-create jobs, how to ensure that the stability pact is not solely a means of controlling public finances and budget policies but also an instrument for boosting growth – is closely linked to the theme of giving a fresh impetus to the Social Charter and the rights enshrined therein.

Another factor, a second component of the scenario which cannot be disregarded, is that the European Union, the Council of Europe and our continent are not living in a bubble. We live in a globalised world, and the conditions that govern economic relations at global level, the

dynamics of competition and the various forms of dumping, including social dumping, have an impact on the implementation of rights.

In this sense, in addition to the issue of harmonising the rules laid down by the Social Charter and EU social law, a battle must be fought to promote the universal recognition of social rights. Otherwise we will continue to be confronted with a competitive gap that entails a clear risk of undermining the full application of these rights.

The third question I believe we must take into account is the radical structural transformation of employment, as regards its quantitative distribution and its qualitative composition. It is not a coincidence that we increasingly speak about the "works society", rather than the "work society", since the transformation of employment is bringing about different ways not just of organising work, but also of experiencing it and perceiving it and of identifying oneself with one's job, and all this clearly has an impact on how work is also protected and guaranteed. There is no doubt that, whatever the form of work in question, no matter what its content or the place where it is carried out, there is a need for recognition of the dignity of work. And work equates with dignity when it commands decent pay, when it is contractually protected and legally safeguarded, and first and foremost when the physical and mental integrity of those doing the work are guaranteed.

However, while being absolutely true, all these considerations must be tempered by the fact that, nowadays, we need to determine how to establish and implement these rights in a changing labour market, one which is now entirely organised around the concept of flexibility rather than rigidity.

I have mentioned just three factors that influence our ability to ensure that the Social Charter, and hence the Turin Process, is given full application. I am very pleased that, after having hosted the Charter's signature, our city is also the starting point for a process aimed at giving it a fresh impetus, so as to ensure its implementation under the new conditions and scenarios. The Turin Process will have to contend with these conditions, and hence with certain changed key variables, around which, as Mrs Battaini-Dragoni and Speaker Boldrini have pointed out, the rights and protections we can afford our citizens must in point of fact be redefined. In other words, and I will conclude here, the Social Charter must be perceived as one of the pillars on which to rebuild the European development model, and not just the European model, as it constitutes an essential point of reference for welfare reform processes and for the social State. The Social Charter must be regarded as a key yardstick for a new phase of citizenship rights for all citizens.

These are the considerations I considered it useful to raise in these few concluding words.

I again convey my sincere thanks to everyone. I hope that our hospitality has enabled you to appreciate the many opportunities that our city has to offer and, as I said yesterday when I opened our proceedings, I hope that you will come back to Turin and that you will always find a warm and friendly welcome here.

Thank you!