



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**Call to action of the Conference of INGOs
to support “Turin Process” for European Social Charter
(January 2016)**

CONTEXT

The Turin Process was launched by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe at the High Level Conference on the European Social Charter, held in Turin on 17 and 18 October 2014.

The Conference of INGOs contributed to the launching by also holding in Turin on 17 October the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and addressing to the participating countries of the High Level Conference a strong message drafted with the help of people living in poverty.

In the context of the Turin Process, representatives of the Conference of INGOs:

- took part in the workshop held by the Social Charter Department in Strasbourg on 4 December 2014
- took the floor at the Council of Europe Conference on the future of the protection of social rights in Europe, held in Brussels on 12 and 13 February 2015, and helped to draft the “Brussels Document”,
- held a training on the Social Charter collective complaints procedure in Brussels in September 2015 in collaboration with European Social platform;
- are involved at the meetings of the Steering Committee for Human Rights and its working groups.

OBJECTIVES OF THE TURIN PROCESS

The aim of the Turin Process is to reinforce the normative system of the Charter within the Council of Europe and in its relations with EU law. The main objective is to improve the implementation of social and economic rights alongside the civil and political rights safeguarded by the European Human Rights Convention.

The action of the Conference of INGOs is in keeping with the objectives of the Turin Process and in response to:

- the action plan for the Turin Process, as set out in the report by Mr Michele Nicoletti, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and general rapporteur of the High-Level Conference on the European Social Charter (17-18 October 2014).
- the undertaking made by Mr Thorbjörn Jagland, Secretary General the Council of Europe, to give priority to strengthening the impact of the Social Charter during his 2014-2019 term-of-office.
- the strong calls by Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe and Giuseppe Palmisano, President of the European Committee of Social Rights, on International Day for the Eradication of Poverty for the INGOs to play their full role and fulfil their responsibilities in the Turin Process.

GENERAL PROPOSALS

The INGO members of the Conference are invited to:

- advocate the ratification of the revised European Social Charter (ESC) by all states
- advocate the acceptance of the collective claims procedure by all States parties
- participate and encourage their national members to take part in the annual cycle of the monitoring of the implementation of the ESC

RESULTS EXPECTED

- 1) In the countries where they are represented, the INGO members are expected to organise activities providing information about and drawing attention to the importance of the Charter and its monitoring mechanism and on the improvement of national policies to eradicate poverty and social exclusion, in particular by stepping up the dialogue between NGOs and the public authorities through the collective complaints procedure,
- 2) The INGO members must undertake to work with their national members to identify the obstacles to ratification and to seize any opportunities that would permit them to do so.
- 3) INGO members wishing to be registered on the list of INGOs allowed to lodge collective complaints should ask the European Committee of Social Rights to register them.
- 4) The quantitative recording and the qualitative analysis of the above-mentioned results (points 1,2,3) will help to strengthen co-operation between the Conference of INGOs, on the one hand, and the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, on the other.

ACTIVITIES PROPOSED TO INGOs

- To inform their members about the European Social Charter and its potential,
- To promote co-operation between national associations and INGOs,
- To foster concerted action at national level in calling for the ratification of the Charter, acceptance of all its provisions and acceptance of the collective complaints procedure,
- To support the national members of the INGOs by providing them with relevant information on the European Committee of Social Rights and the annual cycle of national reports
- To consider the possibility of lodging collective complaints in consultation with their members
- To increase the number of INGOs with participatory status on the list of INGOs authorised to lodge collective complaints.

This proposed action by the Conference of INGOs to support the Turin Process has been prepared by a select group in consultation and with the support of the President of the Conference and the Chair of the Human Rights Committee. It is being carried out in liaison with the European Committee of Social Rights and the European Social Charter Department, in particular where promotion and training activities are concerned.

At the session of the Conference in January 2016, this initiative will be presented to the members of the Working Group on "Extreme Poverty and Human Rights" and subsequently proposed for adoption by the Conference at the plenary session on 29 January 2016. The INGO members of the Conference will be invited to join this initiative entitled "Advocacy for the Turin Process", given that the scope of application of the Charter concerns all of the themes and activities of the INGO Conference and its three committees.

An initial meeting of "Advocacy for the Turin Process" group» will be held in Brussels on 16 and 17 February 2016 to prepare the groundwork for collective action.

The subsequent steps will be decided on the basis of the suggestions made by the INGO Conference at its session in January 2016.