



30rd World Day for the eradication of poverty

« Acting together for the eradication of poverty in Europe

Five years after the joint declaration of the four pillars of the Council of Europe : achievements and proposals

Strasbourg, 17 October 2017

Mme Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy-Secretary-General of the Council of Europe

I am happy to be again with you this morning and I would like to thank Madame Anna Rurka, president of the Conference of INGOs for gathering us here today engaged in a common action.

My thanks go also to

- Ambassador Emil Ruffer, Chair of the Ministers' Deputies
- Mr Giuseppe Palmisano, President of the European Committee of Social Rights

Your presence and your testimonies are crucial today when we commit ourselves once more for eradicating poverty in Europe

- My special greetings go also to Mme Annelise Oeschger, honorary president of the Conference of INGOs

To act, and to act together, is what we are talking about. "From declaration to action" is the good title you have given to the first debate of this morning.

To act means undertaking actions, by doing, behaving, having an influence, having strength, making decisions, producing, changing...

But ... do we really act? Or are we, in fact, helpless when facing this growing poverty in Europe, in the world, or even close to our home and in our surroundings?
I don't believe it.

“There where people are condemned to live in misery, human rights are violated. Uniting to enforce them is our sacred duty »

We must remember these two key sentences engraved in the stone in front of the steps of the Palais of Europe, replica of the commemorative stone at the Trocadero where, 30 years ago, on 17th October 1987, over hundred thousand people have come together to honor the victims of extreme poverty, violence and hunger.

This day made us aware that poverty is a violation of human rights. We know that we have to come together - to be united- for making sure that these rights are respected.

17th October is an opportunity for recognizing the efforts and the fight of people living in poverty.

17th October gives them a voice for making their concerns heard.

But 17th October is also the day for us to recognize that those who are poor are the first ones fighting against poverty.

On 17th October 2012, the Presidents of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of local and regional authorities, of the Conference of INGOs as well as the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers have adopted a common Declaration with which all four bodies have undertaken, each of them within their respective competences, to work together for the eradication of poverty.

Today, representatives of these four bodies are invited to take stock of the progress – but also of the failures- of the past five years.

I welcome this initiative, dear Anna, because it is essential. And we will have to learn very quickly from the conclusions that you will formulate this afternoon.

Let me bring my contribution to some points:

The Council of Europe is participating in the fight against poverty with its tools and thanks to the work achieved within the framework of treaties and monitoring bodies, and especially with the revised European Social Charter.

During the last years our efforts have consisted in

- Modernising the Charter as a first point

We know it, but it is important to remember: the article 30 of the Charter provides now a specific right to protection against poverty and social exclusion. This article has been added to the European Social Charter on the proposal of ATD Fourth World to underline that living in poverty and social exclusion is undermining the human being's dignity.

- Then, a new impulse was given to the Charter with the Turin process, inviting those member States who did not yet ratify the revised European Social Charter to do so, to accept the article 30 and the collective complaint procedure.
- Presently we are preparing the participation of our Organisation to the Social Summit of Gotheborg that will take place exactly in one month, on the initiative of the European Commission and the government of Sweden. There we will highlight the clear synergy in particular between the revised Social Charter and the future social pillar of the European Union, and this should, according to our point of view, be reflected in the final declaration.

What we must remember today is that the States having ratified the revised Social Charter committed themselves

- First to ensure the effective right to protection against poverty and social exclusion by measures providing a real access to the fundamental social rights, notably employment, housing, vocational training, education, culture, social and medical care and
- Secondly to remove the barriers that are hindering this access.

Our principle is that respecting social rights is not only beneficial to the people concerned, in particular to those who are poor, excluded and marginalized, but allows also our societies to remain cohesive and resilient.

It is therefore natural that the Council of Europe engaged in the Action Plan on Building up Inclusive Societies (2016-2019), an Action Plan by which member States may commit to developing and setting up Policies to better manage diversity in Europe, while building on education, combating discrimination and ensuring effective integration of the most vulnerable and, notably, respecting social rights.

We have now to act, and to act together to bring these rights to life.

Each and every one of us here, we have a role to play for translating them into reality: the Council of Europe, member States, NGOs, trade unions, international organisations...

It goes without saying that, in this context of new commitment, our ongoing dialogue with the Conference of INGOs is of high strategic importance. We must carry on, together, our common work on the progress already achieved in these last 30 years and on what still has to be done. Let us commit ourselves once more today, to act – and to act together- against poverty and social exclusion. Unfortunately, poverty is not regressing, on the contrary, it is dramatically growing in some countries.

...

I am in particular thinking of our youth who suffer from the consequences of the financial and

economic crisis in many of our member States. I am also thinking of all migrant or refugee children who are so vulnerable and for whom poverty is a vicious circle.

It will be important to meet again when your conclusion will be finalized.

I wish you a successful day.

Ambassador Emil Rufer, Chair of the Committee of Ministers

On behalf of the Committee of Ministers, I would like to thank the Conference of INGO's for organising this event to mark the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. I shall try to be brief as time is short and participants are many, and we should allow for as much discussion as possible.

The protection of human dignity and fundamental rights of everyone within our territories is the main mission of the Council of Europe.

It is therefore right and just that, to this end, the Organisation has long been committed to alleviating poverty, strengthening social cohesion and protecting the more vulnerable members of our societies.

Unfortunately, whilst much has been done, there remains much more to do.

Today's conference looks to taking stock of progress made since our joint declaration in 2012, in which we committed ourselves to fighting growing poverty and social exclusion.

I do not wish to enumerate all the achievements, failures or challenges of the Council of Europe over the last five years. I will simply offer some comments on the themes to be addressed today.

The first is the close relationship between poverty and the respect for human rights, including social rights.

Article 30 in the revised European Social Charter provides that "Everyone has the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion". It is the first international human rights instrument to provide for a right to protection against poverty.

Whilst to date only a minority of member States committed themselves to Article 30, I would nonetheless recall that this article underlines an important principle, that - for combatting poverty- , it is essential to guarantee access to a number of social rights and to act against social exclusion.

These objectives fall clearly within the competences and priorities of the Council of Europe.

A first step to alleviate the situation of those living in extreme or relative poverty is to improve their living conditions. To do so means providing access to housing, to social security and health care, to fair employment conditions. It calls for special efforts to be made to ensure that the needs of the more vulnerable in our societies such as children, young people, persons with disabilities, the elderly - or migrants, refugees and Roma - are catered to.

In all these areas, the Council of Europe continues to work every day.

The work concerning the European Social Charter and also the work achieved by the European Code of Social Security, of which we shall hear more later on today, is of course an important contribution in this respect.

We shall also hear about activities related to strengthening social cohesion this afternoon. But other sectors of the Organisation also carry out many activities with a view to protecting and improving the situation of groups particularly at risk of poverty. For my part, I would just like to bring special attention to the crucial importance of safeguarding children and young people from poverty.

The new and transversal Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021) places prevention of child poverty and social exclusion as its high priority. The strategy considers that this can most effectively be addressed through child protection systems that carefully integrate preventive measures, family support, early childhood education and care, social services, education and housing policies. To this end, member States are encouraged to follow and implement relevant existing standards and Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and other bodies, not least on child-friendly social services, child friendly health care and access of young people to social rights.

The recommendations which concern the access to social rights by young people, including those from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, will certainly also be discussed during your round table this afternoon.

We know that poverty has multiple implications on the lives of such young people. For poverty is not simply a lack of income or material goods. Poverty contributes to the denial of social as well as civil and political rights. It is often the reason for lacking access to health care, housing or education. The potential of young people living in poverty is often not explored; they are therefore less likely to have skills and qualifications and thus more likely to be unemployed. Poverty can lead to precarity.

We therefore need to provide young people with support and the necessary tools to become full, active and empowered members of our societies in which they feel valued and most importantly where they feel able to pursue their ambitions and aspirations, without the weight of poverty and social exclusion holding them back.

Nelson Mandela pointed out that *"like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made, and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings."* Reducing poverty calls for a multifaceted approach and in this respect, the Council of Europe certainly brings an important contribution. However, the Organisation cannot do it alone. All actors in society - such as all those represented here today – from governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and NGO's - must push for the implementation of the standards, guidelines, recommendations and strategies that are prepared by the Council of Europe.

It is only by working together that we shall reduce poverty and social exclusion and thus remove the threat they present to human dignity and enjoyment of human rights. This annual seminar is a valuable opportunity for us all to renew our commitment to that work and to move forward in achieving those objectives.

Giuseppe Palmisano, Chair of the European Committee of Social Rights

It's my pleasure to open with Madame Battaini-Dragoni and Ambassador Ruffer this seminar organised by the Conference of INGOs for celebrating the 30s anniversary of the World Day for the eradication of poverty, and for discussing the contribution that the Council of Europe may bring and should bring to the fight against poverty.

Let me thank the working group on "poverty and human rights" of the INGO Conference for having once more put the emphasis on the access to rights – and especially to social rights- thanks to all members of this group and above all to those who live in poverty. In today's Europe poverty has several features: migrants and refugees who are not cared for by the State nor by public authorities and are often faced with precarity and illegal work; old aged people, people with disabilities, one-parent families, and especially lonely women with their children; but we have to add also small shopkeepers and craftsmen who are pushed towards bankruptcy by the liberalist globalisation of the market led by multinational enterprises; we have to consider also young and less young workers having a poorly paid or precarious job or who even are jobless. Poverty has also taken the feature of children who seem to have a poor future as poverty is often bearing on several generations – we have worked on this issue in 2015.

All this shows the growing necessity to protect these persons from poverty and its terrible consequences.

Ensuring respect of the right to protection against poverty and social exclusions is one of the important tasks of the European Committee of Social Rights. The introduction into the revised Charter, in 1996, - thanks to the contribution of ATD Fourth World-, of article 30 on the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion aimed at underlining the opinion of the member States of the Council of Europe that the fact of living in poverty and social exclusion is a violation of human dignity. This article is the first binding human rights measure that provides protection against poverty and social exclusion.

The word "poverty" refers here to various situations in which people are living, going from extreme poverty to a temporary situation with a risk of poverty. "Social exclusion" refers to persons who are living in extreme poverty because of a series of unfavourable factors, conditions or negative events, isolation and other circumstances making that these persons have no more access to social helps.

In its enforcement of article 30, the European Committee of Social Rights has clearly shown that, according to the commitments linked with this article, it is up to the States to provide for different measures, including financial support, for persons who are socially excluded and for those who are at risk of social exclusion. This article requires from the States that they adopt a global and coordinated approach, with an analytical framework, a set of priorities and measures aimed at preventing and eliminating barriers limiting the access to social rights. Anyway, States should show that reducing poverty and social exclusion is an integrated duty in all areas of public action.

The Committee has also underlined the transversal character of the protection of persons living in poverty and social exclusion: article 30 has strong links with other articles of the Charter, as the effective access to employment, housing, education and social and medical assistance; it is linked with articles 1, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 31 of the Charter. This means that our yearly conclusions on these articles may have an impact or even determine the assessment of situations under article 30. It shows how the European Social Charter allows for assessing the right to be protected against poverty and social exclusion according to different aspects of the situation. Of course, this extended and in-depth control made by the Committee of Social Rights is only possible in the 18 States that have ratified this article 30.

Within this context, the action of the civil society for eradicating poverty is a key element in the defence of the social rights provided for by the European Social Charter, including the right guaranteed under article 30. The European Committee of Social Rights also considers that the monitoring mechanisms should imply all actors concerned, including representatives of the civil society and persons living in poverty and exclusion.

Up to now the Committee has made 13 decisions on the merits of collective complaints linked with article 30, two more new complaints are still under examination. I want to encourage you, as non-governmental actors, to use without hesitating this tool of collective complaint procedure that the European Social Charter offers as a help in your fight against poverty and for the promotion of social inclusion.

The title of the celebration that will take place at noon at the forefront of the Palais of the Council of Europe is "Ending with poverty: leaving nobody behind" It is a clear reference to the Sustainable Development Programme 2030 of the United Nations. This programme contains 17 sustainable development goals based on 8 of the Millennium goals. This latter programme aimed at, by the end of 2015: eliminating great poverty and hunger; providing access to ground school education level for all; promoting gender equality and capacity building of women; reducing the death rate of children; improving mother health; fighting against illnesses like aids, paludism and others; ensuring a sustainable environment and promoting a worldwide

cooperation for this development. For sure, some progress has already been achieved but still, millions of persons, in particular the poorest ones and the disadvantaged ones have been left behind as Jan Eliasson, Deputy -Secretary-General of the UN said in a forum of member States in January 2016 on the ethics of development.

The World Bank, in its report published in 2016, stated also that extreme poverty is diminishing, but not quickly enough. The report notes that economic inequalities are among the main brakes for improving the situation.

In July 1849, Victor Hugo, in his speech at the French National Assembly, about the case of people who died of hunger, made a call "...(...) I say, such things should not exist; I say, the society should use all its strength, all its solicitude, all its intelligence and all its will, so that such things don't exist ! I say that such facts, in a civilised country, question the conscience of the whole society (...), (...) it is anarchy that opens gaps, but it is misery that digs them. You have made laws against anarchy, now, make laws against misery!"

Today, one and a half century later, misery is still there, we are still about to organise for eradicating poverty. Today, we have laws against misery, we have the European Social Charter, we have the Joint Declaration signed 5 years ago by the four pillars of the Council of Europe. Right now, we must define the priorities for action and put them into force at regional, national and local level. How could the Council of Europe do more? How to do better? It is these questions that we will discuss during this day and I already thank the participants for their input to this discussion

I really hope that this day will help us to improve our means and actions and to better cooperate the one with the others.

1. ROUND TABLE "Acting together for the eradication of poverty in Europe: what are the changes since 2012 "

Contribution: Annelise Oeschger, honorary president of the Conference of INGOs

30 years ago, thousands of people around the world prepared themselves for coming to Paris, to the Trocadero and for making together a big call. Many of them had to first try and get the necessary papers for crossing borders. Paris, the Eiffel tower, are well known everywhere in the world. 100 000 people gathering there for making a call, asking for the respect of the rights of each human being, for ending great poverty in the world, a call that will have an incredible impact. There was a great hope brought about by this meeting.

Those very poor women and men who came to Paris on 17th October 1987 have taken an enormous risk – as nobody could say what will happen when they turn home. They came because they were pushed by a dynamic that had begun long before this travel. In 1982, Joseph Wresinski, the founder of the International Movement ATD Fourth World, had launched an initiative aimed at recognising great poverty as a violation of human rights in the

international texts and signatures had been gathered all over the world. This initiative was successful. The article 30 adopted in 1996, providing for the right to protection against poverty and social exclusions is a direct result of this 1982 initiative, with in between, 15 years of hard work.

Never give up – this is one of the strong things that people living in poverty are teaching us. It is also driven by them that on 17th October the year after, a small group gathered around the stone in memory of the victims of misery at the Trocadero. They wanted to repeat the call that had been made the year before. We felt that it made sense and after that, each year we met there every 17th of each month – and slowly such meetings were organised in other places of the world. Someone said, “with this meeting, every month, I feel at home here, I feel like being somebody”. Madame Heidinger and her daughter who are here today are members of this big family.

It is thanks to this long-lasting commitment that on 22 December 1992, the General Assembly of the United Nations declared that the 17th October will be the International Day for the eradication of poverty.

The Council of Europe and people living in poverty are sharing this history. One of the main steps was the project “Human dignity and social exclusion” from 1991 to 1998; this was an opportunity to gain from the crossing of knowledge between people living in poverty, old aged people and professionals acting in different fields. The Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of local and regional authorities have made important recommendations and resolutions on many issues related to poverty. The Conference of INGOs also worked on poverty and created events making it possible that people are exchanging whilst otherwise they would never have been given the opportunity to meet. So, for example in 2011 at the ENA (National School of Administration) in Strasbourg together with the European Social Charter.

But the things are not changing quickly enough. This radical difference in considering poverty as a human rights violation and as an issue that calls for everyone’s cooperation under the guidance of the poorest people themselves does not really happen. Yet there is a commitment of the States and of local and regional authorities. Therefore, in 2012 the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of local and regional authorities and the Conference of INGOs signed a common declaration “Acting together for the eradication of great poverty in Europe” summing up and recalling the obligations and commitments for so doing.

This declaration is the first tool signed together by the four pillars of the Council of Europe and should be a milestone for the actions to be taken by the States, the local and regional authorities and the Conference of INGOs. Now 5 years have passed. I remember that Sylvie Clause, as a co-drafter of this declaration worked hard for the implementation of this Declaration.

Of course, all commitments listed in the Declaration were already existing but nevertheless it had not been easy to bring the decision makers to write them clearly on a paper and to

reiterate herewith their determination to act. This could be achieved thanks to the help of Ambassador Andrey Tehof, at that time permanent representative of Bulgaria at the Council of Europe and president of the group of rapporteurs on Human Rights at the Committee of Ministers. He was also the one who, the day before that 17th October 2012, had a long talk with persons living in poverty coming from some ten different countries in Europe for preparing the next day conference. This event had been organised with the support of the Albanese presidency of the Committee of Ministers and in cooperation with the service of the Social Charter (– I see here Danuta Wisniewska-Casals and Régis Brillat, - on whom we can rely at any time - I am very happy to see them here).

It is also good to see you here, you the youth. I have spoken of this long way to show you that your presence today and your commitment are crucial – because it is with this common determination, this capacity to come together that we will overcome poverty.

Stefan Rullac Anthropologist, Director of research, Scientific Director of IRTS (Institute for Social Workers) in Paris

« From claiming Human Rights to a positive negotiation with people living at the margin of the society”.

How is it possible to explain why, in France, thousands of homeless people are living in the street and hundreds of them are dying there every year? Why does the society allow the existence of a social rule having such tragic consequences, despite the horror it generates? According to which rules do we all accept this way of social functioning that becomes permanent?

The yearly report of the foundation Abbé Pierre in 2016 says that the number of homeless persons has increased by 50% between 2001 and 2012 when it reached up to 141 500 people living on the street, in hotels or in housing centres. The presence of homeless people on public spaces raises the issue of a social functioning that brings thousands of people to live and many of them to die on the street; it is impossible to ignore their presence. This alarming trend questions the way of management of a society that seems to be lost when it faces this thousand years lasting problem with solutions that seem to worsen it despite a real political and social investment at European, and even World level.

When, in 1992 the members of the French Parliament decriminalised vagrancy and begging they changed the social status of the former vagrants and beggars who stopped being offenders in the sense of penal law and became homeless people and users of a new area of social work.

An anthropological look on the social contract allows to think that, if the presence of homeless people living on the street becomes permanent it means that there does exist a rule making that it is authorised and generating, by the way, a new category of social workers.

Is this social dysfunction not becoming, over time, a social way of functioning? Without any analysis of needs?

Why are these persons on the street, on the public space?

Over time, their presence looks like an answer to the issue faced by the society that is looking for pragmatic and opportunist solutions that would maintain the strength of its social contract. It sends a strong message to the actors in the social area, who, due to the weakening wage society, slowly accept the loss of protection and accept also less protecting universal standards. Faced with homeless people suffering on the street each one is bound to manage his/her own feeling of social insecurity and is readier to accept changes in the social contract rooted in a progressive collective resignation to lesser protection.

The aim will then be to mobilise these persons living on the fringe of the society so that they play a positive part and this the more today, in this special time of shrinking social contract, where the level of social protection is no more the main issue or becomes less important. Such declining social protection is a risk for all of us. Is the society not about to lose its logic when it uses homeless people for redefining the contract that shapes our living together?

The fact is that the social contract must be renegotiated and for so doing we should recognise these people's expertise; the role of social workers is then to facilitate the expression of this expertise. It is necessary to go beyond individual stories and to create a collective say; we already know the methodology that we should use, it is knowledge crossing.

Now, this raises once more the issue of how to measure poverty; is it starting from a poverty threshold? Is it based on statistics? What kind of new configuration is to be found?

Anna Rurka , president of the Conference of INGOs, recalls the different steps of the work done by the Conference , with the first meeting organised on 17th October 2011 at the ENA (the French National School of Administration) on the occasion of the 50 years of the European Social Charter (adopted in 1961), followed by yearly meetings and in 2014 the special day on great poverty in Turin with a strong message sent to the High Level Conference of the Council of Europe and the European Union on the progression of the implementation of the European Social Charter. The discussions, during this day, have ended in what is now called the "Turin process for the development of the European Social Charter". In Turin, at the same time, the Governmental Committee of the Social Charter held its meeting with on its agenda, among others, the article 30 on which Sylvie Clause brought a contribution that made a strong impression on the representatives of the States.

In 2015, at the end of a new meeting of the Council of Europe and the European Union a new text was written, "the Document of Brussels" that points to the necessity of a unified implementation of the European Social Charter.

We have also to quote the collective complaint procedure that is used by many INGOs and is a democratic way to place one or more articles at the core of the policy of a State. The aim is now that national NGOs be allowed to make collective complaints, the INGOs acting then as facilitators.

The Conference of INGOs has created in 2016 “a Committee of coordination for the Turin process for the development of the European Social Charter”. This Committee has, among others, followed the preparation of the EU “common social pillar “which is a positive political paper but unfortunately not binding for the States and without monitoring mechanism.

Afternoon

Fighting against poverty and improving social cohesion in Europe

Moderation by Iamvi Totsi, vice-president of the Commission of human rights at the Conference of the INGOs

Annachiara Cerri PECS (Plateforme Européenne de Cohésion Sociale) European Social Cohesion Platform

In 1997 the 2nd Summit of the Heads of States decided that social cohesion would be one of the main tasks of the Council of Europe.

In 2010 the Council of Europe adopted a Strategy on social cohesion in which it was stressed that social cohesion depends on the societies’ ability to provide for the well-being of all their members, which implies to tackle the issue of existing differences. But we see that there is a growing difference between the poor and the rich. More and more people struggle for not falling back into poverty when they achieved to get out of it and many others experience difficulties for avoiding becoming poor.

The mandate of the Social Cohesion Platform is presently of two years (2017-2019) and aims at promoting exchanges of good practice. The platform meets once a year and works in small groups on questionnaires. It should publish a report by the end of its mandate.

The priorities adopted for this work are as follows:

- Children and youth
- Protection of migrants and refugees
- Impact of the crisis on health and social help

A newsletter is published, and you may find it on the website

Peter Verhaeghe Caritas Europa, representative of the Conference of INGOs at the Collaborative Platform on social and economic rights, member of the Coordination Committee in support of the Turin Process for the European Social Charter

As part of its commitment to supporting the Turin process, the Conference of INGOs participates in the meetings of the CoE-FRA-ENNHRI-EQUINET Collaborative Platform on social and economic rights. The Collaborative Platform was launched in October 2015 by the participating organisations: the Council of Europe ([CoE](#)), the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency ([FRA](#)), the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions ([ENNHRI](#)) and the European Network of Equality Bodies ([EQUINET](#)).

The main objective of the Platform on social and economic rights is to contribute to finding answers to fundamental rights challenges in Europe.

The Platform on social and economic rights provides an opportunity to discuss ways to ensure that the European Social Charter (ESC) is better taken into account in the design and implementation of national legislation and practice.

The Platform mainly focuses on how to ensure greater use of the relevant human rights standards, especially the European Social Charter, on how to promote wider acceptance and use of the collective complaints procedure, and to further the adoption of the revised Social Charter by the States still bound by the 1961 Charter.

The Platform also helps defining the role of the National Human Rights Structures in achieving the objectives of the "[Turin Process for the European Social Charter](#)", launched by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe in October 2014 in Turin. For more information on the Collaborative Platform, see the [dedicated webpage](#).

I participated on behalf of the Conference of INGOs in the 5th meeting of this Platform which took place last month. An entire session was devoted to Article 30 of the Charter - the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion. This included an exchange on the use of the European Social Charter as a tool to eradicate poverty.

In my contribution to the meeting, I briefly presented the Conference of OINGs commitment to fighting poverty and to the full respect of social rights by member States. The struggle for social justice and access to social rights, against extreme poverty and social exclusion has indeed always been a core topic of the Conference.

After the Turin Conference in 2014, the Conference set up a Coordination Committee in support of the Turin Process for the European Social Charter. This Committee brings together INGOs working both at Council of Europe and EU level: ATD 4th World, European Social Action Network, Justice and Peace Europe, European Action of the Disabled (AEH) and Caritas Europa. Objective of the Committee is to increase awareness of the members of the Conference (and their national members) of the Revised European Social Charter as well as their involvement in its promotion and monitoring, including the reporting procedure and use of the Collective Complaints Mechanism. The Committee also supports the full inclusion of the European Social

Charter in the EU proposal for a European Pillar of Social Rights and raises awareness on the possibilities of positive interaction between the two instruments for the promotion of social rights in Europe.

Considering the work achieved by the Coordination Committee in support of the Turin Process and the European Social Charter, the working group on Children's rights of the Conference decided to encourage and coordinate INGOs contributions to this year's reporting on group 4 of the articles of the Social Charter: child, family and migration (articles 7, 8, 16, 17, 19, 27 and 31).

In line with the work of the Coordination Committee, Caritas Europa produces thematic country reports and a European report on a regular basis. The first reports aimed at influencing national and EU social policy making, but increasingly they include reference to the Revised European Social Charter, and are based on the [Caritas "roadmap" for social justice and equality in Europe](#) (also available in [BG](#), [HR](#), [FR](#), [DE](#) and [ES](#)).

The Caritas Country reports are combined with Caritas Europa capacity building initiatives aiming at

- increasing advocacy efforts of the member organisations for the ratification of the Revised European Social Charter, for the acceptance of all relevant provisions that could have a strong impact on the lives of the most deprived (including article 30) and for the acceptance of the Collective Complaints Mechanism by more member States;
- increasing the collection and use of Caritas data and grass-roots information (country reports) as contribution to the European Social Charter reporting procedure and to prepare Collective Complaints.

The Collaborative Platform also had a discussion on the European Pillar of Social Rights, which was adopted by the European Commission on 26 April 2017. The EU institutions (Council, European Parliament and European Commission) intend to officially "launch" the European Pillar of Social Rights as a set of guiding principles for the further development of a more social Europe. This proclamation might take place exactly one month from today, on 17.11.17, as mentioned by Madame Battaini-Dragoni this morning. It is a political document and it will be up to mainly the EU Member States to undertake action. We believe that a ratification of the Revised European Social Charter, with acceptance of all its provisions and acceptance of the Collective Complaints Mechanism by all Member States would be a strong expression of the political commitment expressed in the Proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Charter is indeed the Social Constitution of Europe and efforts need therefore to be continued to ensure that it doesn't become the "best kept social secret" of Europe.

In conclusion of the meeting, it is very clear to me that both the Collaborative Platform and the Conference of INGOs are working hard for a better protection of social rights in Europe. Not only do they share the same objective, they are complementary, and enhanced cooperation could in my view lead to more impact. We will explore how this synergy and cooperation can be further developed in order to renegotiate the "social contract" as Mr. Rullac called for in the morning session.

The access of young people to social rights

Moderation: Gérard Schaeffer, Assistant Directeur of ESTES (School for social workers)

Hélène GARRIGUES et J-L Patrick CHINIARD EUROCEF

Just a year ago we were here, like today, for the world day for the eradication of poverty. During this day, having as topic youth poverty, two young adults had come for sharing with you their experience of poverty and telling how they reflected on this situation and concept with six of their peers.

They had all been so called "Foreign Non-Accompanied Minors" and had become adults, at that time having a Contract of Young Adult with the service for the protection of children giving them access to social support, education, housing and to a benefit for covering their basic needs. Because of that we thought that they were protected against poverty, as they had the support given by the French "social support for children" programme.

In fact, it was not at all like that in reality; similar to what happened 30 years ago when the action of Father Wresinski made that people living in great poverty could speak up, this day of 17th October 2016 made that these young people told us, professionals and volunteers, citizens, that their real experience was totally different. They said that they, of course, feel protected against economic poverty as they are given housing and a monthly benefit but that they have a feeling of "social poverty" as they decided to call it.

Despite social support and education, despite social workers next to them, they had the feeling of "counting for nobody". They expressed it clearly in their own words and said: *social workers are paid for looking after us, but this does not mean that they worry about us, that they ring up for getting news when we are ill.*

They denounced this poor social link that was bearing on them during a debate that quickly turned about how powerful and mighty social workers are, sometimes they don't ask their opinion, don't listen to them, or even threaten with punishments.... They thought that social workers don't respect their rights.

But which rights do they have? They didn't know ... and nobody was there for telling them about the rights they have and how to defend them.

As a result of their participation, exactly one year ago in this same place and with you, they made a decision and this decision was to go ahead and to become a force of proposals influencing the way in which they are given support, at both, the level of the “ system” and the level of practice.

They decided to ask for the creation of a Youth Council in the social support service for children that was caring for them, a Youth Council that would be composed by the concerned young people, providing for their participation in the decision-making bodies where until now only professionals are admitted and speak about their theories and professional experience.

They wanted a Youth Council with meetings, activities and encounters with peers, and that would be organised by themselves. In a nutshell, they wanted to take their future in their own hands as the system is often very far away from their real life.

The project has been accepted and validated by the local authorities. This Council is about to be set up and elections for representatives to this Council will take place soon. It is a good project that would never have been developed by other people, even highly qualified, than those who are concerned.

I wanted also to tell you that the NGO called the SOS Group,(<http://www.groupe-sos.org>) together with EUROCEF and within a project ERASMUS+ has built up a programme aimed at a better integration into the labour market of young people supported by units for childhood protection.

This project included non-governmental organisations and universities from six countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Poland and Spain) and the first findings were that young people cared for by units for childhood protection suffered from a lack of support and that they had no network to call upon for facilitating their access to the labour market.

This project called ABEONA is about to come to its end with 10 recommendations related to professionals and volunteers committed to promoting access to the labour market for these young people.

The 10 recommendations made at the end of the project “resources and skills” are:

1. Training social workers on the topic of professional integration at both initial training and lifelong training
2. Creating a platform (with public access) with all available tools for young people supported by units for childhood protection, including the way how to use these tools.
3. Including enterprises as partners in the vocational integration programme
4. Providing for meeting opportunities of professionals for exchange of practice
5. Supporting the housing units where these young people live and assessing their knowhow as to professional integration

6. Sharing the whole set of tools for professional integration of youth and making sure that the heads of these structures and the social services support vocational training and integration into the labour market.
7. Having a clear assessment of the impact of professional integration on young people coming from childhood protection services.
8. Creating a European quality label guaranteeing the work done by organisations involved in vocational integration.
9. Creating a European network gathering good practices and solutions as for instance new tools
10. Organising an international day for promoting and highlighting the value of the work achieved by social workers with conferences and events in which they would be implied.

Monica Oltra Vice-president of the Regional Government of Valencia; regional Minister for equality and social inclusion, Vice-president of the European network for inclusion and social work (ELISAN), member of the European Social Action network (ESAN)

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to address a few words to all of you.

Discussing poverty and how to fight it in a context such as the rich Europe should be embarrassing, almost obscene. However, here we are in the 21st century thinking about how to fight against the impoverishment of thousands of citizens in a context that should guarantee people a level of social welfare and security sufficient for respecting human dignity, because there is enough wealth available for so doing. However, the current trend in our environment, and which is unfortunately tolerated and accepted, is that there is an increasing difference between those who have the most and those who have the least (those dispossessed of goods, services and resources). Wealth is increasingly accumulating in a few hands while many people have more and more difficulties to live in dignity.

The economic crisis, or rather, its perverse management, has condemned millions of people to social exclusion, while banks were being rescued. It has created new vulnerable groups and has led traditionally vulnerable groups to extreme poverty and despair.

The figures in my region speak by themselves:

The indicators of poverty and social exclusion according to the AROPE rate in 2015, when we arrived at regional government, show that:

32.9% of the Valencian population was in a situation of social exclusion (3.3% higher than the global Spanish average).

25.3% were living in economic poverty. 318,000 people were living on less than 332€ per consumption unit.

14% were late in paying their mortgage or rent.

41% cannot afford unforeseen expenses.

16.3% cannot keep a suitable temperature at home in winter.

These figures are hardly consistent with the Declaration of Philadelphia, adopted on the 10th of May 1944, stating that: "All human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity."

We may even say that the lack of opportunities, of access to rights or well-being could be considered as inhumane and degrading treatment, especially when it occurs in a context of sufficient but unfairly distributed resources.

The management of the crisis has also led to creating a collective idea according to which rights depend on what each person can afford; in other words, their purchasing power.

If you can afford it, you will have the right. Otherwise, you will not have it. This message has caught on to the point of becoming hegemonic, making rights meaningless, since a right that exists only if you can afford it is not a right, but a simple commodity or consumer good; and if the worst comes to the worst, a privilege.

The first victims of this induced way of thinking are social rights. Still in our political context it would be difficult to argue that children receive no schooling or patients have no access to hospital care. However, those social rights that are not consolidated as a pillar within the Welfare State (in fact, the EU is still at this stage trying to build its "Social Pillar", without much enthusiasm though) are given up to the dreaded concept of "budgetary stability".

It will be as simple as all States signing and ratifying the Revised European Social Charter and European Institutions placing all their efforts, especially economical efforts, in its implementation.

I always wondered why it is more important to fight physical illness versus social illness, as both lead to unhappiness.

Giving up social rights will mean giving up educational and health rights too in the medium term, because this is a steady demand of those who have decided to go for a world based on privileges instead of rights. In other words, giving up a right will inexorably involve giving up subsequent rights in an endless cruel cycle.

One of the groups emerging as victims of the management of the financial and subsequently economic crisis is the group of adolescents and young people. While the loss in purchasing power in our country in general has been by 18.6% since 2008, this percentage is as high as 28% for young people.

The unemployment rate for young people is twice the average unemployment rate. While a few decades ago poverty used to hit old age pensioners and retired people, it now has a huge impact on young people; people who have been taken away their chance to build their own life project, their present and their future, jeopardizing the future of the society as a whole, because no society can survive when children are left behind.

This phenomenon coexists with another disturbing one: the growing poverty of women, which, as a result, affects children. Poverty, or rather impoverishment, has a woman's face and a child's face.

However, this diagnosis should not make us lose hope. And especially, it should not hide our ability to act, from local to regional governments, to reverse this situation. Small, irreversible changes can make a big revolution. And that is what we are doing.

These small changes are the translation of the beginning and of the most important part of our government's commitment for helping these people. This means placing people at the heart of government's action for helping them to develop their life project, thus passing from a system of assistance towards a system of universal social welfare.

In fact, my government's first legal measure in this direction was to re-establish universal health care, which had been suppressed by the previous administration.

This was a strong declaration of intent from a government arising from the willingness to change, which took place in Spain in 2015 and led to the election of political forces who have called into question the neoliberal doctrine according to which banks are rescued first and people are left behind.

The translation of these ideas into political action has implied that during our two years in government, in my region, we have carried out a series of projects which will doubtless have an impact on the future. Let me give you some examples:

1. 'Valencian Income for Social Inclusion Law' (currently under parliamentary process)

The purpose of this law is to make that a person's or a family's decent income becomes a subjective right and does not depend on "budgetary stability". In other words, being a citizen gives the right to an income that allows for social inclusion.

We would like this law to be a tool for fighting against impoverishment, so that besides ensuring stable incomes for people and families in need, we also put an end to the stigmatization of poverty. By 'stigmatization of poverty' I mean that we live in a society that everyday reminds people that they are in need, and this reminder almost is like blaming them for their own fate.

Here is an example: in prison there still exist those old, huge and noisy iron bolts to lock the cells at night. When they get locked, they make an awful noise. There are modern and silent bolts that would perfectly do the job, but the purpose is not to close the door. The purpose is to remind prisoners that they are deprived of freedom and to remind it each time the door is locked.

In the same way, when we force a person to ask for subsidies, and for combatting poverty in emergency to ask help from an NGO, to call on social services because of apparently endless difficulties, what we are doing is reminding him/her every day that he/she is poor. And, what is even worst, we make them believe that they are responsible of this situation. It is not the system's fault, it is the person's fault.

Well, that is precisely what we want to put an end to... to guilt, without hope to get out of this vicious circle. We want to stabilize people's economic situation so that they have time and courage to build their own life project, to make individual plans for reaching their goal, allowing them to manage their social inclusion process.

This project not only considers the structural lack of income but also the phenomenon of poor workers who are given a salary supplement, or a pensions supplement (an 80% of women are deprived from a full pension because they did not contribute enough).

We also removed age limitations, as the requirement of being 25 for having access to this income supplement, so that young people who are in difficult situations can have access to this additional resource. Also, for the first time, the number of children in a family is considered when it comes to estimate the amount of this supplement for a family, which seems very logical but nevertheless has not been done until now.

2.The 'Valencian Plan for Social Inclusion and Cohesion'.

This plan starts from a diagnostic of poverty at territorial level with an analysis of its concentration and distribution. This plan is based on two fundamental and transversal concepts for fighting against poverty of women and against inherited poverty. 80% of young girls and boys who are poor today will be poor also as adults. Can you imagine this percentage of inheritance in a congenital disease? The originating gene would probably have been already neutralized. Why don't we do the same when it is about social inheritance?

The Plan considers reaching four aims:

- The right to social inclusion and to work
- Ensured access to benefits.
- Guaranteed protection of rights and access to public services, meaning social services as well as education, health, housing, culture and information.
- The guarantee of territorial equality and social cohesion.

The idea is to promote equality of opportunities regardless of people's origin, personal circumstances or residence.

3.The social function of the Law on housing.

This was, in fact, the first law that our government has adopted due to the very bad situation of thousands of families losing their homes. It considers the right to housing as a subjective right, and not as a right to property aimed at investment or speculation. This law considers the situation of vulnerability of the different communities. It establishes a tax on empty houses depending on the number of houses that a person or society owns. It establishes the obligation to provide a home to the people who need it. In conclusion, it gives the priority to the right to a home as a fundamental right, before speculation and enrichment.

Currently, this law has been questioned by the Government of Spain, who has issued an appeal to the Constitutional Court.

4.A new model of social services.

In our region, we have gone for reinforcing the basic social services, the municipal social services. In two years, we have multiplied by four the staff of these services and therefore guaranteed reasonable ratios (we have gone from 13,000 inhabitants by professional to 3,000 inhabitants by professional). We have also guaranteed multidisciplinary teams. With this, we reinforce neighborhood services and primary social-care attention.

Other measures that will have an important impact are, for example, the project called "Xarxa Llibres", a book bank that guarantees school textbooks to all girls and boys in the public-school system, so that families with fewer resources do not have disadvantage nor a sense of anguish about their situation.

Another measure is the "Project of Integral Youth Policies", which enables young people to participate in the public decision making process on an equal basis with the administration, in the same percentage that the administration and recognises the right to educational leisure for youth.

We begin now to have encouraging effects in the statistical data of my region. In two years, the poverty rate has decreased by four points, to be compared with the decline of 1.3 in the rest of Spain. Besides, the risk of poverty in the Valencian Community has been reduced to 6.9 % whereas in the rest of Spain it has grown by 0.5 % from 2014 on.

Similarly, also from 2014 on, the situations of absolute hardship, that supposes not being able to afford for a meal of meat, chicken or fish at least once every second day, have been reduced by 34 % to be compared with 18 % in the rest of the State. Another data that supports the efficiency of the policies that we are carrying out to improve people's life is that the tax on homes, where people in working age are living but where less than 20 %n are really working, has been reduced by 3.5 % during the last year, whereas in the rest of the State it was reduced by 2.2 %.

There is still much to be done, but we have already taken the right path, the one that has to be taken for achieving an inclusive society, with a place for each and every one. We did this together because these changes would not have been possible without the participation of all social actors and the NGOs, to which we have listened and whose ideas and proposals have contributed to the development of this project.

Finally, I want to thank you for the opportunity that you offered me to explain that another government is possible, that people should be at the center of our policies if we want to build a better and welcoming world.

Gaël Gauthier, JOC , (christian working youth) Secretary general for young jobless youth in France

JOC, what is it?

It is Christian Working Youth, an organisation for popular education gathering 10 000 girls and boys aged from 13 to 30 and living in working class areas.

We discuss, think and act together for having a say on our life and change that what does not really work in our surroundings, in the society. We are active in all areas of life: employment, income, housing, health, leisure, training... With 120 local federations, JOC is the only national organisation of working class youth. It is managed and governed by youth themselves.

ENQUIRY

Within the framework of its campaign "Rights first" in 2013-2015, the organisation aimed at making that each young boy or girl could have access to his/her rights and be recognised and have access to the general legal system. The president of the JOC said "we have to put an end to all these special measures for youth and time has come to recognise that young people aged 18 are adults and have the same rights as all other adults"

Knowing one's rights means also knowing the institutions and public services that are made for supporting the population.

During the year 2013, the enquiry made by the JOC and INJEP (national institute for youth and popular education) with youth ended with the following results:

- Some 1 youth out of 2 declared that he/she had no knowledge of labour law
- Youth have a poor knowledge of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the International Convention for Children

The exercise aimed at discovering and feeling owners of rights led to a bitter statement:

- 44% out of the responding young people think that they can't make their rights respected because they fear to be laid off
- 33% said that precarious employments are a brake to rights .

Last year, within the framework of its new campaign "Workers' Dignity, a challenge for tomorrow" we got the same results from our inquiry with interviews of young people:

- 36% out of them thought that the society does not create the necessary conditions allowing them to know their rights
- Less than 1 young person out of 2 (those who have a job and those who have no job) thought that the society creates good access to housing.

LIST OF COMPLAINTS

Based on these results, the JOC proposed to all youth, and especially to those from workers background and those who have no job, to set up a List of Complaints for the 15th April. They discussed and made proposals for:

- Access to a job with dignity for all
- A real implementation of the labour law as provided for in the French Constitution

The list of complaints is on five main topics and has 40 claims, all on the issue of rights:

- The right to decent employment
- The right for all women to work
- The right to well-being at work
- The right to life-long learning
- The right to make a mistake
- The right to dignity
-

I want to quote here some of their complaints:

- to have a better training and more information about rights to health and the steps for accessing to these rights

The massive unemployment kills over 15 000 people each year in France and millions live in precarious conditions (INSERM official figures 2015). Today, in France, between 5 and 8 million people are living under the poverty level, under 900 € pro month. These persons can't have access to health care. Because they lack information and don't know their rights they can't care for their health.

- To have access to a network of information, training and support for accessing to a decent housing

45% of young people said that, for them, real autonomy goes, among others, together with the possibility to have a housing. Nevertheless, they experience real difficulties for having access to housing: 68% out of young people between 18 and 30 mentioned it in the inquiry of 2016. Since 2012, several measures facilitating access to housing have been taken for different groups of youth (rent deposit for students, VISA for housing and employment...) These measures are a noticeable progress but we all know that when several measures are coexisting the result is often that people don't resort to them. Those for whom these measures have been developed don't really know them and this reduces their use. (FFJ 2016)

For highlighting these rights, the JOC has launched on 7th October 2017, the world day for a decent work, a petition supported by many stakeholder organisations (ATD Fourth World, the group Roosevelt, the National Movement unemployed and precarious workers and others)

Young people's say :

Clémence : *« My job doesn't allow having any project. I am temping. The thing with them is that when they want to fire me, they do it. I have no protection, even if I have a labour contract. I can't do any project so long I have no fix job.*

Edouard : *«In 2009, when I was an apprentice butcher, my working conditions were not respected, and this had an impact on my well-being. Then a friend came with a proposal to join his small group of members of the JOC. There I found help and could choose another orientation. At school I discovered that other young people experienced the same difficulties. This brought me to set up a union of high school students with some friends"*

Veronique Bertollé Youth Express Network Y-E-N

I am representing here the Youth Express Network, a non-governmental and not-for-profit organisation that federates 30 organisations in 22 European countries. We are working for the social inclusion of youth and try to reach our aim: "inclusive society for youth". We consider that an inclusive society is a society that recognises their needs and their participation. Our aim is to encourage social, cultural and economic inclusion of more and more young people.

In our name, Youth Express Network, the word "express" has a double meaning

- Express yourself, because we believe that young people have a lot of important things to say on the present social issues

- Express also means quickly. This means that if we want to promote a change in the society we can't wait till tomorrow, we must do it here and now.

We are an organisation that is

- Managed by young people; we use and spread out the knowledge of young people who are at the core of our activities;
- Inclusive: open to all young people and giving them the opportunity to participate while considering the diversity and the needs of the groups of those who are excluded;
- Sustainable: we invest in the long term, in the steady development and improvement of services and proposals;
- Responsible: we participate actively and take responsibilities for promoting the development of our organisation;
- Innovative: we develop new solutions together with young people who are also involved at implementation level.

Support, implication, courage

Support: we organise trainings, seminars, international projects and research on youth and social issues and try to be the voice of the most disadvantaged ones, either by representing them at the level of local, regional and European institutions, or by helping them to create youth councils and to participate in these councils at the level of local policymaking. We make also recommendations at local, regional and European level. We are members of the European Youth Forum and of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe.

Implication

- Make the voice of youth heard. It is very important that young people are listened to at the level of government and society. Therefore, we encourage their implication so that they become active and well informed citizens and are able to contribute efficiently in the policies concerning them. We support participation of young people and exchange of information; we organise debates with politicians and help young people to give their opinion on topics that are important for them.
- Promoting changes in their community: young people have a great force for bringing about changes. We try to give them the opportunity and the will to have a positive impact on the society. Our members organise and support volunteer actions in local activity programmes.

Courage

- We celebrate good results: very many young people work hard and efficiently for the wellbeing of their peers and for the society in general. We consider that these young people must be honoured and recognised, with prizes and others.
- By supporting positive experiences, prize giving celebrations, and awards we encourage the others to follow their example and to participate in volunteer activities.

The access of young people to social rights is another aspect of our work.

For us, social rights are human rights, not secondary rights. Access to rights means enjoying them fully. We need laws, but we also need information and capacity building so that young people feel enough confident for claiming their rights.

We participated in the project ENTER 2009 for the promotion of the role and the work of young people in matters of access to rights. We should remember the Recommendation 2015 of the Committee of Ministers to the member States five years later. Now it is up to us, the civil society to make sure that lawmakers remember this Recommendation.

This Recommendation ENTER has two sections:

- The recommendations to the member States and to the local and regional authorities related to the development and implementation of policies considering the special situation and the needs of young persons from disadvantaged backgrounds. These policies should aim at preventing and eradicating poverty, discrimination, violence and exclusion of these young people.
- Guide lines (proposals of policy measures related to young people) with an emphasis on young workers.

Some words about recommendations

The Committee of ministers is the main decision-making body of the Council of Europe. It writes recommendations for the member States on issues related to human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Recommendations are not binding but they give a framework and proposals that the governments are invited to implement at national level.

What is the origin of this recommendation ENTER,

The project ENTER aims at developing political answers based on social rights to situations of exclusion, discrimination and violence experienced by young people. The activities carried out in the framework of this project, and specially the training of youth from disadvantaged backgrounds and local interventions, allowed for making a first list of proposals in 2011. These proposals based on measures that young people, young workers and politicians at local and regional level considered to be crucial for youth living in Europe today. These proposals were

submitted to the Committee of Ministers by a group of experts in youth policy and by the decision-makers of the Youth Committee of the Council of Europe. These proposals and the debates that followed have been the basis of the Recommendation (CM/Rec(2015)3) adopted by the Committee of Ministers in January 2015

What does this Recommendation say ?.

It recognises the need for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to be included in the society and become active citizens to have access to quality education, long term employment, decent living conditions, adequate transportation, health, and technology as well as opportunities of social, economic and cultural participation.

It recognises also that these young people, and especially those who are living in poverty, have a lesser access to such opportunities. This makes that they are more vulnerable and at risk of many dangers related to their physical and mental health, to addiction, self-mutilation, violence, discrimination and exclusion.

What is this recommendation asking for?

It first asks that member States develop and implement policies answering the needs of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. It underlines that these policies should prevent and eradicate poverty, discrimination, violence and exclusion. It suggests that for so doing public authorities should:

- Improve the living conditions of these young people by facilitating their access to public services for youth related to
 - Education and training
 - Employment
 - Health
 - Housing
 - Information and counselling
 - Sports, leisure and culture
- Implement measures putting an end to segregation and isolation
- Promote programmes that provide young people with opportunities to be consulted and to participate in the decision-making process on topics related to the place where they live
- Make sure that young people are given an active role in the society without any discrimination
- Recognise the role of non-formal education, social workers, and youth organisations for the promotion of active citizenship and the prevention of discrimination, violence and exclusion
- Ensure that policies concerning young people include gender equality and support equal participation of young women and young men who are living in disadvantaged areas.

The Recommendation requires from public authorities that the measures listed in the recommendation and its appendixes be transposed in their policies and made known as widely as possible, specially to young people by using appropriate means of communication

It finally requests from the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to make this recommendation known by the governments of the States that are not member States of the Council of Europe but members of the European Convention on Cultures.

Dear participants,

We are now coming to the end of the celebration at the Council of Europe of the 30th World Day for the eradication of poverty. I would like to thank Madame Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the Committee of Ministers represented by Ambassador Ruffer, M.Giuseppe Palmisano, president of the Committee of Social Rights for opening this day. I would also like to thank the President of the Congress of local and regional authorities and the President of the Court of Human Rights and the other ambassadors who joint us at the forefront of the Palais for the ceremony.

It is crucial for the Council of Europe to celebrate this day together, having with us women and men, young and less young, who are daily facing discriminations linked to social exclusion and who are facing barriers for accessing to their rights. It is not only about solidarity and dignity. The aim of the meetings of 17th October organised over years by the Conference of INGOs is to show that people who are excluded can be actors of their life and that their experience and knowledge should be considered in the development of public policies and the assessment of new measures on people's life. The fact that these persons are given a political voice and bring proposals of practical measures as a contribution to the member States' public policies, makes our institutions more human and our policies closer to the concerns of the population.

The Council of Europe, with its bodies and institutions has developed legal instruments (Treaties, Conventions, Recommendations) allowing for the protection and the defence of the rights of the poorest members of the population. The States, by being members of the Council of Europe, by signing and ratifying these instruments expressed their will to steadily improve public policies so that they comply with the rules and standards promoted by the Council of Europe.

NGOs and INGOs have an important part to play for making sure that public policies answer the needs of the population to which they apply. The Conference of INGOs, as a body of the Council of Europe, has the institutional and moral obligation to use the instruments and monitoring mechanisms set up by the Council of Europe and to make them accessible to the INGOs so that they could actively contribute to the conclusions made in different sectors within the monitoring framework of the Council of Europe.

It is therefore crucial for the Conference of INGOs to be able to train its members for an effective and efficient use of these mechanisms in their activities at international and national level.

As to the subject of this day, I think that it is essential to reinforce our contribution to the European Social Charter procedure of reporting and even more to the collective complaints so as to have a dialogue with member States under the supervision of the European Committee of Social Rights, tackling precise cases and situations and bringing the evidence of threatening violations making that the respect of social rights becomes more and more uncertain.

Today we asked the pillars of the Council of Europe to tell us about the progress achieved since the Declaration of 2012. Now we must ask ourselves how the Conference could reinforce the work of the existing mechanisms so that they make a real difference in the life of the persons who are the most facing violations of their rights.

30th International Day for the Eradication of Poverty **“Ending poverty: leaving no-one aside”**

Ceremony (forecourt of the Council of Europe) **17 October 2017, 12.30pm**

Jean-Gabriel Prieur ATD Quart Monde

Answering the call of 17th October for ending poverty is a way towards peaceful and inclusive societies.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the declaration by the General Assembly of United Nations making 17th October the International Day for the eradication of poverty (resolution 47/196 of 22 December 1992).

This year also marks the 30th anniversary of the Call for Action by Father Joseph Wresinski which inspired the observance of this Day. The Call for action launched thirty years ago is recorded in the text of the Commemorative Stone at the Trocadero in Paris, which was unveiled in the presence of 100,000 people.

On 17th October 1987, defenders of human and civil rights from every continent gathered on this plaza. They paid tribute to the victims of hunger, ignorance and violence. They affirmed their conviction that human misery is not inevitable. They pledged their solidarity with all people who, throughout the world, strive to eradicate extreme poverty.

« Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that their rights be respected is our solemn duty »

A replica of the commemorative stone containing this text is installed here in Strasburg on this forefront of the Council of Europe since 1993.

The Call for Action recognized the knowledge and the courage of families living in poverty throughout the world -in Europe-, the importance of reaching out to the poorest and building an alliance with citizens from all backgrounds to end poverty. It has its roots in Joseph Wresinski's personal experience as a child living in poverty and his daily struggle with his family to overcome shame and social exclusion, and his lifetime commitment to make that people living in poverty are listened to.

The Call for Action which was taken up and replicated in many countries has allowed people living in extreme poverty to break the silence and to act in solidarity with those who wish to be their partners.

On 17th October each year, we come together to demonstrate the strong bonds between people living in poverty and people from all areas of life, and our individual and shared commitment to work together to overcome extreme poverty and human rights violations. One important commitment is to pay tribute to the human dignity of people living in poverty and to fight for ending the discrimination, humiliation and social exclusion they experience .

Five years after the Joint Declaration of the four pillars of the Council of Europe " Acting together for the eradication of poverty in Europe" (17th October 2012) we are here today to take stock of the achievements, to consider new possibilities and to identify difficulties in order to reach quicker and better our aim.

Misery is violent. There is still a too long way to go for those who suffer.

I propose now a minute of silence for remembering people who fought their life long for their dignity and that of their family.

Ambassador Božidarka **KRUNIĆ**,

Chair of the Rapporteur Group on Social and Health Affairs,

on behalf of the Committee of Ministers

On behalf of the Committee of Ministers, I would like to thank the Conference of INGOs for organising this event to mark the 30th International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

Fighting poverty is a responsibility of us all. This ceremony today is an opportunity to remind us of that responsibility and of the need for more action.

We cannot turn a blind eye to those who live in extreme poverty, who suffer because of lack of income, lack of access to fundamental rights such as health care, adequate housing, education and proper nutrition. Individuals who live excluded from society or in such disadvantaged communities that they may sometimes feel that there is no way out. No assistance. No hope.

The fact that there are still so many people living in poverty in Europe is unacceptable, including for this Organisation. Despite the many efforts to promote social cohesion, to promote access

to social as well as civil and political rights, to guarantee protection of the more vulnerable of our societies, there are still so many people experiencing that each day is a battle for survival.

It is five years since the Committee of Ministers, together with the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe adopted a common Declaration in which we committed ourselves to fight against growing poverty and social exclusion. Whilst much has been done over the last five years, we must acknowledge that so much more remains to be done.

I would recall the words of Mary Robinson, the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in which she stated *"I am often asked what is the most serious form of human rights violation in the world today, and my reply is consistent: extreme poverty"*.

Our duty as a human rights organisation is therefore very clear. We must continue in our efforts to alleviate poverty, in the hope that one day there shall be no need to attend a ceremony like this in memory of its victims.