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DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE I - DROITS DE L'HOMME ET ETAT DE DROIT

DIRECTORATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS / DIRECTION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

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SERVICE DE LA CHARTE SOCIALE EUROPÉENNE*

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**COMPILATION OF REPLIES TO THE QUESTIONS ON DEVELOPMENTS
SINCE THE PREVIOUS PLENARY MEETING**

Replies reproduced in the language in which they were submitted

**RECUEIL DES REPONSES AUX QUESTIONS SUR LES DEVELOPPEMENTS
INTERVENUS DEPUIS LA PRECEDENTE REUNION PLENIERE**

Réponses reproduites dans la langue dans laquelle elles ont été soumises

Point 4 of the draft Agenda/Point 4 du projet d'ordre du jour

Prepared by the Secretariat / Préparé par le Secrétariat

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S MEMBER STATES/ ÉTATS MEMBRES DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

ALBANIA/ ALBANIE

ANDORRA/ ANDORRE

ARMENIA/ ARMENIE

AUSTRIA/ AUTRICHE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

Initiatives:

- So far, the assets of Austrian people in inpatient long-term care (LTC) and their relatives have been utilised before social assistance stepped in to bear costs not covered by other individual financial resources. By 1 January 2018 at the latest a constitutional provision abolishes all forms of recourse to the assets of people in inpatient long-term care.
- In July 2017 the programme Action 20,000 was launched in model regions. The idea is to create or support public jobs for 20,000 long-term unemployed persons older than 50 years within the municipalities, charities and social enterprises. The pilot projects will be accompanied by coaching measures to further the transition of the participants into the first labour market. The next step will be the evaluation of the pilot projects in autumn 2018.

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

- The integration of refugees in the labour market remains as one important challenge.

AZERBAIJAN/ AZERBAİDJAN

BELGIUM/ BELGIQUE

–Wallonie

Principales réalisations, nouvelles initiatives liées à la cohésion sociale / droits sociaux qui ont eu lieu depuis le 28 juin 2016

- 1) Edition d'un guide de bonnes pratiques locales basées sur les droits fondamentaux, intitulé « Cohésion sociale, Droits fondamentaux et Pauvreté, guide de bonnes pratiques locales », éditions SPW, 2016 (voir : <http://cohesionsociale.wallonie.be>)
- 2) Poursuite de la mise en œuvre du Plan de cohésion sociale 2014-2019 dans 181 communes wallonnes (2/3 du territoire) qui vise à favoriser la cohésion sociale et l'accès de tous aux droits fondamentaux en Wallonie et réforme du dispositif.
- 3) Préparation d'un Rapport sur la cohésion sociale en Wallonie (état des lieux des mesures par droit, éléments statistiques, évaluation et prospective et recommandations) à paraître en 2018.
- 4) Lancement d'un Réseau des chefs de projet des Plans de cohésion sociale (170 personnes).
- 5) Organisation des Troisièmes Rencontres du Réseau International TOGETHER des Territoires de Coresponsabilité les en novembre 2016 à Braine-l'Alleud, Belgique.
- 6) Adoption d'un Plan wallon de lutte contre le radicalisme en 2015 et mise en œuvre d'un ensemble de mesures dont un appel à projets auprès des communes, lancé en 2016, visant à améliorer le vivre ensemble et la prévention du radicalisme en Wallonie
- 7) Adoption d'un Plan d'actions 2016-2019 relatif aux Droits de l'enfant en Wallonie.
- 8) Poursuite de la mise en œuvre du Plan wallon de lutte contre la pauvreté 2016-2019 qui vise à réduire les inégalités et à améliorer les droits des personnes en difficulté

Défis ou problèmes particuliers liés à la cohésion sociale / aux droits sociaux qu'il a fallu relever pendant cette période

1) Une augmentation de la précarité et des inégalités entre les citoyens (en particulier une augmentation des inégalités d'accès au revenu et à l'emploi, voir Indice de situation sociale publié par l'IWEPS <http://icpib.iweeps.be/indice-situation-sociale-wallonie.php>) et une baisse des moyens financiers des pouvoirs régionaux et locaux, avec pour corollaire une réduction des moyens dévolus aux associations et une précarisation des travailleurs sociaux.

2) L'écart entre les taux de risque de pauvreté estimés au niveau régional, globalement stable, reste très important : la Flandre a un taux proche du pays de l'Union européenne où le taux est le plus faible (9,8%), Bruxelles a un taux équivalent au taux du pays qui a le score le plus élevé (34%) et la Wallonie se situe au même niveau que la Pologne, le Portugal et la Lettonie (voir aussi Stabilité et Transformations de la pauvreté en Wallonie ?, IWEPS, octobre 2016).

Les chiffres disponibles concernant la Wallonie montrent qu'environ 40% de la population vivant dans un ménage monoparental dispose d'un revenu net inférieur au seuil de pauvreté (en 2014), environ 22,5% de la population vit dans un logement qui présente un problème d'humidité (en 2015), 20,2% des moins de 60 ans vivent dans des ménages à très faible intensité de travail. Parmi les bénéficiaires de l'aide sociale, on constate une surreprésentation des femmes, particulièrement chez les plus âgées (source : IWEPS, Les chiffres-clés de la Wallonie 2017). Enfin, les enfants sont particulièrement touchés par la pauvreté, quel que soit l'indicateur choisi.

3) L'inégalité ne se marque pas qu'en termes monétaires, elle touche tous les droits fondamentaux (source : IWEPS, Working Paper n°16, Regards sur la pauvreté et les inégalités en Wallonie, septembre 2013).

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA/ BOSNIE ET HERZEGOVINE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

Following the Strategy for Improving the Social Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republika Srpska 2010-2015 and the Strategy for Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in the FBiH 2011-2015, new documents were adopted. The Republika Srpska has adopted the Strategy for Improving the Social Position of Persons with Disabilities for the period 2017-2026 and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has adopted the Strategy for the Improvement of the Rights and Position of Persons with Disabilities 2016-2021. The Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2017-2023 was used to develop these Entity strategies. The multisectoral approach was used, which resulted in a comprehensive set of priorities, goals and activities in the fields of health care and insurance, education and training, social protection, employment and occupational rehabilitation, accessibility, information and communication, culture and religion, independence, security and availability of support services, equality and non-discrimination through laws, involvement in social processes, prevention and early intervention, raising public awareness and overcoming prejudices and stereotypes, as well as capacity building of organizations of people with disabilities.

The common goals of the strategy are the implementation of the activities needed to adequately regulate the status of these persons, with the aim of harmonizing the activities and responsibilities of the Entities and BiH with international standards and principles.

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

In co-operation with UNICEF in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Coordination Board was established for the program Transformation of Institutions and Prevention of Separation of Families with the aim of strengthening the process of deinstitutionalization of the system of social protection of children in BiH. Through this program, a document entitled Situational Analysis of Alternative Care System for Children without Parental Care in BiH was developed, which provided the key findings for the process of transformation of the existing social welfare institutions and strengthening of fostering and social services. This will enable deinstitutionalisation and prevention of separation of children from families.

Principales réalisations, nouvelles initiatives liées à la cohésion sociale / droits sociaux qui ont eu lieu depuis le 28 juin 2016

Politiques actives du marché de travail

Suivant les Plans nationaux de promotion de l'emploi 2016 et 2017

1. Huit nouveaux centres de soutien à l'emploi et à l'assistance sociale ont été créés dans le cadre d'un projet pilote d'introduction intégrée de Centres de soutien à l'emploi et à l'assistance sociale dans les régions éloignées, en plus des 65 qui fonctionnent déjà.

2. Une nouvelle réforme a introduit des aides financières pour les femmes qui reprennent le travail après un congé parental (en accord avec les art. 27, al. 2 et 3 de la Charte sociale européenne (révisée))

3. La loi de promotion de l'emploi a été révisée, ainsi que le système normatif d'assistance sociale pour assurer un meilleur accès à des droits sociaux adéquats.

a. Un soutien a été introduit pour la modification du lieu de résidence dans le but d'améliorer la mobilité sur le marché du travail par le biais d'une loi modifiant la loi sur la promotion de l'emploi. Afin de promouvoir la mobilité des chômeurs, il est prévu que, lorsqu'ils commencent à travailler après avoir été conseillés par pôle emploi, à plus de 50 km de leur adresse actuelle, ils recevront des allocations pour la crèche, la maternelle, le loyer, un forfait pour internet, mais pour une durée limitée de 12 mois.

b. Les procédures pour accéder aux services de pôle emploi ont été simplifiées pour faciliter les choses pour les employeurs et les usagers, avec un groupe prioritaire : les chômeurs de longue durée.

4. Des contrats d'une journée visant à lutter contre le travail non déclaré dans l'agriculture sont de plus en plus utilisés par les employeurs.

Progrès réalisé dans l'intégration des Roms

La Bulgarie a fait des progrès concernant l'accès égal à l'éducation de qualité pour les enfants des zones rurales, y compris pour les enfants Roms et les enfants des quartiers sensibles. L'accès à l'eau potable et à l'électricité et à d'autres services de base pour les familles Roms a également été amélioré.

Des progrès ont été signalés concernant la réduction du taux de décrochage des Roms de l'école primaire ¹.

Le rapport sur la Stratégie nationale d'intégration Rom pour 2016 a souligné :

a) Le taux des «NEET» (Not in Éducation, Employment or Training - des jeunes Roms extérieurs à l'enseignement, à l'emploi ou à la formation) a augmenté et reste alarmant, malgré la Garantie Jeunes qui fonctionne au niveau national.

b) Les médiateurs de santé ont été multipliés, ainsi que les cabinets médicaux mobiles. Pour l'intégration des Roms, il est très important de souligner le rôle du marché du travail et des médiateurs Roms de travail dont le nombre ne cesse d'augmenter. Un progrès est assuré grâce aux plans locaux élaborés et exécutés par les municipalités. L'approche multilatérale et transversale de « mainstreaming » a été renforcée au niveau local. Le défi majeur concerne la réintégration dans le système d'éducation des décrocheurs et l'alphabétisation des adultes.

c) JUSTROM est un programme conjoint de la Commission européenne et du Conseil de l'Europe sur l'accès à la justice pour les femmes Roms et les gens du voyage en Bulgarie, en Grèce, en Irlande, en Italie et en Roumanie.

Le programme JUSTROM vise à améliorer l'accès à la justice pour les femmes et les voyageurs Roms dans les cinq pays. À cet égard, le programme vise à donner aux femmes Roms et aux gens du voyage le savoir-faire pour lutter contre la discrimination et d'autres violations des droits de l'homme, y compris les mariages précoces / forcés, la traite de personnes, la violence domestique, les expulsions, les violences policières et les crimes de haine en sensibilisant à la discrimination, aux mécanismes de recours, au système de justice et aux institutions pour agir.

d) La nouvelle approche de ROMED2 consiste à renforcer les capacités des communautés Roms à participer à la gouvernance démocratique en s'appuyant sur la médiation. Les pays d'implémentation pour cette nouvelle phase de ROMED sont la Belgique, la Bosnie-Herzégovine, la Bulgarie, la Grèce, la Hongrie, l'Italie, le Portugal, la Roumanie, la Slovaquie et "L'ex-République yougoslave de Macédoine". Dans cinq de ces pays (Hongrie, Bulgarie, Roumanie, Slovaquie et Italie), la nouvelle initiative commune du Conseil de l'Europe et de la Commission Européenne [ROMACT](#) sera lancée avec le but de renforcer la volonté politique des autorités locales et leur capacité à développer des politiques. L'action des deux programmes se veut complémentaire dans l'autonomisation des Roms et dans l'habilitation des autorités locales avec le but commun de ramener les Roms à un niveau égal en tant que citoyens de plein droit dans leurs municipalités.

Défis ou problèmes particuliers liés à la cohésion sociale / aux droits sociaux qu'il a fallu relever pendant cette période

Cohésion sociale

Les trois messages de la Présidence tournante Bulgare du Conseil de l'UE qui commence le 1 janvier 2018 seront : **Consensus, compétitivité et cohésion**

1. Au niveau du Fonds européen d'aide aux plus démunis (FEAD), des changements sont en cours. Ils vont permettre d'élargir les groupes d'utilisateurs en introduisant :

- des personnes handicapées ayant un assistant, qui vivent au-dessous du seuil de pauvreté ;
- des personnes et des familles 65+ qui vivent au-dessous du seuil de pauvreté ;
- des familles avec 3 enfants ou plus qui vivent au-dessous du seuil de pauvreté ;

Il s'agit notamment de denrées alimentaires, de vêtements et d'autres biens essentiels à usage personnel, tels que des chaussures, du savon ou du shampoing.

2. Le modèle Bulgare de la Banque alimentaire a multiplié ses usages pour réduire la pauvreté extrême. Des incitations fiscales ont été introduites pour les donateurs de nourriture, notamment depuis janvier 2017, les entreprises d'alimentation ont été autorisées à faire don de tous leurs excédents et denrées alimentaires avec une durée de vie courte ou proche de leur échéance, sans frais de TVA (20%).

3. Les défis liés au trafic d'êtres humains et à la protection des victimes ont été adressés par le Programme national de prévention du trafic d'êtres humains et protection des victimes pour 2017. Un effort est témoigné à tous les niveaux pour renforcer la coopération interinstitutionnelle dans la lutte contre la traite des êtres humains, en relation avec les réalités migratoires actuelles et les nouvelles manifestations du crime.

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

**YOUTH AND CHILDREN
VULNERABLE PEOPLE, INCLUDING THE ELDERLY**

- In the field of social protection, the National Strategy for Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2017-2020 enacted in April 2017.
- During 2016, calls for proposals through ERDF were published, for:

Improvement of infrastructure for the provision of social services for children and youth in support of deinstitutionalization process (Phase 1-total value 71, 4 million HRK); Improvement of infrastructure for the provision of social services in the community for persons with disabilities in support of the deinstitutionalization process (Phase 1- total value 107,2 million HRK) and Improvement of infrastructure of the social welfare centres in support of the deinstitutionalization process (Phase 1- total value 73,1 million HRK).

Call for proposals are permanent and open until the end of 2019. There were 7 project proposals (5 Homes for persons with disabilities, 1 Home for children without adequate parental care and 1 Centre for Social Welfare) with a total value of around 50 million HRK. Four contracts were signed by the end of August. In March 2017 grants for funding through ESF were published - Support to the process of deinstitutionalization and prevention of institutionalization of children and youth (total value 63.000.000,00 HRK) and Support to further process of deinstitutionalization and transformation of social welfare homes for persons with disabilities (total value 135.000.000,00 HRK). Calls are limited and permanent, published until the end of 2020. To date, 3 project proposals have been submitted to support further process of deinstitutionalization and transformation of social welfare homes for persons with disabilities. (Social Welfare Homes for people with disabilities)

During 2017, Proposal of the Strategy on Social Care for Elderly Persons in the Republic of Croatia 2017-2020 was drafted, and submitted to the Government of Croatia for adoption.

Croatian Ministry for Regional Development and EU funds published 4 calls for proposals within *The Operational Programme "Competitiveness and Cohesion 2014. – 2020."*, Priority axis 8 *Social inclusion and Health* aimed to the following disadvantaged groups: persons with mental and physical disabilities, children without parental care, children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders, socially disadvantaged groups, palliative and spinal patients.

Within all OPCC grant schemes obligatory activities are introduced to strengthen the horizontal issues in each contracted project in the following areas: equal opportunities, gender equality and non-discrimination, sustainable development and accessibility to persons with mental and physical disabilities. A.m. activities must be implemented to reach over the legislative minimum and to be in line with *The Guidelines for Applicants on Horizontal Activities* that are part of tender documentation.

Concerning Social Cohesion and Inclusion, Ministry of Culture participates in the work of the OMC Group on Social Inclusion, operational from 2017 to 2019. At the moment, research and mapping activities are in place, and will be the focus of the working group. OMC Working Group recommendations are expected in early 2019.

In accordance with published calls for proposals (Arts and Culture for Youth and Arts and Culture 54+), targeting youth (aged 15 to 25), in particular youth in disadvantaged situations, and persons over 54, the tenders are closed. The evaluation process of submitted projects is still on-going.

Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the republic of Croatia (2014 - 2020) aims to establish a system of equal opportunities in education for each child /pupil regardless of their social group background. Pursuant to the Strategy, in the field of **education**, initiatives are taken, as follows:

- **Co-financing textbooks, for pupils - members of households that are beneficiaries of the guaranteed minimum benefits.**

In 2016 a total of 18,789 beneficiaries received assistance in the amount of 11,937,498 HRK, including 10,180 beneficiaries of Guaranteed Minimum Benefit, in amount of 5,390,483.91 kn.

- **Scholarship for regular students coming from lower socioeconomic background and co-financing transport costs for regular students with disabilities in their inclusion to the higher education.**

In 2016, aggregated funds for state scholarships amounted to 57,030,600.00 HRK. Scholarship programme aims to ensure access to higher education for full-time students, Croatian nationals and nationals of EU with registered stay in Croatia and approved status of foreign persons with permanent residence in Croatia, persons enrolled in university and professional study programmes in Croatia based on Act on International and Temporary Protection, students with disabilities and students without adequate parental care enrolled in postgraduate studies who are all of lower socioeconomic background.

In 2016, 131 students with disabilities exercised their right to financial support for transport cost in monthly amount of 1,000.00 HRK; aggregated funds for this measure amounted to 1,062,500.00 HRK.

- **Provision of special needs classroom assistants and expert communication intermediaries**

In 2016/2017 school year, funding for 2030 classroom assistants was secured through ESF fund, for 2499 pupils with developmental disabilities, in total amount of 74.735.497,32 HRK. In addition funds allocated from Games of Chance were secured for additional 287 teaching assistants for 302 pupils with developmental disabilities, in total amount of 11.087.120,60 HRK.

- **Upbringing and education in languages and scripts of national minorities**

In 2016/2017, the Ministry of Science and Education announced *the Public call for award of funds to national minority associations implementing special education programmes for national minority pupils in the Republic of Croatia*. Associations received HRK 583,770.00 for implementation of related activities, namely summer school courses.

In the field of **employment**, in their work with the **long-term unemployed persons**, the Croatian Employment Service (CES) guides itself by the Council of the European Union Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market (2016/C 67/01). Pursuant to the above, the **CES devised a special program for long-term unemployed to assist them in their activation in the labour market**. Based on counselor's evaluation, a long-term unemployed person is involved in an activation program that represents a form of group support for long-term unemployed persons who need support from the Employment Service in increasing their motivation. It is a long-term program for long-term unemployed persons which will help the long-term unemployed understand the situation in which they are in, determine what must be done for further improvement and progress of the person concerned and to develop an action plan based on the goals for the integration of the person into the labour market.

The testing (piloting) of the activation program was carried out in the period June - July 2017 in two branch offices of the Employment Service - Branch Office Karlovac and Branch Office Bjelovar. The first results of pilot implementation are expected at the end of summer after which its adaptation and introduction into all regional / branch offices of the Employment Service will start if necessary. The program is intended for unemployed persons who are unemployed for more than 12 and less than 18 months. The estimated duration of the program is up to 2 months, that is, until a person finds employment or engages in some form of activity that will help increase employability (e.g. training) or abandons active job seeking or is no longer an unemployed person.

The goal is that after the program participants are able to:

- realistically evaluate their labour market opportunities
- realistically evaluate the types of jobs for which they will apply
- be qualified to independently apply to job advertisements/or apply to jobs that are appropriate to their knowledge, skills and abilities
- know where and how to look for a job
- be aware of the need for any additional education they need in order to be more competitive in the labour market.

Croatian Ministry for Labour and Pension System developed an information system that will enable tracking of dropouts and inactive NEETs. Data exchange between relevant data bases has been established and the first analysis is expected by the end of 2017

The GoC has adopted the new Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan for the period 2017-2018 in June 2017. The new Plan has largely influenced by the results and recommendations of the External evaluation of active labour market measures for 2010-2013.

MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

During 2017, the Croatian Ministry for Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy participated in drafting of Proposal of the Action Plan for Integration of Persons Granted International Protection 2017-2020. This activity is coordinated by the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities.

Croatian Ministry of the Interior, in order to improve integration and remove obstacles burdening this process, initiated the procedure of drafting the Action Plan for the integration of persons granted international protection 2017-2019. Draft AP is currently in its final stages. Subsequently, the Action Plan will be submitted to the GoC for adoption.

The Action Plan is a follow-up to activities related to the Action Plan for the removal of obstacles in exercise of individual rights in the field of integration of aliens 2013-2015.

This Action Plan was drafted by Working Group operating within the Standing Committee for implementation of the integration of aliens into Croatian society, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of Croatia.

In the field of **education**, related to **asylum seekers, asylees and aliens under subsidiary protection**, currently, 40 pupils in elementary schools in Zagreb and 23 pupils in elementary schools in Kutina attend preparatory classes in Croatian language. In addition, 8 students (asylum seekers/international protection) in Zagreb and 4 students (asylum seekers/international protection) in Kutina have enrolled in secondary education. In 2017, Croatian language courses are held in 4 cities (Zagreb, Velika Gorica, Kutina, Crikvenica) for 87 persons.

In the field of **employment**, harmonization of the Act on Employment Mediation and Unemployment Rights with the Aliens Act in the part regarding the asylum seekers' right to work (Article 14 of the Act)

<i>Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period</i>

YOUTH AND CHILDREN VULNERABLE PEOPLE, INCLUDING THE ELDERLY

Based on the contracting rate analysis within three grant schemes under Operational Programme "Competitiveness and Cohesion 2014. – 2020." Priority axis 8, SO 9a3 aimed to support deinstitutionalization process in Croatia it could be concluded that institutions (as eligible applicants) are not ready for transformation that could provide inclusion of individuals in the community. The reasons are at the policy level, so the appropriate support from decision makers remains low. National framework in the form of National strategy for deinstitutionalisation and related Action plan are set up for the period 2011. – 2016. (2018.), implementation is not monitored, mitigation measures not applied and overall readiness to implement deinstitutionalisation remains low, thus the contracting fails (the average contracting rate in 1 year period is 9,47%).

Regarding the Youth Guarantee implementation, it was not possible to develop tailor-made measures for outreach to the NEET population, because the existing data bases were not connected, which prevented more comprehensive analysis of the inactive NEET population.

MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Considering that these categories are not insured under compulsory health insurance, regardless of their right to a health care as any other insured person, in practice, a number of obstacles burden their attempt to receive health care: (difficulties in finding medical doctors, problems with issuing referral letters and prescriptions).

Croatia has a registered high unemployment rate; the problem of long-term unemployment also relates to asylees and aliens under subsidiary protection. Moreover, this category of aliens is often poorly educated and do not have sufficient knowledge of the Croatian language. The lack of knowledge of Croatian language is recognized as the main obstacle for asylum seekers and their participation in active employment policy measures.

Avoiding legal employment by unemployed asylum seekers due to the fact that persons are obliged to pay for accommodation/housing in case their income exceeds HRK 2,500.

CYPRUS/ CHYPRE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

1. Since January 2016, the unemployment rate in **Cyprus** declined from 13.0% to 10.8%, one of the largest decreases within the European Union.

During 2016 and 2017, several measures have been implemented in order to tackle unemployment and increase labour market participation. The measures aimed to facilitate the creation of new jobs (mainly through subsidised employment schemes), the acquisition of work experience (for improving the employability of the unemployed), to address the skills mismatch, to promote entrepreneurship, to address all unemployed as well as long term and youth unemployed, and Public Employment Services enhancement.

The measures introduced were targeted to specific groups of unemployed, such as the young, the long-term unemployed and the vulnerable in general.

2. A major reform as regards the governance of Social Long Term Care came with the introduction of the Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) in July 2014 and subsequently with the Decree "Guaranteed Minimum Income and in General the Social Benefits" (Emergency Needs and Care Needs)" of 2014, which was revised in 2015 and 2016, to further improve governance and service delivery.

The GMI provides for basic needs based on a minimum consumption basket and also covers other needs, such as housing (rent or mortgage interest), municipality taxes and extraordinary needs, as well as child care needs and long-term care. The GMI is also provided to families not receiving any income support benefits in the past, as it incorporates a new group, the working poor, as an eligible group and also consolidates low-income pensioners.

The Decree of 2016 incorporates the Scheme for the subsidization of care which includes: (a) home care, (b) institutional care, (c) day care and (d) respite care. The Decree also covers the child care needs of GMI recipients. The Service responsible for the benefit provision to GMI recipients for their care needs is the Welfare Benefits Administration Service, while the Social Welfare Services are responsible for assessing the care needs of the GMI recipients based on specialized evaluation tools, the service delivery and the monitoring of the provided care.

The GMI further provides the framework for two mechanisms, social care and social intervention to GMI recipients. Social care provides for the subsidisation of the cost of home, institutional, respite and day care, including child care of GMI recipients. Social Intervention refers to the activation and social inclusion of GMI recipients. This action includes a wide spectrum of services provided to a person or family unit receiving the GMI that will empower and support them in their social integration. The ultimate purpose of this action is the employment rehabilitation through co-operation with the Public Employment Services. Activation measures targeted at GMI beneficiaries, involving training and development interventions as well as participation in public work programmes have been rolled out and are currently utilized for the social integration of GMI beneficiaries. The measure is related to the labour market, education and social challenges and to the employment national target.

3. Further to the existing measures implemented in Cyprus addressing child poverty, the Government decided to devote the EU funding provided through the Fund of European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), to efforts combating child deprivation and poverty. The two actions being promoted are the provision of breakfast for deprived children at schools and the provision of basic material assistance to newborn babies of deprived families.

4. The provision of accessible, affordable and quality social care programmes at local level (i.e. child care services, long-term social care services to the elderly and persons with disabilities, counselling services) is a key priority of the Government. In this direction, the competent authority is implementing the State Aid Scheme, for the provision of services of general economic interest (De minimis) where NGOs and Local Authorities may receive state aid based on certain criteria for the development and functioning of quality social care programmes. In 2016, 163 organisations received state aid for the operation of 252 social care programmes with a total budget of approximately 7 ml euros.

5. In 2016, a co-funded project for the implementation of a National Roma Platform was rolled out,

covering a period of 12 months, aiming at the promotion of dialogue on Roma issues among relevant stakeholders and the Roma population.

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

The situation in the labour market is improving, but major challenges remain. Labour market indicators started to improve in 2015, with unemployment decreasing in the first quarters of 2016 and throughout 2017. Unemployment remains however above pre-crisis levels and the reabsorption of the long-term unemployed continues to be an important issue.

CZECH REPUBLIC/ REPUBLIQUE TCHEQUE

DENMARK/ DANEMARK

<i>Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016</i>

- 1) In June 2017, Denmark completed a revision of the adult assistance provisions in the Act on Social Services.

The purpose of the revision was to improve assistance to citizens in order to emphasise positive developments and self-help through i.a. increased focus on early, holistic and coherent efforts.

In addition, the purpose was to simplify and simplify the legal framework to ensure simpler and faster administrative process to the benefit of both citizens and municipalities.

- 2) The Danish Government has worked out a draft proposal to ban discrimination on the ground of disabilities outside the labour market.

The bill is expected to be introduced to the Danish Parliament in November 2017.

- 3) In January 2017, a new regulatory framework on Adult Responsibility came into force. The new Act, an administrative order and guidelines on adult responsibility regulate the use of forcible measures against children and young persons who are placed in care. The regulatory framework has been adopted in part to strengthen the protection of the rights and integrity of children and young person who are placed in care.

In November 2016, the Danish Parliament agreed to strengthen the support for vulnerable and disadvantaged children. A total sum of 183.8 million DKK has been allocated to effective support measures for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

ESTONIA/ ESTONIE

FINLAND/ FINLANDE

FRANCE

Principales réalisations, nouvelles initiatives liées à la cohésion sociale / droits sociaux qui ont eu lieu depuis le 28 juin 2016

Plan pluriannuel de lutte contre la pauvreté et pour l'inclusion sociale, 2013-2017

Ce plan visait à répondre à l'urgence sociale du moment et à structurer la politique du gouvernement sur le long terme. Il s'articule autour de trois grands axes de réforme :

- Réduire les inégalités et prévenir les ruptures ;
- Venir en aide et accompagner vers l'insertion

Coordonner l'action sociale et valoriser ses acteurs.

Défis ou problèmes particuliers liés à la cohésion sociale / aux droits sociaux qu'il a fallu relever pendant cette période

Le plan pluriannuel de lutte contre la pauvreté répond à **l'aggravation du taux de pauvreté et à la dégradation relative de la situation des plus pauvres suite à la crise économique de 2008.**

En France métropolitaine, en 2012, 8,5 millions de personnes (13,9 % de la population) vivaient en dessous du seuil de pauvreté monétaire (987 €/ mois). Le niveau de vie avait continué à baisser plus fortement pour les plus modestes (1^{er} décile). L'intensité de la pauvreté avait également augmenté ; la moitié des personnes pauvres vivaient avec moins de 784 € par mois, un niveau qui n'avait pas été aussi bas depuis 2006 (en euros constants).

Les situations de précarité sont aussi associées à une **marginalisation et une stigmatisation** sociale des personnes confrontées à la pauvreté alors que ces dernières sont en capacité de participer à la prise de décision politique et l'élaboration de politiques qui leur sont destinées.

GEORGIA/ GEORGIE

GERMANY/ ALLEMAGNE

GREECE/ GRECE

HUNGARY/ HONGRIE

ICELAND/ ISLANDE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

Flexibility regarding retirement-Active Aging

A policy has been developed on greater flexibility regarding retirement and the drawing of pensions from the social insurance system. This was increased under legislation passed in 2016, and people are now able to decide, to a greater degree than previously, how and when they choose to retire, according to their personal circumstances. They are now able to begin drawing pensions from the age of 65, and it is also possible to postpone drawing pensions for longer, so raising the pension amounts.

Improvement of the position of pensioners with little or no entitlements in the pension fund system-strengthening of social rights and inclusion

Legislation passed in 2016 has greatly improved the position of pensioners who have accumulated little or no entitlements in the legally-prescribed (obligatory-membership) pension fund system due to the fact that they were not employed for long during their working-age lives and therefore depend to a greater extent on the social insurance system for support in old age.

Empowerment to survivors of violence and better co-ordinated services with the participation of grassroots organizations.

During the period a Family Justice Center was established, named Bjarkarhlid. The project is run in co-operation of public institutions and grassroots organizations that fight against violence and support survivors. In Bjarkarhlid survivors are provided with comprehensive professional consultation and counselling in one place, free of charge in a safe environment. The members of the project are the city of Reykjavik, the ministries of welfare and justice, the Metropolitan Police of Reykjavik, the Icelandic Human Rights Center and several grassroots organizations: The women's Counselling, the Women's shelter, and Stigamot and Drekaslod.

Increased Maternity/Paternity payments

The maximum amount of payments from the Maternity/paternity fund was greatly increased (33%) during the period. This enables more parents to stay home with their children with less worries concerning financial situation of the family and applies equally to mothers and fathers.

Policy and Action Plan on Mental Health

A parliamentary resolution on Mental Health for the years 2016 – 2020 was passed during the period. The main goal of the policy is improved well-being and increased social inclusion of individuals facing mental health difficulties. The Action Plan has the focus on four areas: 1) Comprehensive and continuing services to individuals with disorders, 2) Preventive measures, 3) Marginalized groups and sensitive/vulnerable age-periods and 4) Prejudice.

Gender Equality

A parliamentary resolution on the Gender Equality Action Programme for the years 2016-2019 was passed in September 2016. The programme includes projects intended to secure gender equality in Icelandic society and demonstrate the government's emphasis and priorities in gender equality issues at each time. Among focus areas is the labour market and equal pay with the implementation of the Equal Pay Standards including *breaking down traditional gender division in choices of study and career* and an *action plan on methods of integrating family and professional life*. Special emphasis is put on men and gender equality as well as on *gender and democracy* which includes that measures shall be taken to have a survey made of equal access to, and equal presentations in the media when it comes to gender and an examination shall be carried out of the status of refugees and asylum-seekers from the perspectives of gender equality and human rights.

Increased and improved assistance to renters

As of January 2016 a new system of support to renters was implemented and funding increased substantially. The main intention of the support system is to secure individuals and families housing and even out support to different types of residences. The assistance takes into account number of family members and family income. Secure housing is seen as one of the most important basis for well-being as well as a major pillar of social rights.

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

Social inclusion of refugees.

There is a high increase of refugees receiving international protection in Iceland (from a total of 14 in 2013 to an estimated 200 in the end of 2017). While Iceland has a long history of resettling refugees in cooperation with UNHCR fewer persons have received international protection after claiming asylum in Iceland. With this high increase of refugees arriving in Iceland there is need for a coordinated program for refugees regardless how they have arrived. This includes providing housing and integration programme for a diverse group of people and strengthening service providers such as social workers, teachers and healthcare workers.

Assistance and empowerment of young people with psychiatric difficulties and mental illness

The state is faced with increased number of young adults receiving pension because of mental illness or mental difficulties. There is a growing need for increased access for young people to rehabilitation and financial support during rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation-Active Aging

Rehabilitation of older persons needs to begin early enough to prevent loss of working capacity and enable them to go on living in their own homes for as long as possible. Rehabilitation should also be extended to cover and maintain mental health to improve the quality of life and day-to-day well-being. Welfare technology can be used to support rehabilitation.

Improved Services-Active Aging

More service options need to be developed within the current scope of services for older people who live in their own homes, e.g. places in day-care centres, more social home care and the integration of social home care and home nursing services.

Flexible retirement-Active Aging

Increased participation by older persons in employment with the option of a flexible retirement age. One potential approach considered is to raise the age when an individual is eligible to receive pension from the social insurance system from 67 years to 70 years over the next 24 years.

Social inclusion and empowerment of disabled persons

The government has set the goal of implementing by legislation personal assistance to disabled individuals (independent living/user co-ordinated services). The Program is already offered to disabled persons to some extent, but needs to be legalized. Assistance should be provided on the basis of individual needs assessment and depending on the life situation of each individual with the aim of providing an opportunity for empowerment and inclusion of disabled people.

IRELAND/ IRLANDE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

- Published in May 2017, the 2015 Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) shows that social transfers reduced the at-risk-of-poverty rate from 34.9% to 16.9%, a poverty reduction effect of 51.6%. The data shows that Ireland has the strongest performance in reducing poverty through social transfers, ranking 1st of the 28 EU Member States.
- The current strong recovery phase is highlighted by the continuing decrease in the unemployment rate which currently stands at 6.3%.
- The [Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme \(SICAP\)](#) aims to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long-term unemployment through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. Target groups include children and families from disadvantaged areas and lone parents. Approximately 47,000 individuals (15+ years) were engaged in SICAP on a one-to-one basis during 2016.

Child Poverty

- Child poverty is a priority issue under the national policy framework [Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures](#). The Framework includes a target to reduce child poverty by two-thirds by 2020. While consistent poverty among children fell in 2015, 102,000 children will have to be lifted out of consistent poverty to meet the child poverty target by 2020.
- The Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme is a cross-departmental initiative targeting investment in effective services to improve the outcomes for children and families living in areas of disadvantage. It received €29.7m. funding for period 2013-2016.

Provision of Affordable Childcare

- Ireland is continuing to roll out the childcare reforms announced in Budgets 2016 and 2017. Additional funding of €121.5million has been allocated in 2017 for early years care and education, an increase of 35% on 2016.
- A new Affordable Childcare Scheme was announced as part of Budget 2017, to replace existing childcare subsidy schemes with a new, income-based national scheme of financial support for parents towards the cost of childcare.

Parental Supports

- DCYA published its *High Level Policy Statement on Parenting and Family Support (2015)*. [Tusla's \(Child and Family Agency\)](#) existing *Parenting Support Strategy* promotes positive parenting including www.parenting24seven.ie (an on-line resource), and including booklets and signposts for further supports. The work of Tusla's *Prevention, Parenting and Family Support (PPFS)* teams is continuing at local level to support a standardised approach to the provision of family support in line with the overall strategy.
- The *Early Years Strategy* will provide an opportunity to consolidate commitments and initiatives relevant to a parenting support plan for the 0-6 age group.
- In the past year the **Department of Justice & Equality** has launched several new national strategies relating to social policy:

[National Women and Girls Strategy 2017-2020](#): the Strategy's key theme is to promote equality for women and girls across all areas of life, in the workplace, in education, in the family, on public and corporate boards, in sport and the arts.

[Migrant Integration Strategy 2017 – 2020](#) -: the Strategy's aim is to enable all to participate actively and constructively in Irish society and to ensure that mainstream services, such as in health, education, social protection and employment, are responsive to the needs of migrants. Targeted measures will also be developed to address particular issues.

[National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017 - 2020](#) :

The Strategy will take a whole of Government approach to improving the lives of people with disabilities both in a practical sense, and also in creating the best possible opportunities for people with disabilities to fulfil their potential.

[Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017 – 2020](#): This Inclusion Strategy builds on the wave of positivity arising for Travellers from the Taoiseach's statement of formal recognition of Travellers as an ethnic group of the Irish nation in March 2017. The challenge now is for Travellers and Government to work together in a sustained way to address the issues the community faces so as to bring about real improvements in the everyday lives of Travellers.

Implementation plans for the above strategies are now operational.

Education

- [DEIS: Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools Plan 2017](#): sets out a vision for education to more fully become a proven pathway to better opportunities for those in communities at risk of disadvantage and social exclusion.

The Plan presents an ambitious set of objectives and actions to support children who are at greatest risk of Educational disadvantage.

- [Co-ordination of Traveller Education](#): the Department of Education and Skill's policy on the provision of education for Travellers is based on the Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy

The primary aim of the Strategy is to ensure a quality, integrated education for Travellers underpinned by the principles of inclusion and mainstreaming with an emphasis on equality and diversity and the adoption of an intercultural approach.

- The [Intercultural Education Strategy \("IES"\)](#): aims to ensure that all students experience an education that "respects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society and is conducted in a spirit of partnership" (Education Act, 1998) and that all education providers are assisted with ensuring that inclusion and integration within an intercultural learning environment becomes the norm.
- [High Support Special Schools](#) : The Department of Education and Skills has responsibility to provide education services for these people with children with emotional and behavioural problems, whose presenting difficulties cannot be met in mainstream education.
- [Youth Encounter Projects \(YEPs\)](#): provide non-residential educational facilities for children who have either become involved in minor delinquency, or are at risk of becoming involved. A pupil may be referred to one of these schools by a number of agencies or by the court system. Youth Encounter Projects provide these children with a lower pupil teacher ratio and a personalised education plan.
- The Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance is a nationwide scheme that provides a once-off payment for eligible families to assist with the costs of school clothing and footwear when children start school each autumn. In 2017 providing €47.4 million was provided for the Back to School Clothing and Footwear scheme, an increase of €10 million on the original allocation.

- The school meals programme provides funding towards the provision of food to some 1,460 schools and organisations benefitting over 200,000 children at a total cost of some €47.5 million in 2017. Budget 2017 announced an additional €5.5 million for school meals which will benefit over 50,000 children (13% over the 2016 allocation of €42m) from September 2017 bringing the total number of schools to some 1,700 and the number of children to around 250,000.

Housing

- In July 2016 the Government published [Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness](#) to address the shortage of housing. The plan aims to address the needs of homeless people and families in emergency accommodation, accelerate the provision of social housing, deliver more housing, utilise vacant homes and improve the rental sector.
- [Housing Assistance Payment \(HAP\)](#) is a form of social housing support provided by all local authorities. HAP means that local authorities can provide housing assistance for households who qualify for social housing support, including many long-term Rent Supplement recipients.

There are now just over 18,000 households in receipt of HAP Budget 2017 has increased HAP funding to €152.7 million for 2017 to meet the costs of both existing HAP households and the Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness accelerated target of supporting an additional 15,000 households in 2017.

Health

- The [National Positive Ageing Strategy](#) (NPAS) provides a framework for cooperation to address age-related policy and service delivery across Government.

The Strategy is intended to promote older people's health and wellbeing so that older people can continue to contribute to social, economic, cultural and family life in their own communities for as long as possible, thereby representing a vision for an age-friendly society.

The inaugural National Positive Ageing Forum (established as part of the implementation of the NPAS) took place in March 2017, and was attended by civic society organisations representative of the needs and views of older people in Ireland.

- [Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery – a health led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017-2025](#) was launched in July 2017 and aims to provide an integrated public health approach to drug and alcohol use, focused on promoting healthier lifestyles within society. The strategy aims to treat substance abuse and drug addiction as a public health issue, rather than a criminal justice issue.
- [Intercultural Healthcare In-Reach Project for Refugees in European Reception and Orientation Centres \(EROCS\)](#)
€1.15m has been made available to provide health supports to Refugees arriving and settling under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) and to health and social care staff working with these Refugees. This project will help provide person centred health services for Refugees resident in EROCs.
- [Provision of Supports to Families of Transgender Persons](#)
The main aim of this measure is to provide family support measures to transgender people and their families. Individuals and families of transgender persons suffer social isolation and mental health issues. The role of family support has an extremely beneficial impact on the mental health and wellbeing of young transgender people and offers a proven protective factor to negative mental health outcomes, suicidality and self-harm.

- [Mental Health Initiative for Travellers](#)

The aim of this measure is to develop Traveller mental health initiatives to reduce suicide and improve mental health outcomes for Travellers. These initiatives include maintaining and promoting positive mental health and wellbeing and improving Traveller access to mainstream mental health services through the development of culturally appropriate services.

Low Pay

- The Programme for Partnership Government commits to supporting an increase in the minimum wage. The [Low Pay Commission](#) makes annual recommendations to Government on the level of adjustment each year. For instance, in 2016 the rate increased to €9.15 per hour from €8.65 per hour. The social impact assessment showed that the impact is quite significant for the small minority of households affected, with middle income quintiles gaining the most. In 2017, it was increased to €9.25 per hour.

The Government also committed to strengthen the role of the Low Pay Commission to examine the gender pay gap and strengthen regulations on precarious work.

<i>Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period</i>

Poverty reduction target

While the 2015 Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) results point to the improvements in living conditions and in tackling poverty, there is a long way to go to achieve the national social target for poverty reduction. In addition, over 350,000 people will have to be lifted out of combined poverty to meet Ireland's Europe 2020 target.

Disability

The Department of Justice & Equality and Department of Health are working to bring about the legislative changes required to facilitate ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

ITALY/ ITALIE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

Among the several relevant initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the development of measures to fight poverty and social exclusion is of strategic importance.

The Support for Active Inclusion (**SIA**) is a measure promoted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to counter poverty by assisting financially families in economic difficulties; it is a national measure against poverty addressed to families in severe economic conditions where at least a member is a child, or a son/daughter with disability or a woman in confirmed state of pregnancy.

The SIA ensures an economic support and activates a care project tailored on the specific households and involving its members. Expected result is the activation of beneficiaries in order to overcome hardship conditions and achieve self-reliance.

Another important measure to underline is **Law nr. 33/2017**, “*Rules to fight poverty, to reorganize assistance benefits and to coordinate the system of social services interventions*”, that provides for a comprehensive systematization of measures against poverty, countering economic and social constraints for citizens equity and human development and promoting wider and harmonized social policies.

The main measures provided by law 33/2017 are:

- The introduction of a national measure to fight poverty and social exclusion; this measure, the so-called **Inclusion Income**, is an essential level considered as a basic key of social care, to be granted evenly at a national level. The inclusion income will be financed through the National Fund to Fight Poverty and Social Exclusion, provided by Stability Law 2016. The priority target will be families with children, people with disabilities, pregnant women and unemployed over 55;
- The reorganization of all **Social Assistance Benefits** aimed to fight poverty;

The strengthening of the **Coordination** of all the **Social Services Interventions**, in order to grant the same essential level of performance at a national level.

Other achievements and initiatives focus on the development of two relevant programs carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The first one is **P.I.P.P.I.** (Program of Intervention for Prevention of Institutionalization), a research-training-intervention-programme aiming at preventing child placement out-of-home by balancing risk and protective factors, that focuses on supporting parenting through multi-professional and resilient based intervention. The program is held at a national level and the sixth year of experimentation (2017-2018) is presently running, involving 18 Regions, 56 territorial areas with 560 children. The second program, started in 2012, is **RSC project** for inclusion and integration of Roma, Gipsies and Travelers children. The Project's purposes are to develop processes of inclusion for RSC children, to reduce their discrimination and to strengthen local communities by creating integration between school, RSC families and children and social services. After a three-year implementation, starting from 2017 the RSC project will be part of the PON (National Operational Program) “Inclusion” 2014-2020, that supports the definition of common patterns of intervention for the fight against poverty and that promotes, through coordinated actions and pilot projects, new models of social interventions and integration of people and communities that risk social exclusion.

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

The main issues faced during the last period concerns the fight against poverty, and **Law nr. 33/2017** creates a system of multidimensional services in order to promote the active inclusion of the disadvantaged citizens, thanks to the coordination of active labour market policies, housing conditions and social care policies.

The measure of the **Inclusion Income** will be available starting from the 1st of December 2017; in the meantime, Support for Active Inclusion (**SIA**) will still remain actionable.

Concerning the Program **P.I.P.I.**, the current challenge focuses on the spreading of the *“Guidelines for the intervention with children and families that face a situation of vulnerability”*. These Guidelines, that are presently in pending approval, will be a relevant tool for the development of the program into a funded support for the practice of social services at a national level.

The prosecution of the implementation of **RSC project** inside the PON Inclusion 2014-2020 represents a scaling up of its relevance and support.

During the period 2017-2019, the aims of the project will be the consolidation of interventions and their progressive self-sufficiency. Therefore, the first year will schedule: starting up of the project's activities, strengthening of local governance with the creation of an interinstitutional table, building of the multidisciplinary team and adoption of a local plan for the inclusion of RSC community.

LATVIA/ LETTONIE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

In order to reduce poverty, the family state benefit for the fourth and subsequent children has been increased to 50.07 euros per month (before 34.14 euros) from January 1, 2017. The family state benefit for the first child in the family is 11.38 euros, the second - 22.76 euros and the third – 34.14 euros.

Currently Ministry of Welfare is elaborating further improvements in the disability and workability determination. The aim is to provide more support for employment for persons with limited or fully limited ability to work. Discussions with the target groups and other involved institutions concentrate on the following aspects – introduction of new and broader scope of employment measures (specific measures for persons with functional impairments, adaptations to be able to use the existing employment measures), support for employers who employ persons with impairments in open labour market, development of criteria to evaluate the remained ability to work, possible introduction of conditionality for persons with limited workability who do not comply with the activation criteria to receive the workability pension. Additionally it is being discussed if disability and workability could be divided into two separate terms, where disability would be targeted at health conditions and functional impairments but workability would assess the ability to work with those impairments. If discussions are successful the proposal for policy change should be ready in spring 2018.

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

In 2015-2022, deinstitutionalisation is being implemented in Latvia. The purpose of deinstitutionalisation is to develop community based services so that a person with limited ability to care for himself / herself has the necessary support at home or in a family environment. With the support from the EU funds municipalities will be able to create a wide range of services so that children currently living in social care centers could grow up in a family environment and children with functional disabilities could get social care and rehabilitation in their municipality. Adults with mental disorders will be able to choose to live independently and work.

Deinstitutionalisation projects will be implemented in 115 municipalities (there are 119 municipalities in total). Target groups for deinstitutionalisation in Latvia are:

- children out-of-family care;
- children with functional disorders;
- adults with mental disabilities.

LIECHTENSTEIN/ LIECHTENSTEIN

LITHUANIA/ LITUANIE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

In order to increase employment, improve labour relations, enhance social insurance and fight against poverty, Lithuania has adopted a new social model of enhanced sustainability. Lithuanian social model embrace four pillars: labour relations, employment, social insurance, fight against poverty. Social Model Package aims to create a more sustainable, more balanced pension system, as well as provide more incentives for young families with children.

2017 July 1 the new Labour Code came into force. The provisions of the Labour Code aim at simplifying the procedure for recruiting and dismissing employees, more flexible working hours and more diverse forms of work (temporary, temporary work, job sharing, multi-employer employment, apprenticeship), which will help create more jobs. Also, for working parents, the new regulation offers a more flexible framework for working relationships and work schedules, allowing families, academics and work to be reconciled.

New Employment Law creates a more effective model for applying active labour market policy measures, reducing the risk of long-term unemployment.

Restructuring of the system of protection of the rights of the child was started. The Law on the Fundamentals of the Protection of the Rights of the Child submitted to the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania. It seeks to strengthen the protection of the rights of the child, to develop family support services and to centralize the services of the children's rights.

Financial support for adoptive families, regardless of the child's age, was legitimated.

New complex family services as close as possible to family living place are starting to be built in the municipality, helping families overcome crises and reconcile family and work commitments.

A model for strengthening community-based activities in municipalities is being prepared, which will ensure favourable opportunities for communities to become involved in the decision-making process.

A modification of the Youth Policy Framework Law was drafted in order to define the work with young people and the principles for its implementation, and to improve the activities and functions of the institutions working in the youth field.

The system of housing adaptation for the disabled is being developed, giving priority to families with disabled children and young people with disabilities.

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

The biggest challenges – reducing poverty and social exclusion; rising income inequality; improvement of access to housing for disabled; population aging, driven by emigration; low birth rates; strengthening the protection of the family and the child; promoting social responsibility of citizens; improvement of labour relations; ensuring sustainability of pensions system.

LUXEMBOURG

Principales réalisations, nouvelles initiatives liées à la cohésion sociale / droits sociaux qui ont eu lieu depuis le 28 juin 2016

En janvier 2017, le Gouvernement a déposé le projet de loi relatif au revenu d'inclusion sociale (REVIS).

Défis ou problèmes particuliers liés à la cohésion sociale / aux droits sociaux qu'il a fallu relever pendant cette période

Les défis relevés pour concrétiser cette réforme ont été au nombre de quatre:

- concrétiser une approche d'inclusion sociale;
- établir un système cohérent de politiques de stabilisation, d'activation sociale et de réinsertion professionnelle;
- agir contre la pauvreté des enfants et des familles monoparentales ;
- procéder à une simplification administrative.

MALTA/ MALTE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

Following the major strategic objectives of the Council of Europe:

Republic of Moldova's goals are:

- overall consolidation and protection of **human rights** and effective **implementation of European Convention on Human Rights**;
- better **protection of social rights and effective** implementation of **European Social Charter** and other relevant instruments and standards;
- consolidation of national **legal and institutional framework** in human and social rights fields;
- implementation of key policies **and reforms in social protection field**;
- promotion of **social cohesion and social justice**;
- a better **protection and access of vulnerable groups of population to social protection, fair and equitable standards of living**;

Republic of Moldova contributes to social cohesion development by **ensuring everyone's access to social rights, without discrimination, providing specific support to vulnerable groups of population, children, young people, families, elderly, Roma, disabled and migrants.**

Of particular relevance is promoting **equal and effective enjoyment of social rights**, which is decisive for the construction of **cohesive societies**.

The **European Social Charter** represents a real added value and its implementation is more relevant in times of crisis, helping managing the impact of austerity measures on **human rights, avoiding marginalisation**, which is mostly resulting in poverty and exclusion.

As member state of the Council of Europe since 13 July, 1995, Republic of Moldova partially ratified the **European Social Charter**, on 28 September, 2001, by Law nr.484-XV, accepting 63 paragraphs of the Charter, of the total 98.

Ratification of the Social Charter means an important commitment of Republic of Moldova to promote and respect continuously the social rights: **the right to education, employment, the right to legal, social and health protection, the right to associate and free movement of persons - in conditions of peace, social cohesion, equality and non-discrimination.**

A major commitment of the Government of **Republic of Moldova** is to give full effect to the rights recognised in the **European Social Charter**, implement the goals enshrined in the Council of Europe **Social Cohesion Strategy, follow the objectives** of the Council of Europe **Action Plan for Supporting the Democratic reforms in Republic of Moldova** in the ongoing **social reform process**, enriched with practical actions.

A priority objective of the Government of Republic of Moldova in **reforming social protection and social security fields** consists in increasing the **political relevance** and the efficiency of **social cohesion in the society**.

New trends and challenges to social cohesion in specific areas examined at the level of the Council of Europe, are placed on the political agenda of the Government of Republic of Moldova, such as **protection and integration of migrants and refugees, impact of economic crisis on social protection and social welfare, social security, social cohesion and health care, combating poverty and exclusion**, which may foster **violent radicalisation**, as well as, **access of vulnerable groups and young people to labour market and social rights, while including a human dignity and anti-discrimination perspective in this work.**

Gender perspective advised by Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, in performing social protection tasks, seeking to apply **transversal and cross-cutting sector** approach, as well as **combating domestic violence**, in line with **Istanbul Convention (2011)** is taken due account.

Social cohesion is mainstreamed into all relevant policy and reform processes, building on distinct **transversal and multi-faceted nature of social cohesion**, contributing to building a cohesive Moldavian society.

Due attention is paid to **social development aspects and co-operation projects**, developed for building **more inclusive and cohesive society**.

Of particular relevance is **promoting equal and effective enjoyment of social rights for all**, which is decisive for construction of cohesive societies, **managing the impact of austerity measures on human rights, avoiding marginalisation.**

Practical and long-term outcome actions are designed to give full effect to rights recognised in European Social Charter. Effective **monitoring and follow-up mechanisms** and **co-operation projects** are contributing to **stronger social cohesion** and more secure and **integrated multicultural society**.

Social cohesion is focusing on full **enjoyment of social and economic rights**, as well as on **related current challenges**, as **youth issues, children protection policies, integration of migrants, the economic crisis impact on health and social protection, in particular combating poverty and social exclusion**.

In the ongoing Government reform, the number of Ministries have been reduced (16 of them will be integrated in only 9). On the basis of two ministries: Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family and the Ministry of Health, which joined, a new Ministry was formed: the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection, which is the central public authority in the Government of Republic of Moldova, responsible for implementation of the **social and health Agenda** in the country, which is **open to co-operation with all national stakeholders and social partners**, at all levels, as well as, **the international partner organizations**, on issues related to promoting social rights, social cohesion, health issues, supporting the implementation of the country major social objectives and documents: the Strategy on Child's rights, Occupational Strategy, Social security/pension and health reforms, the aging and disability agenda, wages reform, employment, labour relations, social assistance and migrants' protection policies.

The **Government of Republic of Moldova** involves actively the civil society and social partners in decision making in the social and economic fields at all levels, promoting **social cohesion, equality, non-discrimination, tolerance, social justice, social peace, social stability and well-being, from small communities - to the society, as a whole**.

The priority fields for action in the social protection and social cohesion areas are:

- **Reforming the social protection system;** Improving the existing legal framework in all relevant fields, adjusting it to the European and international norms and standards;
 - A priority was establishment of the **National Social Assistance Agency**, which shall assess the social workers /social assistants activities, inclusively it shall monitor the activity of 16 social institutions subordinated to the MLSPF – psycho-neurological institutions, children home-type institutions, social institutions and centres for rehabilitation of adults.
 - **Develop social assistance services** for most vulnerable/marginalised segments of the population: disabled, roma, elderly, migrants, women and children, LGBTI, homeless, etc.
- **Implementing reforms in the occupation policy field.** The Strategy on occupation - 2016 - 2020 -was elaborated and adopted in December 2016.
- **Improved labour legislation**, fighting payments in „envelopes” is implemented. The government and the social partners are looking to provide the equilibrium between the rights and interests of parties and the commitments and obligations of the employers and employees.
 - About 40 articles of the Labour Code have been proposed for improvement.
- **Improved wage policies:** the reform is implemented, standing for increase of the minimal salary per economy and the average salary per country; combating illicit labour – for this purpose, interdisciplinary teams have been established at local levels, as a prime action to fight fraud and combat violation of legal framework on payment of wages and the fiscal system.
- **Promote social protection in employment**, job creation and equal opportunities: **active measures** are developed on the labour market; a new **legal framework on labour force** occupation and social protection of persons searching a job and a new **Employment Strategy** have been elaborated and an **Action Plan** proposed for approval;
- with World Bank support new ToR have been elaborated on social and economic inclusion and statistical data improvement in employment;
- the Barometer of professions has been elaborated and launched.
- A priority is the development of a system of occupational guidance and career counseling in Moldova and creation of occupational career guidance Centres;
- as follow-up, a **Memoranda of understanding was concluded between Employment Agency, subordinated to MHLSP, Ministry of Education and Entrepreneurship Education and Business**

Assistance Centre of Moldova and the elaboration of its Regulation (the pilot Centre is acting in Chisinau - since April 5, 2016);

- The **collaboration of MHLSP and ILO** is permanently developed.
- **A Country Memoranda on Decent Work has been signed for years 2016-2020.**

- **Reforming the social security system:**

Major priorities: increase of minimum pension; development of private pension systems; elimination of privileges, improve the calculation formula, etc;

- Republic of Moldova concluded bilateral **social security Agreements** with **12 European/EU** countries: Bulgaria, Portugal, Romania, Luxemburg, Austria, Estonia, Czech Republic, Belgium, Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, Germany, and Turkey and negotiations are going on with: Republic of Israel and Republic of Letonia.
- **Improve legal standards in the field of disability**, in line with the UN CRPD, ratified by RM on 9 July 2010; Republic of Moldova is promoting a human rights based system, a socially oriented model, to provide inclusion and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities;
 - A **National Program for Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities, for 2017-2022** has been developed and approved on 10th of August 2017 by Government of RM.
 - A collegial - Advisory body - the National Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, is monitoring the promotion and implementation of the state policies in the field of disability (legislation, strategies, programs, action plans, etc) in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, for achieving the fundamental freedoms, equal rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities, at the same level with other members of the society. De-institutionalization is a priority and a moratorium on institutionalization is in place.
- **Elimination of domestic violence against women.** The opportunity of signature and ratification of the CoE Convention on Preventing and Combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention, 2011), is examined (A Draft Government Decision on approval of the project Law for signature by Republic of Moldova of the Istanbul Convention, of 11 May, 2011, has been elaborated and submitted for opinion and examination to national competent institutions in 2016, in conformity with the Gov. Decision nr. 442 of 17.07.2015 on the approval of Regulations on mechanisms of conclusion, application and cessation of international treaties).
- **Implementation of family and child policies:** support is provided to large families; the family support allowance is increased (up to 5500 lei); created new conditions for admission in kindergartens for children (starting 1,6 months); elaborated and adopted the legal framework for parental leave (14 days);
- **Implementation of the adopted Strategy on Child protection;** Promoting children's rights and child protection is one of the major objectives of the social cohesion.
- **Support policies for migrants** and their integration into society, promoted;
 - support for re-integration policies of returned migrants,
 - are implemented the provisions of a **Common Declaration** signed on **6 June 2016**, between the **Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family of RM and the French Office for Immigration and Integration**. The document will provide the legal basis for reintegration of returned Moldovan migrant workers to their home country.
- **Promoted gender equality:** promotion of women in policy, business, management, civic activity, enjoyment of rights at work and family life. The legal framework is adjusted to provisions of EU Directives: **2006/54/CE** of 5 July, 2006, on application of the principle of **equal opportunities and equal treatment** between women and men in the matter of employment and occupation; the EU Directive **2004/113/CE** of 13 December, 2004, on application of the principle of equality of treatment between women and men on the access to goods and services and their supply, have been planned to be transposed into the national legislation in 2017;
- **The legal and policy framework on non-discrimination**, on any ground, is regulated by **Law on Providing Equality, no. 121 of 25.05.2012**. In the view of providing overall approach in implementation of the UN Convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination towards women, as to assure observance of principles of equality between women and men in all policies and programs, as adopted by Parliament by **Law nr.71 of 14.04.2016**, on amending some acts, which provides for the

harmonization of the national legislation and provisions of Law nr. 5 of 09.02.2006 on providing equality between women and men. The Ministry jointly with development partners (UN Women and UNFPA) have elaborated the **project Strategy on providing Gender Equality in Republic of Moldova for 2016-2020**.

➤ **Promote Roma inclusion policies.** The approval of the National Action Plan, aimed to support the Roma population in the field of social protection, demonstrating the commitment of the Government to support the Moldovan Roma ethnic population, as one of most vulnerable among other ethnic populations. As result, the function **of Community Mediator** was establishment from roma communities population. A range of improvements have been made to the legal framework, elaborated and approved. A new Strategy was elaborated and implemented.

MONACO

Principales réalisations, nouvelles initiatives liées à la cohésion sociale / droits sociaux qui ont eu lieu depuis le 28 juin 2016

MISE EN PLACE DU TELETRAVAIL

Deux lois ont été votées :

- La Loi n°1.428 du 4 juillet 2016 portant approbation de ratification de l'Avenant n°6 à la Convention du 28 février 1952 entre la Principauté de Monaco et la France sur la sécurité sociale, signé le 18 mars 2014
- La Loi n°1.429 du 4 juillet 2016 relative au télétravail.

Les objectifs poursuivis par ces deux lois, sont l'affiliation aux régimes monégasques de sécurité sociale pendant la période d'activité, l'obligation de formaliser le télétravail dans un contrat de travail ou un avenant au contrat de travail et l'obligation de présence du salarié télétravailleur au moins un tiers de son temps de travail dans l'entreprise pour maintenir le lien social.

L'adoption de ces lois qui autorisent la mise en œuvre du télétravail en Principauté marque un pas historique dans l'histoire de la Principauté, car ces textes permettront, dans les prochaines décennies, de répondre avec efficacité aux défis posés par les conséquences du succès du développement économique de Monaco : l'exiguïté du territoire qui, sans ce projet d'avenir, constituerait un frein à la croissance future de la Principauté.

Le télétravail constitue une solution pour le futur.

Cette loi ouvre de nouvelles perspectives aux entrepreneurs et aux salariés, sans constituer en rien une contrainte, le télétravail n'étant appliqué que par l'accord de leurs deux volontés :

- Concrètement, les employeurs peuvent désormais embaucher leurs premiers salariés télétravailleurs, sans avoir besoin de surfaces supplémentaires et donc sans augmenter leur charge immobilière;
- Les salariés quant à eux, peuvent notamment gagner du temps en transport, qu'ils peuvent consacrer à leur famille et à leurs loisirs.

Enfin, cette avancée aura un impact environnemental certain, en contribuant à un allègement du trafic routier et ferroviaire.

CREATION D'UN POLE EDUCATIF SPECIALISE

Un projet intitulé « Pôle Educatif Spécialisé » (PES), ayant pour objet de proposer aux familles un accompagnement éducatif individualisé prenant en compte l'enfant handicapé dans sa globalité, par des actions visant au soutien de la scolarisation et de l'inclusion sociale et à l'acquisition de l'autonomie par des moyens éducatifs adaptés a été élaboré par les Services du Gouvernement Princier et sera mis en œuvre au cours de l'année 2018.

Ce « Pôle Educatif Spécialisé » s'adressera à tout mineur :

- âgé de 3 à 18 ans ;
- attributaire du statut de personne handicapée par la Commission d'Evaluation du Handicap (CEH) ;
- nécessitant une prise en charge éducative spécialisée, afin de soutenir la poursuite de la scolarisation en milieu ordinaire en Principauté ou, transitoirement, en lieu et place de celle-ci, lorsque l'état de santé du mineur n'est pas compatible avec une scolarité en milieu ordinaire et qu'une orientation dans un établissement spécialisé en France n'est pas souhaitée par la famille ou ne peut être concrétisée, faute de structure adaptée au handicap du mineur ou faute de place.

Ce « Pôle Educatif Spécialisé » assurera, sur orientation de la Commission d'Evaluation du Handicap (CEH), la mise en place d'interventions éducatives ponctuelles et régulières sur l'ensemble des lieux de vie

de l'enfant ainsi que dans un local dédié, en complément de la prise en charge thérapeutique dont il bénéficie et de sa scolarisation au sein des établissements de la Principauté, ou en lieu et place de celle-ci lorsque la scolarisation est suspendue sur décision médicale.

La prise en charge par le PES ne se superposerait pas à celle du Dispositif d'Education et de Scolarisation Individualisée (DESI) (cf. mon mail en date du 31 août 2017 adressé à Mme CERRI) mais viendrait en complémentarité.

MONTENEGRO

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

Government Strategy for Displaced and Internally Displaced Persons was extended for 3 additional years, until December 2019 in February 2017, with special emphasis on camp Konik. Strategy is implemented through annual Action plans, which are implemented each year. Strategy foresees two types of solutions: integration into Montenegrin society or voluntary return. Those who opt for social integration have access to all the rights as Montenegrin citizens except for the voting rights (legal status, education, health care, housing and social rights).

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

Challenges: social integration and housing for the most vulnerable categories of refugees

-IPA project for social inclusion has two components: integration (housing) and voluntary return.

-Regional Housing Programme: a total of 6.063 refugees will be provided with housing. Until now, 6 projects in different municipalities are approved for financing.

NETHERLANDS/ PAYS-BAS

NORWAY/NORVEGE

POLAND/ POLOGNE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

Program “Family 500+” worth PLN 23 billion (€5.4 billion, ca. 1% of GDP) annually, is a demographic stimulus/social transfer instrument whereby every family, regardless of income, receives a PLN 500 (€118) monthly benefit for the second and every subsequent child until the age of 18 or for every child if its monthly income is less than PLN 1200 (€283) per person. The program has been introduced in 2016.

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

Income inequality has not been rising in recent years. Income inequality in Poland is mostly attributed to high wage dispersion, caused by the high wage premium for tertiary education and segmentation of the labor market, in particular the substantial proportion of people hired through the so-called “irregular” employment forms.

PORTUGAL

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

The Portuguese Government has assumed the commitment to defend and strengthen the Social State, implement policies that promote decent work and a fair wage, guarantee the sustainability and adequacy of Social Security and restoring social minimums, promoting access to basic public goods, and implementing a strategy to combat poverty and social exclusion, with a special focus on children.

The current Government is strongly committed to fight child poverty; to improve the living conditions of the population, especially of disadvantaged families; to ensure adequate and sustainable social protection; and at the same time to foster an inclusive labour market in order to tackle long-term and very long term unemployment and youth unemployment, as well as in-work poverty.

In this regard, commitments made by the Government have already produced concrete results, in particular measures taken to reinforce disposable household income, especially of those who are most vulnerable and at risk of poverty and exclusion like the low-wage workers, the senior citizens with low pensions and children: increase of minimum wage from €505 in October 2014 to €530 in January 2016 and to €557 in January 2017; unfreezing of pensions indexation from the beginning of 2016, updating lower pensions amounts taking into account Consumers Price Index (the automatic indexation mechanism); reinstatement of reference amount of the social supplement for the elderly (CSI); reinstatement of reference amount of the minimum income scheme (RSI) and of its equivalence scale, having as a result an increased percentage of the amount to be allocated to each adult from 50% to 70% of the RSI reference value, and to each minor from 30% to 50%; update of Child Benefit amounts for the first three households' income levels and an increase of the mark-up from 20% to 35% of Child Benefit for single parent families; rollover of the 10% increase of unemployment benefit for unemployed parents; extension and reinforcement of social tariffs for basic needs services (electricity, gas, etc.); creation of temporary benefit to reinforce protection of long-term unemployed; etc.

The Government is also committed to deliver a Strategy to fight child and youth poverty, reassessing the national framework of social benefits, and it has already presented a Development Plan of the Long-term Care Network for 2016-2019.

The Government has been also making efforts to strengthen the response in partnership, in particular with so-called "public-social partnerships" between the State and Social Economy Organizations, which have assumed particular relevance as promoters of social intervention and economic agents generating wealth. In general terms, the promotion of social economy has been based on cooperation protocols, contractual instruments between the State and social sector organizations that reinforce the logic of partnership as a form of participatory social management, with more decentralized and active methodologies of action, close to citizens and families and based on the sharing of common responsibilities.

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

Recent data on the socio-economic situation of Portugal point to a general improvement, after the period of economic and financial adjustment that the country has had with social repercussions. In the last few years, the national social protection system has been confronted with a series of constraints which, either through increased expenditure or through reduced revenue, as a consequence of high levels of unemployment and the incidence of situations of poverty, which have traditionally already been high, have become a serious challenge to their capacity to respond.

Some of the major challenges Portugal is experiencing are:

- Combating unemployment levels, particularly among the youngest, also combating NEET, as well as those segments of the population that are particularly vulnerable (such as women, people with disabilities, people over the age of 45, low-skilled workers and the long-term and very long-term unemployed);
- Investing and promoting the access to lifelong learning;

- Eliminate inequalities in the different types of hiring (segmentation) and income, which are manifested in the inequalities of access to protection in particular the unemployment situation and the rights to pensions;
- Ensure decent working conditions for all workers in all forms of employment;
- Combating social and economic inequalities, particularly in the distribution of income, given that inequalities are threats to social cohesion and sustainable growth. The social groups most vulnerable to the risk of poverty are children, single-parent families and households with unemployed adults;
- Develop policies to combat child poverty and promote the well-being of children and young people, ensuring, among others, access to health, education and social services;
- Strengthen social dialogue to build long-term commitments on the definition and implementation of relevant structural, economic and social policies at national level;
- Promoting Work-Life Balance and strengthen gender equality in the labour market.

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

1. HeforShe Campaign

The first celebration of the “Equal opportunities between women and men Day” was the launching of the “HeForShe” campaign in Romania. In this context, the online petition of the campaign was launched, on the official website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice. The event took place at the initiative of ANES, with the support of the Romanian Presidency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. By signing the online petition by as many men and boys, Romania sent a clear message to support equal opportunities between women and men as well as women’s rights.

Romania is actively involved in the “HeForShe” campaign launched by UN Women. The President of Romania is one of the 10x10x10 Impact Champions. The planned activities include the establishment of a new integrated system to track, report and prevent all forms of gender violence, training of specialists in a new profession - gender equality expert - and developing and implementing programs to engage 100000 girls and boys in political, social and economic life. Romania contributes to the HeForShe campaign with an integrated vision of promoting equal opportunities and treatment between women and men, on a national level.

2. Gender Equality Expert – innovative profession for strengthening staff capacity

An important measure that we took is introducing an innovative profession: Gender Equality Expert, which is now in our National Classification List of Occupations.

The Gender Equality Expert profession was created and implemented during the “START – a quality life in safety!” project and was designed in a manner that would integrate the gender perspective and include specific modules for gender equality and domestic violence and it is also a part of Romania’s commitments in the HeForShe Campaign.

Their mission is to promote and apply the principle of equal opportunities between women and men in all their activities, to support active measures in order to prevent and combat domestic violence and to become Ambassadors for Equality within the society. There are currently 1100 trained Gender Equality Experts in Romania.

3. Ratifying of the Istanbul Convention

By Law no. 30/2016 Romania ratified the Istanbul Convention imposing concrete measures on States Parties to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence.

By ratifying the Istanbul Convention, Romania has committed itself to adopting, promoting and enforcing a number of firm measures to ensure the prevention and appropriate combat of the phenomenon of violence. The Convention encompasses women and girls from any social background, regardless of age, race, religion, social origin, immigrant status or sexual orientation.

In the context of our country’s ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), by Law no. 30/2016, it was created the opportunity to make proposals for amendments and/or completions of the internal legislation in order to implement the provisions of the Convention.

4. “Justice has no gender” project

This project was launched on the 1st of May 2017, with a 30 months implementation period. It is funded by the European Commission through the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, initiated by ANES in partnership with the National Agency for Disabled Persons (ro. ANPD) and the ActiveWatch NGO.

The main objective of the project is to raise awareness among more than 15000 Romanian students and to address the negative effects of gender stereotypes on people with disabilities and/or of a different ethnicity in the Romanian society. In this sense, a group of 650 students from 26 high schools, in collaboration with 26 teachers (with the support of our experts), will be empowered to become social activists, who will develop campaigns in their own high schools, aimed at reducing discrimination and gender-based violence.

This project also aims at raising awareness about social inclusion of all persons, irrespective of their vulnerable situations.

5. World Conference of Francophone Women

ANES will organize in Bucharest, on 1-2 November 2017, in cooperation with the International Organisation of La Francophonie (ro. OIF) and under the high patronage of the President of Romania, the World Conference of Francophone Women, having as theme "The Role of Women in Economic Development". The event, with approximately 450 participants from all francophone countries, will be premiered in Bucharest, its focus being on women's role in economic development, with a special interest on female entrepreneurs.

This event falls under the scope of developing activities for empowering women, by sharing examples of successful female entrepreneurs in Romania.

6. "VENUS" project

In terms of social and health care services, we have written a project sheet that awaits validation in order to obtain funding from the Romanian Ministry of European Funds. The project will develop measures centered on an integrated and unified approach to social services, socio-professional and professional training of specialists in the field, in order to prevent and combat domestic violence at national level.

<i>Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period</i>

1. Provisional protection order (ro. OPP)

The issuance of the provisional protection order is the essential pillar of the new regulations and aims at the emergency intervention, in imminent danger situations, according to Article 52 of the Convention (which involves the extension of the police's prerogatives in order to ensure the protection of victims by immediate removal of the domestic aggressor in immediate danger situations). This measure involves the issuing of the OPP by police officers, on the spot, on the basis of the situation's assessment, according to a Risk Assessment Form (with a validity term of up to 5 days) and validation of the order by a prosecutor.

2. Modifying Law no. 202/2002 on equal opportunities and treatment between women and men, republished

Through the draft Law on the amendment and completion of the Law no. 202/2002, we aim at:

- introducing the notion of "gender-based violence" according to the Istanbul Convention, and
- introducing the obligation for legal entities with more than 50 employees from public and private sectors, to have a gender equality expert among their staff. If the employer does not identify a suitably trained person, then they may assign tasks in the field of equal opportunities between women and men to one of their employees.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION/ FEDERATION DE RUSSIE

In 2016, first half 2017 Russian Government carried out active work, aimed at improving the legislation in the sphere of social protection, pensions, social insurance, employment and labour relations. In the framework of this work several important goals were set.

They are: **“Decent work and fare wages”, “Improvement of demographical situation, state support for families with children”, “Targeted Approach to Social Protection”**.

In order to achieve first aim **“Decent work and fare wages”** the following steps have been taken.

- **minimum wage has been increased;**
- **the maximum monthly salary of top managers, their deputies, chief accountants was tied to monthly salary of workers of such institutions and enterprises;**
- **additional measures in the field of employment, aimed at reducing tensions in the labor market of the regions of the Russian Federation were taken;**
- **increase of the employers responsibility for violations of the law in terms of wages;**

Also some documents were developed:

- **The Plan of measures for 2016-2018 on improving the quality and accessibility of public services in the field of employment of the population (the plan includes standards of accessibility);**
- **the Action Plan ("road map") "Ensuring effective control over the timely payment of wages in the regions of the Russian Federation"**

To achieve the goal of **“Improvement of demographical situation, state support for families with children”**, " several important documents were approved:

- **a plan of measures to implement in 2016-2020 the Concept of the Demographic Policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025;**

The plan provides for the implementation of activities aimed at:

- **reduction of preventable causes of mortality;**
- **increase of availability and effectiveness of medical care for elderly people, including the development of geriatric services;**
- **provision of conditions for protecting the health of the population of the Russian Federation from the consequences of tobacco and alcohol consumption;**
- **the development of additional mechanisms for the economic stimulation of the birth of second and subsequent children;**
- **increasing the affordability of housing for families with children;**

As a result of the implementation of the plan's activities, by 2020, it is planned to increase the population to 147.5 million people; an increase in the life expectancy of individuals of both sexes to 74 years; an increase in the total fertility rate to 1.87;

- **National Strategy for Women for 2017 - 2022;**

It is supposed to be implemented in two stages

At first stage (2017-2018) - the development of mechanisms for implementing the Strategy; information-analytical, legal and personnel support of state policy in the interests of women. At the second stage (2019-2022) - measures to improve the status of women in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres.

- **Strategy of actions in the interests of citizens of the older generation in the Russian Federation until 2025 and an action plan for 2016-2020 on its implementation;**

-

The plan consists of seven sections, including:

- **stimulation of employment of elderly people;**
- **improvement of the system of health protection of elderly people, development of medical assistance in the field of "geriatrics", including the training of relevant specialists;**
- **ensuring access of elderly people to information and educational resources;**
- **development of conditions for the organization of leisure for elderly people;**
- **development of modern forms of social services for elderly people;**
- **stimulating the production of goods and services in order to meet the needs of elderly people.**

- **An opportunity to obtain a state certificate for maternity (family) capital, in the form of an electronic document.**

Within the framework of the goal "**Targeted Approach to Social protection**" some important documents were approved:

- **methodical recommendations on the development of the network of social service organizations in the regions of the Russian Federation (the provision of social services including rural areas);**
- **recommendations for the provision of social and medical services in the form of social services at home for veterans and disabled veterans of the Great Patriotic War;**

The concept of development of early aid in the Russian Federation for the period until 2020 and a plan of measures for its implementation.

The purpose of the Concept is to create conditions that ensure early detection of health impairments and disability, optimal development and adaptation of children, social integration of the family and children, prevention or reduction of the severity of disability, the formation of physical and mental health, and increased access to education for children of the target group.

The plan, in particular, provides for the development of standard documents, standards, educational programs, statistical tools, methodological recommendations for the executive authorities of the regions of the Russian Federation on early childhood assistance; implementation of pilot projects to develop approaches to the formation of an early child care system in the regions

-**A working group has been set up to work out the main approaches to reforming the activities of psycho-neurological boarding schools;**

The Federal Register of Disabled Persons has been formed (is aimed to actively integrate and rehabilitate people with disabilities in society).

SAN MARINO/ SAINT-MARIN

SERBIA/ SERBIE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

1. The Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Strategy for Gender Equality (2016 – 2020) and its Action Plan (2016 – 2018) in February 2016.
2. The Employment and Social Reform Programme was adopted in May 2016. The expected added value of the ESRP for Serbia, additionally to being an obligation resulting from Serbia's EU integration process, is its value for consolidating the strategic framework for inclusive growth in Serbia and improving the system for policy coordination and monitoring. Furthermore, the ESRP is expected to create a framework for better use of EU/IPA funds and to strengthen reforms which are not part of the EU acquis agenda, but are important for sustainable socio-economic recovery and development.
3. The Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women in the RS for period 2016-2025 (adopted on May 31, 2016) and its Action plan for period 2017-2018 (adopted on June 7, 2017)
4. In November 2016, the Prevention of Domestic Violence Law was passed. Its objective is to improve coordination of competent authorities, introduce advance special training for all competent authorities and introduce temporary restraining orders – temporary removal of an offender from place of abode, and temporary ban on contacting and coming near the victim of violence. Also, under revised Criminal Code, criminal legal protection of children from sexual abuse has been improved as provided for under the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, also known as “the Lanzarote Convention” and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.
5. Regulation on earmarked transfers has been adopted (2016), and on the basis of it, cca 700. Mil. RSD have been allocated in the State budget for 2017 for setting up and development of social care services at local level for children with developmental disorders and other target groups of children and adults.

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

1. Further development and full enforcement of diversion orders and equivalent measures required for full exercise of the right of the child to child-friendly justice.
2. Including children and students - asylum seekers in education system and developing intercultural programmes of Serbian as a foreign language.
3. Protection, assistance and support to unaccompanied migrant children.

SLOVAK REPUBLIC/ REPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUE

SLOVENIA/ SLOVENIE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

Partial release of austerity measures related to family and social benefits and payments, which were adopted by a special law (2013) in times of economic crisis.

Adoption and exercise of new social legislation, which have changed the conditions for obtaining social care benefits (basic income and income supplement) for permanently unemployable and older than 63/65.

Preparation of a package of legislation aimed at increase access to rights (at the primary level) and ensure sustainable funding for the health care system and long-term care system.

Adoption of the "Personal Assistance Act".

Adoption of comprehensive strategy of long-lived society.

Preparation and launch of programs for the activation of long-term recipients of social benefits.

Preparation of the reform of social work centers.

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

Preparation and delivery of action plans based the strategy of a long-lived society.
Delivery of the reform of social work centers.

Preparation and delivery of the deinstitutionalization in the field of social care.

Further release of austerity measures

Final adoption of health and LTC legislation.

Adoption of resolution on family policy

SPAIN/ ESPAGNE

SWEDEN/ SUEDE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

National Reform Programme, especially 4.3, p 25-28 in the following link:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2017-european-semester-national-reform-programme-sweden-en_1.pdf

SWITZERLAND/ SUISSE

<i>Principales réalisations, nouvelles initiatives liées à la cohésion sociale / droits sociaux qui ont eu lieu depuis le 28 juin 2016</i>

Le 17 mars 2017, le Parlement a adopté la réforme "Prévoyance vieillesse 2020".

Il s'agit d'une réforme des 1^{er} et 2^e piliers de notre système de retraite, à savoir du régime de base et du régime professionnel de retraite.

Le but de la réforme est d'assurer la stabilité financière du système de prévoyance vieillesse tout en maintenant le niveau des pensions.

Le peuple suisse sera appelé à voter sur cette réforme le 24 septembre 2017.

“THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA”/ "L'EX-REPUBLIQUE YOUGOSLAVE DE MACEDOINE"

TURKEY/ TURQUIE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

- The Law N° 6735 dated 28 July 2016 establishing the Directorate General of International Labour Force.
- “Regulation on part-time working after maternity leave or unpaid leave” published on the Official Gazette N° 29882 dated 8 November 2016
- The Project of “Improving Social Integration and Employment of Disadvantaged People” (DESİP)
- The Strategy Paper for Roma Citizens 2016-2021 and Stage I Action Plan 2016-2018.
- Entry into force in 1 September 2016 of The Law No. 6667 on the Adoption of Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.
- Entry into force in 27 July 2016 of the Law establishing the Department of Combating Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking of General Command of Gendarmerie

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

- The negative effects of the ongoing war and instability in Syria causing the flux of refugees
- Unemployment of the youth being still high and the low rate of women employment ratio to population affect other measures taken in terms of social cohesion and create new challenges.

UKRAINE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

- the implementation of pension reform
- phased reduction of poverty and social exclusion through the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy
- development of the system of social services at the level of territorial communities in order to ensure equal access of people regardless the place of residence

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

- reforming the system of remuneration and labour legislation

UNITED KINGDOM/ ROYAUME-UNI

COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S BODIES/ ORGANES DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**AD HOC COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON ROMA AND TRAVELLER ISSUES/ COMITE AD HOC
D'EXPERTS SUR LES QUESTIONS RELATIVES AUX ROMS ET AUX GENS DU VOYAGE (CAHROM)**

**SUPPORT TEAM OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
COUNCIL OF EUROPE FOR ROMA ISSUES/ ÉQUIPE DU REPRESENTANT SPECIAL DU SECRETAIRE
GENERAL POUR LES QUESTIONS RELATIVES AUX ROMS**

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which have taken place since 28 June 2016

- Meetings of the Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller NGOs were organised in June and November 2016, respectively; topics of the June meeting included hate speech, forced evictions and internal as well as cross-border migration, whilst the November meeting focused on Roma youth and on the travelling way of life;
- Adoption by the CAHROM in 2016-2017 of thematic reports on Roma school and health mediators, on linking national Roma integration strategies and anti-poverty policies, on the protection and promotion of the Romani language, on mainstreaming Roma women and Roma youth in national policies and strategies, and on participation in advisory and decision-making bodies;
- Adoption by the CAHROM in June 2017 of a draft CM recommendation on improving access to justice for Roma and Travellers in Europe;
- Launch of the European Institute for Arts and Culture (ERAC) based in Berlin, Germany, in June 2017;
- Launch of the INSCHOOL 'Inclusive schools, making a change for Roma children programme in 5 CoE member States;
- Successful external evaluation of the ROMED programme and concrete achievements in the ROMACT programme, both focused on local democratic governance and community development;
- Launch of the adapted version of the ROMED/ROMACT programmes in the Western Balkans and Turkey under the name ROMACTED (7 beneficiaries);
- Finalisation of the report on how Roma are represented in national curricula in 21 countries.

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

- Delays in the adoption of the new law on social housing in Albania (CoE proposed amendments concerning quotas for Roma and Egyptian families and measures to prevent forced evictions supported by the government, but the Act is still under discussion in the parliament);
- Postponement of the CAHROM thematic visit on access to employment for Roma and Travellers in Turkey (now scheduled in 2018);
- Change in the priorities of the local authorities mainly related to a new focus on migrants and refugees.

COMMITTEE ON BIOETHICS/ COMITE DE BIOETHIQUE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

An international conference to mark the 20th anniversary of the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (Oviedo Convention) will take place on 24-25 October 2017, in Strasbourg, under the auspices of the Czech Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers. The Rapporteur on Article 11 of the European Social Charter will take part in the event.

More information:

http://www.coe.int/en/web/bioethics/20th-anniversary-of-the-oviedo-convention*

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

The Commissioner published two documents related to social cohesion containing his recommendations and positions on these respective issues:

- Issue paper on Realising the right to family reunification of refugees in Europe (19/6/2017)
- Position Paper on Fighting school segregation in Europe through inclusive education (12/9/2017)

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

CEB approved new job creation projects in favour of most vulnerable populations through lending to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). These projects aim at fostering a more inclusive labour market and strengthening social cohesion. CEB also approved projects and loan requests presented by member countries for providing durable housing solutions for vulnerable populations such as migrants and refugees.

(See: <https://coebank.org/en/project-financing/sectors/msmes/>)
<https://coebank.org/en/news-and-publications/projects-focus/building-homes-strengthening-regional-cooperation/>)

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

The Bank's main lines of action have been redefined in order to respond to current social challenges. The aim of the Bank is "Sustainable and Inclusive Growth".

(https://coebank.org/media/documents/CEB_Strat%C3%A9gie_2017-2019.pdf)

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

The Drawing up of new guidelines to ensure meaningful civil participation in political decision-making,

The purpose of these guidelines is to strengthen and facilitate participation by individuals, NGOs and civil society at large in political decision making.

Civil participation is all the more important today when, in many countries, democracy is challenged. Civil participation complements and supports representative democracy. Citizens who feel that they have a say in the general policy debate and in everyday decisions, are more likely to accept the decisions taken and, more generally, to trust their elected representatives.

The guidelines are based on good practices and on key Council of Europe and international standards. They present the scope and definitions, conditions and principles, fundamentals and types of civil participation as well as essential elements to ensure civil participation in practice.

The Guidelines have been transmitted to the Committee of Ministers for adoption.

The revision of the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers (2001)19 on the participation of citizens in local public life

The CDDG examined the Recommendation of 2001 on the participation of citizens in local public life and confirmed its continued relevance given the ongoing concern with issues related to citizens' participation in the life of their local community.

In addition, issues identified previously, such as declining public interest in and a general feeling of apathy about politics, are still relevant.

The role and functions of local authorities and local democracy also develop and evolve continuously in all European countries: solutions that are deemed appropriate in 2001 must be constantly checked and if necessary challenged in the light of changes in society and in citizens' needs and expectations.

The CDDG therefore decided to bring the Recommendation up to date, reflecting current concerns and recent developments in member States in respect of citizen participation, to streamline and simplify the text as required, ensuring coherence with other relevant Council of Europe texts, including the European Charter of Local Self-Government and its Additional Protocol on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority and the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level.

A working group of the CDDG has been charged with this task and held its' last meeting on 8 and 9 September 2017.

The revised (draft) recommendation contains five recommendations to the governments of the member states and an appendix with basic principles of a local democratic participation policy and steps and measures to encourage and reinforce citizens' participation in local public life.

The CDDG will approve the draft at its' meeting of December of this year.

Compendium of the most relevant Council of Europe texts in the area of democracy

The Secretariat of the Council of Europe has drafted a Compendium of the most relevant texts of the Council of Europe in the area of democracy. The chosen texts are texts adopted by the Committee of Ministers (Conventions, Recommendations and Declarations), the Venice Commission, PACE, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and some Ministerial Conferences.

The CDDG approved this Compendium. The Committee of Ministers took note of the Compendium and the Secretariat of the Council of Europe gave permission to publish it online.

The Compendium is regularly updated with the latest texts adopted. The CDDG can ask other steering committees and other relevant bodies of the Council of Europe to take the Compendium into consideration when drawing up their future activities and ask them to submit proposals to the CDDG which texts can be recorded in future versions of the Compendium.

EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER/ CHARTE SOCIALE EUROPEENNE

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

The European Social Charter has a central place in the mandate of the European Social Cohesion Platform and I will just briefly try to highlight some of the main developments that have taken place since June 2016 concerning the Charter's monitoring mechanism, and notably the collective complaints procedure.

Before doing that, however, let me refer to some developments at the political level. Firstly, PACE has now adopted its report on "*The Turin Process: reinforcing social rights in Europe*" and also a Recommendation to the Committee of Ministers containing a number of proposals. PACE has also recently called on the CoE and the member states to make social rights an absolute priority in the upcoming biennium 2018-2019 (and to reflect this in the Budget and PoA for this period).

In December last year the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, transmitted [an opinion](#) to the European Commission on the initiative for a "European Pillar of Social Rights". In his opinion the SG called for the provisions of the Charter to be formally incorporated into the Pillar as a common benchmark for states in guaranteeing these rights and he also proposed that the collective complaints procedure be acknowledged by the Pillar for the contribution it has made to the effective realisation of the Charter rights and to strengthening inclusive and participatory democracies.

The European Commission has now adopted its [proposal on the "Pillar"](#) setting out a series of principles and rights intended to contribute to the proper functioning and fairness of labour markets and social welfare systems. The Commission's proposal does refer to the Charter, but in a rather perfunctory way, in passing as it were. It is still only a proposal and we hope that the EU social summit in Gothenburg later this year and the process of implementing the Pillar will result in a more robust taking into account of the Charter as part of the Pillar.

Now let me turn to the substantive outputs of the Charter's collective complaints procedure, outputs which we hope can feed into the work of the Platform.

In January 2017 the Committee published its conclusions in respect of 34 States on the articles of the Charter relating to "Employment, training and equal opportunities".

The Committee identified several problems that many States Parties encounter when applying the Charter, for instance insufficient protection against discrimination in employment on different grounds such as gender and sexual orientation, insufficient integration of persons with disabilities in mainstream education, the labour market and society in general and insufficient guarantee of equal rights between men and women in particular as regards equal pay. In some cases the efforts to combat unemployment and encourage job creation remain inadequate.

The Committee is currently examining State reports on the Charter provisions relating to "Health, social security and social protection" with the Conclusions to be published in January 2018.

Over the last year, the ECSR has handed down several important decisions – given the time constraints I can refer only to a few:

In its [decision in European Roma and Travellers Forum \(ERTF\) v. the Czech Republic, Complaint No. 104/2014, published in October 2016](#), the ECSR found violations of Article 16 due to insufficient access for Roma to housing, poor housing conditions and territorial segregation and due to forced evictions of Roma. It also found a violation of Article 11 due to exclusion of Roma in the field of health and inadequate access to health care services.

In a case lodged by the [Finnish Society of Social Rights v. Finland, Complaint No. 106](#), the ECSR in its decision published in January this year held that legislation makes no provision for reinstatement in the event of unlawful dismissal and that it provides for a ceiling on the amount of compensation that may be awarded in the event of unlawful dismissal in the absence of adequate alternative other legal avenues to provide a remedy in such cases, which is contrary to Article 24 of the Charter.

Finally, in March this year the ECSR adopted its decision in a high-profile complaint lodged by the [Greek General Trade Union Confederation \(GSEE\) v. Greece](#) concerning a range of austerity-related labour

market reform measures. The Committee held that legislation adopted to implement the Memorandums concluded with the Troika was in violation of several provisions of the Charter, including as regards unfair and discriminatory pay levels, insufficient limits on working time, absence of notice periods or severance pay during probationary periods, insufficient holiday entitlement for apprentices and the lack of guarantee of participation of workers in determination and improvement of working conditions in undertakings.

Interestingly, the Greek Government not only did not dispute the allegations, but expressly agreed that the legislation imposed by the memoranda concluded with the Troika was in violation of the Charter.

The Committee of Ministers adopted a resolution in July 2017 to make the Committee's decision public and will begin the substantive follow-up to the decision this autumn (GR-SOC 3 October).

To conclude, just a few words about what is in the pipeline. At its session in May 2017 the ECSR adopted a decision on the merits in *FIDH v. Ireland*, a complaint concerning social housing standards. That decision will become public in the autumn (23 October). Among the pending complaints I would draw your attention to the 15 complaints lodged by the INGO UWE, one complaint against each of the States Parties to the procedure on the topic of equal pay for women and men as guaranteed by notably Article 4§3 and 20 of the Charter. At its session in July, the ECSR declared all 15 complaints admissible and will now proceed to examine the merits of these complaints.

As for the other pending complaints there are many interesting issues at stake ranging from trade union rights in Croatia, Ireland and Italy, the reception of unaccompanied children in France, mainstreaming of education for children with disabilities in Belgium, financial exploitation of the elderly in France, cutbacks to daycare and early childhood education in Finland, a legal requirement of sterilization imposed on trans people in the Czech Republic and restrictions on the payment of family allowance in Bulgaria, alleged discrimination of Roma in maternity health care also in Bulgaria, and the use of unpaid trainees in the Belgian labour market.

GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION/ COMMISSION POUR L'EGALITE DE GENRE

The [Gender Equality Commission of the Council of Europe](#) (GEC) is composed of representatives of the 47 member states. It provides advice, guidance and support to other Council of Europe bodies and to member states and supports the implementation of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017. The Gender Equality Unit in DG II provides the Secretariat support to the GEC.

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

Social cohesion/social rights (equal rights, equal opportunities and equal treatment, non-discrimination, human dignity, training) are part of our work and activities on:

- Combating gender stereotypes and sexism (including in the fields of education, media, and sexist hate speech);
- Preventing and combating violence against women and girls;
- Guaranteeing equal access of women to justice;
- Achieving balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making;
- Achieving gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures.

The next Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023) is likely to keep the existing priority themes and add a new strategic objective: "protecting the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls".

Ongoing activities:

A [Drafting Committee has been set up to prepare a draft CM recommendation to prevent and combat sexism](#). Two meetings have already taken place in Paris in March and June 2017 and a third meeting is scheduled in March 2018.

The co-operation project on [Improving Women's Access to Justice in Six Eastern Partnership Countries](#) has organised training seminars in 2016 and 2017 and a [regional conference](#) in October 2016. A *Manual for Judges and Prosecutors on Ensuring Women's Access to Justice* will be published at the end of the project in late October 2017.

The preparation of the next Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023) is underway and a revised draft will be submitted for discussion and adoption by the GEC at its [next meeting](#) on 15-16 November 2017. Since the last meeting of the Platform, the GEC has met twice (Nov.2016 and April 2017) as well as during a CoE [conference](#) in Tallinn (30 June-1 July 2016) to take stock of the implementation of the current Gender Equality Strategy and prepare the next one.

Mainstreaming gender equality into all Council of Europe activities, policies and measures is a requirement addressed both to our member States and across CoE's work. To facilitate it, Gender Equality Rapporteurs are appointed within intergovernmental committees and monitoring bodies. Regular training sessions are organised by the Gender Equality Unit (the latest one took place in November 2016). A Gender Mainstreaming Team composed of staff members meets twice a year to exchange information on gender mainstreaming work across the Organisation (the latest meeting was in May 2017 and a second one will take place in early December 2017). A colleague dedicated to support the Organisation's gender mainstreaming work will take up this new post on 1 October 2017. Last year, the Dutch government seconded a high-level official to advise the CoE on gender mainstreaming matters. Carlien Scheele took up her duties in September 2016, for a term of two years.

Gender Equality Newsletter:

The Gender Equality Unit publishes a [quarterly newsletter](#) to which members of the Platform are invited [to subscribe](#) (next one to be sent out in Sept./October 2017). The Unit regularly contributes to the Platform's newsletter and gives visibility to the work of the European Committee of Social Rights by publishing [news about its decisions](#) and [conclusions](#).

Other Publications:

The publication on [gender mainstreaming activities at the Council of Europe](#) was updated in March 2017. A further update will be produced in the autumn.

The [report of the seminar on Combating Sexist Hate Speech](#) was published at the end of 2016 and a [factsheet](#) on this topic is also available.

The [2016 annual report on the implementation of the Strategy](#) was published at the beginning of 2017.

A report on [Article 52 of the Istanbul Convention](#) has recently been published and a report on the 3rd monitoring on the implementation of Recommendation Rec (2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making will be published soon.

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

As the GEC mentioned in its latest annual report (for 2016), Council of Europe member States face a number of challenges that prevent more and better progress in the field of gender equality and women's rights, including:

- a backlash against women's human rights and continued misconceptions about what "gender" means in the framework of gender equality policies and measures, which are increasingly attacked under the label of "gender ideology".
- two worrying manifestations of sexism and discrimination against women: sexist hate speech, including in political discourse, and threats of violence against women in the internet and social media.
- attacks to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights - which are crucial for the realisation of other human rights, including in the fields of education and employment - are worryingly on the rise and they also have a very negative impact on the advancement of the global gender equality agenda.
- budgetary cuts and austerity measures applied to gender equality authorities and bodies have directly affected the activities and impact of national mechanisms for gender equality in some member States. The implementation of gender equality laws and policies goes hand in hand with the financial and human resources dedicated to that task. The strengthening of institutional mechanisms for gender equality, at the national and local level, is therefore critical, and it will determine future progress to improve gender equality on the ground.

INTERCULTURAL CITIES/ CITÉS INTERCULTURELLES

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

Event on “Urban policies for inclusive migrant integration and diversity advantage”, taking place on 28-29 November 2017 in Lisbon, Portugal.

The event will offer a unique platform for discussion among national, regional and local leaders to share successful approaches to migrant and refugee inclusion policies and responses to outstanding challenges. Moreover, a Policy Lab will take place in the afternoon of 28-29 November and will bring around the table local and national authorities to discuss consistency and complementarity between local and national integration policies, as well as transfer of innovation between different levels of governance

More information:

<https://rm.coe.int/urban-policies-for-inclusive-migrant-integration-and-diversity-advanta/1680721e73>

SRSG ON MIGRATION AND REFUGEES/ SRSG SUR LA MIGRATION ET LES REFUGIES

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

- Fact-finding missions to Calais and Grande-Synthe, Italy, Serbia and the transit zones in Hungary.
- Publication of reports on Turkey, Calais and Grande-Synthe and Italy.
- Follow-up activities with other CoE services and Greece to implement recommendations in Greek report, e.g. launch of pilot project, involving Greece, for the recognition of refugee qualifications by DG II/Education Department; organisation of two training events in Athens in November 2017 by the SRSG's Office in cooperation with the Mayor of Athens on (i) general integration issues, for municipality administrators, social workers etc; and (ii) integration of children in education, for teachers).
- Publication of the thematic report on migrant and refugee children, highlighting issues such as poor living conditions, barriers to education and inadequate access to health services.

Launch of the CoE Action Plan on Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe, which includes actions to ensure appropriate shelter, provide training on children's socio-economic rights, provide education and create opportunities for participation in the host society. The SRSG has responsibility for coordinating the CoE activities envisaged.

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

The protection of the social rights of migrants and refugees is often low on the list of priorities for countries faced with the challenges linked to mass arrivals. Sometimes social rights are guaranteed by law but are in practice limited or denied for bureaucratic reasons. Approaches to addressing certain issues – such as integration – are coloured by perceptions of the temporary nature of the migrants' stay in the host country, whereas the reality is that for many their stay is likely to be of some duration.

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

Enter! project – supporting the implementation of the Enter! recommendation through:

- a) Enter! Long-term training course for youth workers on access to social rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The course supports 30 youth workers in developing projects in cooperation with local authorities to implement the Enter! Recommendation (May 2017- June 2018)
- b) Enter! Long term training on access to social rights and autonomy through youth work for representatives of authorities and youth workers in the Russian Federation. It includes 25 participants working to develop and implement projects on access to social rights for young people in the Russian Federation (October 2016-November 2017)
- c) “Taking it Seriously” – a guide to the Enter! Recommendation was developed and disseminated in English and French.
- d) The Enter! Recommendation was translated German, Italian, Russian, Turkish, Spanish and Ukrainian.

Youth Works – An online database features youth work practices which support young people’s access to social rights, transition to autonomy, social inclusion and peace building.

Study Sessions – educational activities done in cooperation with youth organisations focusing on young people's access to rights and social inclusion of young people. Some examples from 2017:

- a) “Building a socially inclusive world through personal empowerment” in cooperation with the International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People -IFHOHYP
- b) Welcome to Education! – All included” in cooperation with the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions- OBESSU
- c) Children on the move – how youth organisations can support young refugees and migrants” in cooperation with the International Falcon Movement – Socialist Education International – IFM-SEI
- d) Youth and migration: Transforming the crisis” in cooperation with the International Federation of Liberal Youth – IFLRY
- e) Inclusion for all through Human Rights Education” in cooperation with the Participation for All – Euro-Asian Network
- f) Promoting Leadership and intercultural understanding in Mixed Ability groups” in cooperation with European Network for Independent Living
- g) Empowering Young Refugees in cooperation with VYRE – Voices of Young Refugees in Europe
- h) Combating hate speech, antigypsism and anti-Semitism online” in cooperation with the Phiren Amenca International Network and the European Union of Jewish Students

Seminar on young people’s access to rights – creating an overview mapping of barriers and proposals for ways forward to support young people’s access to rights. The seminar gathered participants from the European Youth Forum, youth organisations, national youth councils, authorities responsible for youth policy, equality bodies representative and PECS representative.

Roma Youth Action plan – including training activities for youth workers and youth leaders, support for youth policy development and development of educational materials such as Mirrors – Manual on combating antigypsism through Human Rights Education

Youth Peace Camp allows young people and youth organisations from conflict stricken regions to engage in dialogue and conflict transformation activities based on human rights education and intercultural learning.

Inclusion of Refugees – supporting youth organisations, young refugees and unaccompanied minors through joint organisation of seminars, study sessions and other activities. Some example of activities in the past year include: Seminar on Social inclusion of Syrian students and refugees and their role in intercultural dialogue (2016), Summer school “Young refugees as actors for social inclusion and intercultural dialogue” (2017), an expert meeting on the policy guidelines regarding refugees in transition to adulthood (2017) as well a Study Sessions in cooperation with the VYRE Network – Voices of young refugees in Europe.

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

Specific challenges can be identified on the level of each programme or activities implemented, and are being dealt with in a case-by-case situation.

More clarity and commitment from member states towards the implementation of the CM Recommendations on Access to Rights, sometimes there is an impression that the Council of Europe should implement the CM recommendations directly. This is also due to the interdisciplinarity of various issues: they are not exclusively or mainly the remit of ministries in charge of youth matters.

There is a resistance among some stakeholders about specific realities, challenges and terms, such as antigypsyism, segregation or islamophobia. While some of it is derived from lack of knowledge, others are the result of a social climate that is not supportive of human rights and diversity. The issues need therefore to be placed in a human rights framework which, in itself, is being challenged more regularly.

The effectiveness, outreach and impact of the programmes and activities also depends a lot of the established cooperation with the youth civil society organisations and the authorities responsible for youth, which are ensuring that the activities are widely disseminated and that they target multipliers who can further promote the Council of Europe's work.

The concept of social cohesion is fluid, perhaps too fluid and confused with social inclusion or participation.

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UNITED NATIONS /NATIONS UNIES

Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016

- In April 26 2017 the European Commission delivered a proposal to establish the European Social Pillar setting out 20 key principles and rights to support fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems. These key principles are structured around three categories: (i) Equal opportunities and access to the labour market (ii) Fair working conditions, (iii) Social protection and inclusion.
- On the same date the Commission put forward a number of legislative and non-legislative initiatives related to work-life balance, the information of workers, access to social protection and working time.
- The proposal for a European Social Pillar is accompanied by a Social Scoreboard to monitor its implementation.
- The Commission proposes that the European Pillar of Social Rights is proclaimed at the EU Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth to convene on the 17th of November 2017 in Gothenburg Sweden.

Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period

- The Europe 2020 strategy target as regards poverty is not yet reached. Number of people at risk of poverty has not declined.
- Income inequalities continue to pose a challenge across the EU.
- Inadequate housing assistance and persisting homelessness are identified in a number of Member States.
- Limited access to public utilities persisting for certain groups of the population, especially for Roma.

**QUESTIONS TO UPDATE DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE PREVIOUS PLENARY MEETING/
QUESTIONS DE MISE A JOUR SUR LES DEVELOPPEMENTS INTERVENUS DEPUIS LA
PRECEDENTE REUNION PLENIERE**

QUESTIONS TO UPDATE DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE PREVIOUS PLENARY MEETING

EUROPEAN SOCIAL COHESION PLATFORM Second meeting Strasbourg, 19-20 September 2017

In order to facilitate point 4 of the Agenda 'Developments since the previous plenary meeting' of the next meeting of the European Social Cohesion Platform (Strasbourg, 19-20 September 2017), all the participants are kindly asked to reply in a very concise way to the following questions:

State, Council of Europe's Body or Committee, International Institution, NGO	
Major achievements, new initiatives relating to social cohesion/social rights which took place since 28 June 2016	
Challenges or particular issues relating to social cohesion/social rights that had to be faced during this period	

We thank you to send the replies to the address g.pecs@coe.int, by Wednesday 13 September, at the latest

QUESTIONS DE MISE A JOUR SUR LES DEVELOPPEMENTS INTERVENUS DEPUIS LA PRECEDENTE REUNION PLENIERE

PLATEFORME EUROPEENNE DE COHESION SOCIALE Deuxième réunion Strasbourg, les 19 et 20 septembre 2017

Afin de faciliter le point 4 de l'ordre du jour «Développements depuis la précédente réunion plénière» de la prochaine réunion de la Plateforme européenne de cohésion sociale (Strasbourg, 19-20 septembre 2017), tous les participants sont priés de répondre de manière très concise aux questions suivantes :

État, organe ou comité du Conseil de l'Europe, institution internationale, ONG	
Principales réalisations, nouvelles initiatives liées à la cohésion sociale / droits sociaux qui ont eu lieu depuis le 28 juin 2016	
Défis ou problèmes particuliers liés à la cohésion sociale / aux droits sociaux qu'il a fallu relever pendant cette période	

Nous vous remercions d'envoyer vos réponses à l'adresse g.pecs@coe.int, pour mercredi 13 septembre au plus tard