

# Contribution to the High-Level Conference of the European Social Charter

Call with deadline 15 March 2024

Contribution by the International Movement All Together in Dignity – ATD Fourth World,  
INGO member of the Council of Europe Conference of INGOs

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The International Movement All Together in Dignity – ATD Fourth World welcomes the announcement to hold a High-Level Conference on the European Social Charter (3-4 July 2024, in Vilnius, Lithuania) and look forward to promoting the messages of the Political Declaration, the expected main outcome of the Conference. For decades, ATD has supported, influenced and promoted the development of the Social Charter. Currently, we are involved in 4 collective complaints (submitted or in preparation). We are also long term member of the CINGO Committee focused on Social Rights and the Social Charter.

ATD will continue to promote in the Member States where local ATD Community groups exist (12 CoE Countries) the acceptance by member states of further commitments under the Charter where possible. One of the focus of ATD in the future could to assess in extended way the situation of Social Rights in French territories overseas.

([https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/article\\_jo/JORFARTI000036086855](https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/article_jo/JORFARTI000036086855))

ATD will continue to support Civil Society Networks from all Council of Europe countries to encouraging further ratification of the Revised Charter areas (including the seven States that are still bound by the 1961 Charter.

We support also the Council of Europe aim to show unity in its mission to defend social rights and to reduce the (treaty law) complexity that arises from the existence of two social charters.

We identify additional measures needed to achieve the objective of strengthening the implementation of social rights in Europe.

- Raise awareness about what it means to live on very low income in a world of multiple inequalities – The experience of life in poverty has now be described in a comprehensive way by the University of Oxford together with ATD (<https://www.atd-fourthworld.org/what-we-do/participation/participatory-research/dimensions-of-poverty/>).

This new understanding has been presented at OECD (2019) and World Bank / IMF (2024). Social Rights have a large impact on human experience of life in poverty. A new awareness about hardships of this life can create more support for implementation of social rights in Europe in the general public.

- Support better understanding of the experience and impact of socio-economic discrimination on the take-up of existing social rights. Socio-economic discrimination is probably the most prevalent discrimination experience by Council of Europe citizens, yet it remains an hidden discrimination. And many member states don't ban it in their equality packages.

Yet all discrimination studies on target groups (Ethnic groups, Women, LGBTQ...) show that the lower your income the more you are at risk of discrimination. The objective of strengthening the implementation of social rights in Europe can't go without supporting the strengthening of the protection against socio-economic discrimination.

See also the recent 2022 resolution by PACE

(<https://pace.coe.int/en/news/8688/tackling-discrimination-based-on-social-origin>) and

the « Ban Povertyism » report by the UN Special Rapporteur  
(<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/11/1130267>)

- Provide to Member-States better tools to design effective policies that deliver Social Rights. One example of tools is the IDEEP Tool (Inclusive and Deliberative Elaboration & Evaluation of Policies Tool) presented by ATD and the UN Special Rapporteur Olivier de Schutter to the World Bank / IMF on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024  
(<https://www.srpoverty.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2024-02-12-IDEEP.pdf>)

- Articulate in the most appropriate way the process to include the Council of Europe's human rights architecture the « Right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment ». Most of the European citizens who today are denied the Right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment are citizens who have weak access to Social Rights and collective complaints as secured by the Revised Charter should also be accessible for this new protected right.

ATD Fourth World has been for the 40 past years a strong campaigner for the indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of Human Rights. Our reference document is the 1988 Joseph Wresinski Essay : «[The very poor, living proof of the indivisibility of human rights](https://www.joseph-wresinski.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2016/09/THE_VERY_POOR.pdf) »  
([https://www.joseph-wresinski.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2016/09/THE\\_VERY\\_POOR.pdf](https://www.joseph-wresinski.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2016/09/THE_VERY_POOR.pdf)), our achievement, the UN adoption of the 2012 The Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-poverty/guiding-principles-extreme-poverty-and-human-rights>)

We will continue to emphasising that social rights are human rights express support for them. With the Council of Europe who reaffirmed it at the Reykjavik Summit we see the social justice is crucial for democratic stability. The growing inequalities in Europe are fuelling in a visible way the weakening of democracy and of the rule of law. The strengthening of social rights and the provisions of the Social Charter should contribute to more stable and meaningful democratic process and improvements.

That is why ATD :

- Supports initiatives to strengthen the Social Charter in the Council of Europe's human rights architecture and to consolidate the various Charter instruments into one single treaty.

- Recognises the need for a regular High-level Conference of specialised ministers in the area of social rights (labour, health, social affairs, housing, etc).

- Continues to work with European networks (Social Platform, EAPN Europe, Caritas Europa,...) to strengthen the EU commitments towards the European Pillar of Social Rights and to assess the feasibility of EU accession to the Social Charter.

- Within CINGO, after the High-Level Conference on the European Social Charter (3-4 July 2024, in Vilnius, Lithuania) and rooted in its results, together with partners like Caritas Europa, ESAN,... will submit a new mandate for a 2025-2027 CINGO Committee « Action for Social Rights and the Social Charter » aiming to engage Civil Society in the support and delivery of the outcomes of the Vilnius Conference.

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