

EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

Management response and Action plan



May 2025

DIO-EVA(2025)02

Management response and Action Plan

Name of Evaluation Report:	Evaluation of the European Social Charter		
Date of Evaluation Report:	27 March 2025	Date of Action Plan:	28 May 2025

Overall management response to the evaluation:

The management takes note with interest of the above-mentioned evaluation report, which contains a wealth of valuable observations and recommendations. While the recommendations in their substance are not necessarily new – many of the issues at stake were discussed in the past, for example in the context of CDDH work (Improving the protection of social rights in Europe, Volume II, 2019) and most notably in the work of GT-CHARTÉ (CM decisions of September 2022 and March 2023) – they confirm, inform and enrich our thinking about how to strengthen social rights in the CoE framework.

Accordingly, the management accepts the recommendations of the Evaluation Report, however with a few caveats concerning some of them, including the report analysis on which they are based:

As regards Recommendation No. 2, it should be noted that the mandate of the ECSR members (part-time members with full-time occupations) and more generally the human/financial resources currently available to the statutory organs of the Charter system severely limit the operational capacity to carry out such activities. The ECSR is an independent quasi-judicial monitoring body, and its role is not to provide technical capacity-building for States Parties or other Charter organs.

With respect to Recommendation No. 4, it should be noted that while the first ad hoc reporting on the cost-of-living crisis shows promise in increasing the profile of the Charter system, this ad hoc reporting exercise is not treaty-based and its impact in changing State behaviour remains to be seen. Such exercise departs from the ECSR's quasi-judicial and ad hoc reports, the ECSR's role is confined to providing a general overview of the situations found and a broad legal analysis, analysing good and less good practices and making non-binding recommendations. Any review of the value and future utility of the ad hoc reports should be assessed against this background.

Recommendation No. 5 is heavily dependent on additional human resources to the monitoring system. Only marginal productivity/efficiency gains are possible, and they will not suffice to decisively reduce the time needed to produce the monitoring outputs. The Charter's monitoring procedures addressed structural and systemic issues, which rarely lend themselves to easy/quick remedial solutions in the member States.

The Management is pleased to provide information below on its on-going and/or planned action to address the recommendations and looks forward to reporting on the implementation of said action in due course.

ACTION PLAN

Management decision ¹	Entity in charge ²	Planned actions ³ (determined by entity)	Justification for non-acceptance ⁴	Target date for action	Person responsible for action
Recommendation 1: Increase the visibility of the Charter through targeted, high-visibility events and outreach, focusing on national parliaments, NGOs, legal professionals, and key national stakeholders to foster greater engagement. (High⁵)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	DG I, Department of Social Rights DC	The Department will prepare a communication strategy with the aim of raising visibility. It has included it in its workplan awareness-raising activities and information events for targeted audiences and will update or develop new communication tools, including with a view to the 30th anniversary of the Charter in 2026. It will also increase co-operation with other relevant international organisations.		2025-2026	Head of Department of Social Rights
Recommendation 2: Increase dialogue between the Charter monitoring bodies and member states with particular emphasis on improving interaction between the ECSR and the GC to enhance contextual understanding and avoid non-conformity decisions based on incomplete information or lack of context. (High)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	DG I, Department of Social Rights	With a view to increasing dialogue, joint meetings between the GC and ECSR Bureau and plenaries will be organised, as well as increasing bilateral meetings between ECSR and States Parties regarding conclusions of non-conformity and the meetings in the context of the procedure on the non-accepted provisions of the Charter (NAP) will be continued.		2025-2026	Head of Department of Social Rights
Recommendation 3: Promote the collective complaints procedure among government officials and national parliaments, emphasising its advantages in targeted reporting and reducing the broader reporting burden. (High)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	DG I, Department of Social Rights	The events/meetings referred to in the above recommendations will be used to promote the collective complaints procedure.		2025 and 2026	Head of Department of Social Rights

¹ The management decision is in relation to the Recommendation (Accepted, Partially accepted, Rejected).

² Initial suggestion – to be defined/updated by management.

³ For implementing accepted recommendations.

⁴ For recommendations that are partially accepted or rejected.

⁵ Recommendations have been classified as either "high" or "medium" in terms of the assessment of their importance following the evaluation.

Management decision ¹	Entity in charge ²	Planned actions ³ (determined by entity)	Justification for non-acceptance ⁴	Target date for action	Person responsible for action
Recommendation 4: Review the value of ad hoc reports, assessing to what extent they can complement regular monitoring reports to enhance peer learning and address emerging issues. (High)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	DG I, Department of Social Rights	ECSR will hold exchanges on lessons learnt from the 1st ad hoc reporting exercise. GC will begin its follow-up to the ECSR's review of ad hoc reports.		End 2025	Head of Department of Social Rights
Recommendation 5: Decrease the time between receiving reports and publishing conclusions to improve responsiveness and reduce the time gap that currently limits impact. (High)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	DG I, Department of Social Rights (Primary responsible) in consultation with SecCM	To improve timeframes, the following actions are planned: - aim to adopt Conclusions 2025 in December 2025 and publish in January 2026; - aim to adopt Conclusions 2026 in October 2026 and publish in December 2026. The implementation of this recommendation is circumscribed by the time available for the examination of States Parties reports by the ECSR and the timely submission of reports by States Parties.		End 2026	Head of Department of Social Rights
Recommendation 6: Advocate for greater involvement of national civil society organizations in the collective complaints procedure to hold governments accountable and foster public support for social rights. (Medium)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	DG I, Department of Social Rights	To advocate for greater involvement of civil society organisations (CSOs), awareness raising efforts will be deployed to promote/train CSOs involvement in all stages of the complaints' procedure. A working method will be proposed to achieve involvement of CSO in the follow-up to complaints decisions at CM level.		2025-2026 End of 2025	Head of Department of Social Rights

Recommendation 7: Integrate national parliaments, NGOs and civil society more closely into follow-up efforts to enhance implementation of resolutions and ECSR conclusions or recommendations. Create a broader support network for the Charter objectives. (Medium)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	DG I, Department of Social Rights	To implement this recommendation, the following actions will be put in place: - systematic liaising with national parliaments in the context of NAP meetings (see Recommendations Nos. 1 and 3); - increase cooperation with PACE, hold regular exchanges with PACE on conclusions of non-conformity and violations on the merits in collective complaints and follow up; - foresee additional regular meetings with NGOs/NHRIs and trade unions.		2025-2026	Head of Department of Social Rights
--	--	--	--	-----------	---

Recommendation 8: Strengthen the implementation of the Charter by linking it more closely with Council of Europe co-operation activities in member states, allowing for better alignment with national priorities and resource allocation. (Medium)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	DG I, Department of Social Rights	On a strategic level, further efforts will be made to include cooperation activities on the Charter in the frameworks of CoE country specific action plans and joint programmes. Several country-specific, including regional, project proposals have been included for the biennium 2026-2027.		End 2025	Head of Department of Social Rights
--	--	--	--	----------	---

Abbreviations	
DC	Directorate of Communications
DGI	Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law
ECSR	European Committee of Social Rights
GC	Governmental Committee
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
SecCM	Secretariat of the Committee of Ministers
The Charter	European Social Charter