

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



## **Resilience under pressure: equality and human rights in times of economic and financial turbulences**

8<sup>th</sup> Meeting

of the CoE-FRA-ENNHRI-EQUINET Collaborative Platform

on Social and Economic Rights

**10 April 2019**

Hotel Titania

Panepistimiou 52

Athens, Greece

### ***RATIONALE***

Building on the feedback from the Platform members, NHRIs and NEBs have asked in particular to:

- strengthen their understanding of effective measures to challenge and counteract the negative impact of austerity measures and other forms of economic and financial restrictions that affect adversely equality and human rights;
- explore the synergies between the European Social Charter and the European Pillar of Social Rights to provide solutions to the detrimental effects of austerity measures upon the broader equality and human rights context;
- receive specific and actionable guidance on effective engagement with the European Committee of Social Rights and other relevant international stakeholders such as the UN Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and human rights in order to address potential implementation gap at national level, including the negative impact of austerity measures on equality and human rights;
- deepen knowledge on how to secure sustainable and targeted investment in equality and human rights that reflects the political commitment to these values, including outlining the role of national equality bodies and national human rights institutions in ensuring that equality and human rights considerations are incorporated in the design and implementation of economic and financial policies and legislation;

## **OBJECTIVES**

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The 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CoE-FRA-ENNHRI-EQUINET Collaborative Platform on Social and Economic Rights will aim in particular at:

- identifying the implications of austerity measures for equality and human rights and discussing possible responses to the challenges they present;
- identifying, analysing and discussing the potential implementation of best practices and solutions to counter the negative impact of austerity measures and budget cuts on equality and human rights.

Participants will also identify next steps for the Platform and elaborate the outline for the next meeting.

## **FORMAT / WORKING LANGUAGE(S)**

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The meeting will be held in plenary and in small workshop sessions. The working languages will be English and French.

## **PRELIMINARY DRAFT PROGRAMME**

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9.00–9.20

### **Opening Session**

Welcome and introductory remarks

Maria GAVOUNELI, First Vice President of the Greek National Commission for Human Rights, , Associate Professor of International Law, University of Athens

Andreas POTTAKIS, the Greek Ombudsman (tbc)

Jan MALINOWSKI, Head of the Department of the European Social Charter, Council of Europe

### **Setting the scene - economic crisis and austerity policy: what does it mean for equality and human rights?**

9.20–10.15

A factual approach to identify the impacts of the recession on equality and human rights

Moderator: Petros STANGOS, Member of the European Committee of Social Rights

Juan Pablo BOHOSLAVSKY, UN Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and human rights

Marion SANDNER, Senior Associate, Treaty Monitoring, Equality and Human Rights Commission, United Kingdom

Nora UHRIG, Senior Associate – Programmes Scotland, Equality and Human Rights Commission, United Kingdom

Discussion

*10.15-10.45 Coffee break*

10.45-11.50 Current approaches and challenges in identifying the equality and human rights costs of austerity measures – experience of national equality bodies and human rights institutions

Moderator: Milla VIDINA, Policy Officer, European Network of Equality Bodies (Equinet)

*Tour de table*

### **Tools to counter the negative impact of austerity measures on equality and human rights in Europe: the European and international framework**

11.50-13.00 The effectiveness of various approaches and tools to challenge the detrimental impact of austerity measures on equality and human rights

Moderator: Juan Pablo BOHOSLAVSKY, UN Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and human rights

Petros STANGOS, Member of the European Committee of Social Rights

Irene BERTANA, Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union (COFACE Families Europe)

Ioannis DIMITRAKOPOULOS, Scientific Adviser, EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)

Discussion

*13.00-14.30 Lunch break*

### **Tools to counter the negative impact of austerity measures on equality and human rights in Europe: the national framework**

14.30–15.30 The Greek experience: a compelling case study

Moderator: Sophia KOUKOULIS-SPILIOTOPOULOS, Attorney and Counsellor at Law

Giannis IOANNIDIS, Member of the Greek National Commission for Human Rights, Lawyer, President of the Hellenic League for Human Rights

Maria VOUTSINOI, Senior Investigator, Department on Equal Treatment - on relevant cases concerning austerity measures before the Constitutional Court

Ellie VARCHALAMA, Second Vice President of the GNCHR, Legal Counsel, Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE) - the trade union that brought the collective complaint regarding Greek austerity measures to the European Committee of Social Rights

*Discussion focused on identifying those elements in the Greek experience that can be successfully applied in other national contexts*

15.30-15.45 *Coffee break*

15.45-16.30 Other tools and approaches for effectively tackling the negative equality and human rights effects of austerity measures: learning from the experience of national equality bodies and human rights institutions

Introduction: Nina PANIKOVA, Human Rights Officer, European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI)

*Parallel break out session and discussion*

Small group discussion moderators:

1. Small group on austerity

Nina PANIKOVA, Human Rights Officer, European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI)

2. Small group on introducing socio-economic status as a discrimination ground

Jorge CRESPO GARCIA, Human Rights Trainee at European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI)

3. Small group on institutional resources

Tanya MONTANARI, Policy Officer, Department of the European Social Charter, Council of Europe

16.30-16.45 Reporting back

## **Concrete solutions and next steps for the Platform**

16.45-17.15 Next steps and ways forward

Moderator: Jan MALINOWSKI, Head of the Department of the European Social Charter, Council of Europe

Contribution of national equality bodies and human rights institutions to promoting the European Social Charter and the conclusions and decisions of the European Committee of Social Rights

Working methods, definition of capacity building needs of Platform Partners and outline for the next meeting of the Platform

General discussion

17.15-17.30 Conclusions of the meeting

Nina PANIKOVA, Human Rights Officer, European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI)

17.30-17.45 **Closure of the meeting**

Maria GAVOUNELI, First Vice-President of the Greek National Commission for Human Rights, Associate Professor of International Law, University of Athens