



ÉADHC

Étude Académique des Droits de l'Homme et du Constitutionnalisme

Association loi 1901

23/25 rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 75001 PARIS

Email : contact@eadhc.org Téléphone : +33 767 36 43 42

High-Level Conference on the European Social Charter – Chişinău, 2026.

Localising Social Rights: Developing Subnational Indicators and Benchmarks for the European Social Charter

1. Introduction and rationale

The implementation of the European Social Charter across Member States is currently assessed using national-level indicators and self-reported data. While this approach is valuable, it can obscure local disparities, mask inequalities between regions or municipalities, and fail to capture innovative local practices for advancing social rights.

As an organisation that works directly with local stakeholders and communities, we advocate a stronger focus on localised monitoring tools. These should include subnational indicators and benchmarks that align with the European Social Charter. These tools would enable more precise assessments, targeted policy responses and greater public accountability.

2. The need for local-level indicators and benchmarks

Many of the social rights ensured by the Charter, such as housing, education, access to healthcare, social inclusion and employment support, are under the jurisdiction of local or regional authorities. Yet, national averages mask regional and urban-rural disparities, leaving key implementation gaps unnoticed; crisis situations (e.g. mass displacement or cost-of-living pressures) affect municipalities unequally; also, best local and regional practices in social innovation are rarely captured or shared across the Charter system.

These issues limit the potential of the Charter to serve as a practical governance tool for subnational actors and undermine the visibility of local and regional progress.

3. Proposal: to develop localised, Charter-aligned monitoring tools.

We propose that the Council of Europe, in collaboration with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the relevant treaty bodies of the Charter, launches a project to develop localised social rights indicators and benchmarks. This project might include:

- the co-development of a subnational monitoring framework aligned with Charter provisions, with a flexible, modular design that local and regional authorities can apply voluntarily;
- pilot testing in selected Member States representing different administrative systems and socio-economic profiles (here Ukraine might be of a special interest);
- capacity-building for local and regional authorities on how to use social rights benchmarks for planning, budgeting and reporting;
- integration of subnational-level reporting templates into Charter compliance procedures.

Inspiration for this effort could be drawn from existing Council of Europe initiatives, such as the Human Rights Cities programme, and it could work in coordination with relevant UN and EU indicator frameworks (e.g. SDG localisation, the EU Social Scoreboard).

4. Benefits and added value

Such an approach could provide granular, actionable data for policymakers at all levels.

It could empower local and regional authorities with concrete tools to assess and improve the delivery of social rights.

It might help national governments to identify targeted support needs across regions, cities, towns, villages.

It could enhance monitoring legitimacy and participation, especially for marginalised or underserved communities.

It might increase the visibility and use of the Charter at the local and regional level.

6. Conclusion and priority themes for the conference

In order to effectively protect social rights, it is essential that they can be measured where they are delivered - in cities, towns etc., as well as at the regional level. Adopting localised indicators and benchmarks would greatly improve the Council of Europe's capacity to support and evaluate the implementation of the Charter. This would also reinforce the Congress's role and guarantee that social rights are recognised not only in law, but also in everyday life.

This contribution supports the inclusion of the following priority themes at the 2026 conference: measuring social rights from the ground up: subnational indicators and accountability; bridging national obligations and local realities: data, benchmarks, and implementation tools and the role of local and regional authorities in evidence-based social rights governance.