

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS
COMITÉ EUROPÉEN DES DROITS SOCIAUX

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FIFTH REPORT
ON THE NON-ACCEPTED PROVISIONS OF THE REVISED EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

Norway

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I. OVERVIEW

The European Social Charter is based on a ratification system, which enables States Parties, subject to certain minimum requirements, to choose the provisions they are willing to accept as binding international legal obligations. This system is provided for by Article A of the revised European Social Charter (Article 20 of the 1961 Charter) and it allows States, at any time subsequent to ratification of the treaty, to notify the Secretary General of their acceptance of additional articles or paragraphs.

It is in the spirit of the Charter for States Parties to progressively increase their commitments, tending towards acceptance of additional and eventually all provisions of the Charter where possible, as opposed to an *à la carte* stagnancy.[1]

The procedure on examination of reports on non-accepted provisions is provided for by Article 22 of the European Social Charter of 1961 (ETS No. 35). According to this provision, the States Parties shall send to the Secretary General, at appropriate intervals as requested by the Committee of Ministers, reports relating to the provisions of Part II of the Charter which they did not accept at the time of their ratification or by subsequent notification. The Committee of Ministers shall determine from time to time in respect of which provisions such reports shall be requested and the form of the reports to be provided.

In September 2022, the ECSR adopted a decision to henceforth implement the procedure on non-accepted provisions in respect of all State Parties to either Charter, in a reinforced manner. The current procedure provides for submission of written information by States Parties in accordance with a pre-established calendar, and additional bilateral meetings when it is deemed to represent an added value. The written information, submitted by the States Parties shall be made public upon its reception, and the national and international social partners, non-governmental organisations, national human rights institutions, equality bodies and other stakeholders are given the possibility to provide comments within three months after receipt of the written information.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Norway ratified the revised European Social Charter on 7 May 2001, accepting 79 of its 98 paragraphs. On 13 January 2005, Norway accepted Article 28, and on 14 July 2025, it accepted Article 3§1 and Article 27§3, thus accepting to be bound by **82 of the 98 paragraphs** of the Charter. The following provisions are not yet accepted: **Articles 2§7, 3§4, 7§4, 7§9, 8§2, 8§4, 8§5, 18§§1-4, 19§8, 26§§1 and 2, 27§1 (a and b), and 29 (16 provisions)**.

Norway accepted the collective complaints procedure on 20 March 1997; however, it has not yet made the declaration enabling national NGOs to lodge collective complaints.

The procedure on non-accepted provisions provided for by Article 22 of the 1961 Charter was applied to Norway for the first time in the context of a meeting between the delegation of the European Committee of Social Rights and representatives of various Norwegian ministries in Oslo on 28 March 2006.

[1] The opening paragraph of Part I reads "The Parties accept as the aim of their policy, to be pursued by all appropriate means both national and international in character, the attainment of conditions in which the following rights and principles may be effectively realised", followed by the heading of all rights contemplated by the European Social Charter. Part III, Article A, provides that "each of the Parties undertakes [...] to consider Part I of the Charter as a declaration of the aims which it will pursue by all appropriate means, as stated in the introductory paragraph of that part", followed by the rules on the choices available as regards provisions that Parties can declared to be bound by and which determine the modalities of monitoring under Part IV of the Charter. (See CM(2022)196-final).

Following this meeting, the European Committee of Social Rights at the time concluded that, from the point of view of the situation in law and in practice, there were no obstacles to the immediate acceptance of Articles 2§7, 3§1, 18§1, 18§4, 27§1 (a and b) and 27§3.

With a view to carrying out the procedure for the second time in 2011 and for the third time in 2016, the Norwegian authorities were invited to provide written information on the situation in law and practice in the areas covered by the non-accepted provisions of the Charter.

Having examined the letter sent by the Norwegian authorities on 31 January 2017 in the context of the third assessment the Committee noted with interest the Government's statement that it was actively working towards the ratification of Articles 2§7, 3§1, 18§1, 18§4, 27§1 and 27§3. It welcomed the fact that, compared to the statement made in 2011, two additional provisions were under consideration (Articles 18§§1 and 4).

The written procedure was also applied to review the situation for the fourth time in 2021. The Norwegian authorities submitted written information on 3 November 2021, informing the Committee that Norway was in the process of working towards the acceptance of Articles 3§1 and 27§3 of the Charter.[2] The Committee took note of this information and encouraged the Norwegian authorities to take concrete steps towards the acceptance of the provisions identified in 2006 and confirmed in 2011 and 2017 as posing no problems for acceptance.

This fifth examination of the non-accepted provisions is based on the adjusted procedure on non-accepted provisions. In terms of this procedure, Norway was invited on **1 December 2025** to submit written information before 31 March 2026. On **27 March 2026**, the Norwegian authorities sent a response that was subsequently published on the CoE website.[3]

Having examined the content of the response provided by the Government, the ECSR regrets that the Government has not submitted a full report on the non-accepted provisions and has instead provided information on the process for reviewing them. This response is not sufficient to enable the ECSR to assess whether the situation in law and practice has changed in respect of those provisions. Nevertheless, in light of Norway's recent acceptance of provisions of the Charter, the ECSR exceptionally agrees to proceed on the basis of the information currently available in this monitoring cycle. This exceptional approach is specific to the present circumstances and should not be regarded as a precedent or as relieving the Government of the need to provide full and up-to-date information on non-accepted provisions in future.

The ECSR encourages the Norwegian authorities to take concrete steps towards accepting the remaining provisions identified in 2006 and confirmed in 2011 and 2017 as posing no obstacles to acceptance — namely, Articles 2§7, 18§1, 18§4, and 27§1 (a and b).

Furthermore, the ECSR invites the Government to submit updated information on the situation in law and practice regarding all the non-accepted articles: 2§7, 3§4, 7§4, 7§9, 8§2, 8§4, 8§5, 18§§1-4, 19§8, 26§1 and 26§2, 27§1 (a and b) and 29.

The ECSR also invites Norway to make the declaration enabling national NGOs to lodge collective complaints, as a step towards meeting the strong interest of domestic NGOs in the continuous strengthening of social standards at the national level.

[2] On 14 July 2025, Norway accepted Article 3§1 and Article 27§3

[3] Information provided by Norway on non-accepted provisions, 2026

The ECSR remains at the disposal of the Government for enhanced dialogue on the provisions of the Charter and the relevant case law and invites Norway to undertake further commitments under the Charter as soon as possible.

A table showing the provisions of the revised Charter accepted by Norway appears in Appendix I.

The next examination of the provisions not yet accepted by Norway will take place in 2031.

APPENDIX I

— Norway and the European Social Charter[4] —

Signatures, ratifications and accepted provisions

Norway ratified the European Social Charter on 26/10/1962; it accepted 60 of the Charter's 72 paragraphs.

Norway ratified the Additional Protocol providing for a system of collective complaints on 20/03/1997. It has not yet made a declaration enabling national NGOs to submit complaints.

Norway ratified the Revised Charter on 07/05/2001; it accepted 80 of the Revised Charter's 98 paragraphs.

The Charter in domestic law

Statutory ad hoc incorporation by specific implementing legislation.

Table of accepted provisions

1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	3.1
3.2	3.3	3.4	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	5	6.1	6.2	6.3
6.4	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.5	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.9	7.10	8.1
8.2	8.3	8.4	8.5	9	10.1	10.2	10.3	10.4	10.5	11.1	11.2
11.3	12.1	12.2	12.3	12.4	13.1	13.2	13.3	13.4	14.1	14.2	15.1
15.2	15.3	16	17.1	17.2	18.1	18.2	18.3	18.4	19.1	19.2	19.3
19.4	19.5	19.6	19.7	19.8	19.9	19.10	19.11	19.12	20	21	22
23	24	25	26.1	26.2	27.1*	27.2	27.3	28	29	30	31.1
31.2	31.3							Grey = Accepted provisions			

* Sub-para. c.

Reports on non-accepted provisions

The European Committee of Social Rights ("the Committee") examines the situation of non-accepted provisions of the Revised Charter every 5 years after the ratification. It adopted reports concerning Norway in 2006, 2013, 2017 and 2021.

Further information on the reports on non-accepted provisions is available on the relevant webpage.

[4] The country fact sheets are being updated.

APPENDIX II: Chişinău Declaration

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

19 March 2026

High Level Conference on Social Rights – the European Social Charter

(Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, 18-19 March 2026)

CHIŞINĂU DECLARATION

1. The Council of Europe member States gathered in Chișinău recognise that social rights as enshrined notably in the European Social Charter are under unprecedented pressure as Europe grapples with overlapping and mutually reinforcing societal crises. Democratic stability and security are directly impacted by rising socio-economic inequalities and the cost-of-living crisis. These factors, as well as the need to increase defence spending resulting from the unstable international situation, including Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, have placed burdens on governments, institutions and communities already grappling with climate change, the health challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and demographic change.

2. The Reykjavík Declaration (2023) and the Vilnius Declaration (2024) reinforced the political commitment of the Council of Europe member States to social rights, as guaranteed by the European Social Charter, a primary instrument for achieving social justice. The Vilnius Declaration welcomed the decisions taken by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to improve the implementation of the Charter system and its monitoring procedures.

3. In this context the member States reiterate their commitment to recognised principles on social rights and social justice enacted by other international or regional organisations including the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and, where applicable, the European Union (EU). They acknowledge the alignment of these principles with the Doha Declaration (2025).

4. Difficulty to guarantee social rights and deliver social justice is a major driver of distrust in public authorities and democratic institutions. The member States welcome the initiative on a New Democratic Pact for Europe (the Pact). With social justice as a key objective, the Pact offers an opportunity for renewed commitments, integrated solutions across sectors and innovative ways to support social justice. As previously stated by the Committee of Ministers, social justice denotes a society based on equality and solidarity, which meets fundamental human needs, reduces inequalities through fair redistribution mechanisms and secures collectively the conditions necessary for every individual to develop and use their skills.

5. Investing in social rights is both a moral imperative and a strategic choice for building sustainable, resilient, just and inclusive societies. Such investment reduces inequality, fosters social cohesion and inter-generational justice, and enhances democratic stability and security. At the same time, it reinforces trust in institutions and public authorities at all levels of governance. Investing in social rights means investing in the future of democracy itself. Democratic stability and security can only be achieved where social rights are adequately protected.

6. On the occasion of this High-Level Conference, member States and participants at the Conference:

a. reaffirm their full commitment to the protection and implementation of social rights as guaranteed by the European Social Charter system and encourage member States to consider ratifying the revised European Social Charter (1996), while keeping under review the possibilities for accepting additional commitments, including the additional Protocol (1995) providing for a system of collective complaints;

b. recognise that ensuring social rights as enshrined notably in the European Social Charter is essential to countering growing threats to democracy driven in particular by fears about economic instability, declining working and living standards and limited opportunities;

c. recognise that combatting poverty and social exclusion is a question of human dignity. The cost-of-living crisis situation remains critical for millions of people, in particular the most vulnerable groups who are forced to spend a larger proportion of their income on essentials. This crisis disproportionately affected – and still affects - low-income households and particularly vulnerable population groups such as single-parent families, children, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and Roma and Travellers;

d. underline the importance of addressing emerging labour rights challenges in Europe, including those arising from digitalisation, artificial intelligence and climate and demographic changes;

e. acknowledge that effective social dialogue, freedom of association and collective bargaining are indispensable for a just, inclusive and sustainable future of work;

f. recognise the role played by the Charter's monitoring body, the European Committee of Social Rights, and the follow-up and other work undertaken by the Governmental Committee of the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security;

g. recognise the importance of strengthening visibility, understanding, awareness and ownership of the Charter, in particular at local level where social rights are implemented;

h. underline the importance of implementation of the Committee of Ministers 2022 reform package and the need to take into account reviews and evaluations thereof;

i. underline the need for better co-operation within the Council of Europe to promote coordinated action on social rights including between the Charter treaty bodies, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Conference of INGOs, other monitoring bodies and relevant intergovernmental Committees;

j. recognise the importance of institutional dialogue and synergies between the Council of Europe, the United Nations, the ILO and the EU in order to ensure coherence and complementarity.

7. In view of the above, member States:

a. commit, where necessary, to adopt laws and policies which can ensure equal enjoyment of social rights and equitable access to life/work opportunities to bring about a stronger, more cohesive, more democratic and socially just Europe, in which the enjoyment of the rights enshrined notably in the European Social Charter is effectively guaranteed, in law and in practice, while preserving an adequate balance between rights and obligations and strengthening incentives for labour market participation;

b. undertake, with due consideration of national systems and practices, to ensure that current economic, demographic and technological transformations in labour markets place workers at the centre, guided by respect for social rights, including decent working conditions, dignity in the workplace, fair remuneration, access to social protection and effective social dialogue;

c. undertake to adopt gender-responsive economic and social policies addressing the persistent social rights shortfalls experienced by women, including those resulting from the gender pay and pensions gaps, women's over-representation in precarious jobs and their disproportionate burden of unpaid household and care work;

d. undertake to strengthen child and youth perspectives and participation in strategies and measures to realise social rights, including those related to eradicating poverty and child labour and securing equal, inclusive societies, by establishing institutionalised, regular and meaningful participation mechanisms and advisory structures;

e. undertake to adopt measures to ensure the right to active social citizenship of older persons and commit to eliminating ageism and age discrimination, as well as to taking the necessary steps to ensure older persons' social protection, including their participation in society and ability to lead independent lives;

f. undertake to ensure the effective exercise of the rights of persons with disabilities to independence, social inclusion and participation in community life by taking the steps required to ensure that quality services are genuinely available and accessible to all persons with disabilities;

g. commit to take appropriate measures to give effect to the conclusions and decisions of the European Committee of Social Rights, including on the basis of the follow-up measures proposed by the Governmental Committee of the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security, taking into account national circumstances and realities;

h. resolve to promote and strengthen enhanced dialogue, conducted in a constructive spirit, between the European Committee of Social Rights, the Governmental Committee of the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security, competent national and local and regional authorities as well as other stakeholders, with a view to the shared objective of improving the achievement of social rights in practice;

i. resolve to fully engage with and support Council of Europe co-operation activities in the relevant fields and to explore financing options provided by the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) to improve the implementation of the Charter at national level;

j. resolve to maintain political engagement, through High-Level Conferences on social rights and the European Social Charter in order to monitor progress, share best practices, and encourage further treaty commitments.

8. Participants thank the authorities of the Republic of Moldova for the perfect organisation of the High-Level Conference and their gracious hospitality, and welcome the invitation by Portugal to hold the 3rd High-Level conference during their Presidency of the Committee of Ministers in 2029.

APPENDIX III: Digest of the case law of the ECSR

Link: **DIGEST OF THE CASE LAW OF THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS**