



EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS
COMITÉ EUROPÉEN DES DROITS SOCIAUX

12 March 2026

European Committee of Social Rights

**Statement on the occasion of the High-Level Conference
on Social Rights the European Social Charter (Chişinău,
18-19 March 2026)**

The European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) welcomes the convening of the High-Level Conference in Chisinau on 18-19 March 2026 and extends its gratitude to the Moldovan authorities for hosting this important event aiming to ensure increased support for and commitment to the Charter system as called for in the Reykjavik and Vilnius declarations. The ECSR recognises the progress achieved by many States Parties in advancing social rights protection and improving compliance with Charter obligations. Economic insecurity and anxiety about the future increase the risks of democratic backsliding. Democratic stability and security can therefore only be realised on a foundation of social rights and social justice, as reflected in political commitments and, especially, in implementation in law, policy and practice. The ECSR considers that the conference can contribute to achieving these objectives in at least three key ways:

1. By serving as the basis for strengthening commitment to the Charter

The ECSR underlines the importance of continued progress towards a unified and coherent pan-European system of social rights protection, the key obstacle to which remains the variety in state commitments that impacts directly on the effectiveness of the Charter system.

This will be achieved first and foremost through ratification of the 1996 Revised Charter by all member States, as well through acceptance of the collective complaints procedure as an important expression of commitment to fundamental democratic values of rule of law and accountability, and ratification of the 1991 Amending Protocol to the 1961 Charter by the very small number of States whose ratification is necessary for the entry into force of the Protocol. Ensuring a comprehensive social rights protection system at the European level is also dependent on the acceptance of additional provisions of the Revised Charter by those States that are Parties to it.

In this regard, the ECSR also reiterates the importance that all States Parties concerned should make the declaration foreseen under Article L of the Revised Charter (Article 38 of the 1961 Charter) extending the territorial scope of the Charter to the entirety of their territories thereby ensuring equal enjoyment of social rights across all of States Parties' territories.

2. By serving as a platform for enhanced impact of the Charter system

The ECSR considers that there is a pressing need to increase focus on ensuring effectiveness of Charter rights and giving effect to and strengthening the ECSR decisions and conclusions.

A key element of this would be to promote peer-learning by drawing on good practices in certain States Parties in relation to implementation of ECSR conclusions and decisions. This could include the establishment a national mechanism of coordination (or the use of already existing mechanisms) as regards the Charter, involving all relevant ministries and institutions and with representation from the social partners and civil society.

At Council of Europe level, the impact of the ECSR's jurisprudence would be further enhanced by aligning the follow-up to the ECSR's conclusions and decisions by the

Committee of Ministers (and prepared by the Governmental Committee in the case of reporting conclusions) more closely with the procedure of execution of judgments of the ECtHR, while fully respecting the distinct nature of the Charter system.

In this regard, the ECSR welcomes the interest of the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) in further developing its work in relation to the system of the European Social Charter, including as regards effective follow-up to ECSR decisions in the collective complaints procedure.

3. By providing greater clarity to States of what the ECSR needs for its proper functioning and to achieve impact

In recent years, the scope and intensity of the ECSR's work have expanded significantly, both due to its steadily growing monitoring role and workload over the last two decades, and because of the additional responsibilities introduced following the 2022-2023 Committee of Ministers' reforms (including ad hoc reporting and enhanced dialogue activities). The human and financial resources of the ECSR and its Secretariat should be increased in proportion to the ECSR's increased functions and work.

Finally, in order to maintain an appropriate balance reflecting Europe's diverse legal traditions and social models, and to respond effectively to the expanding responsibilities, consideration should be given to adjusting the number of Committee members beyond the current composition of 15. This would furthermore contribute to the long-term sustainability, representativeness and effectiveness of the Charter system.