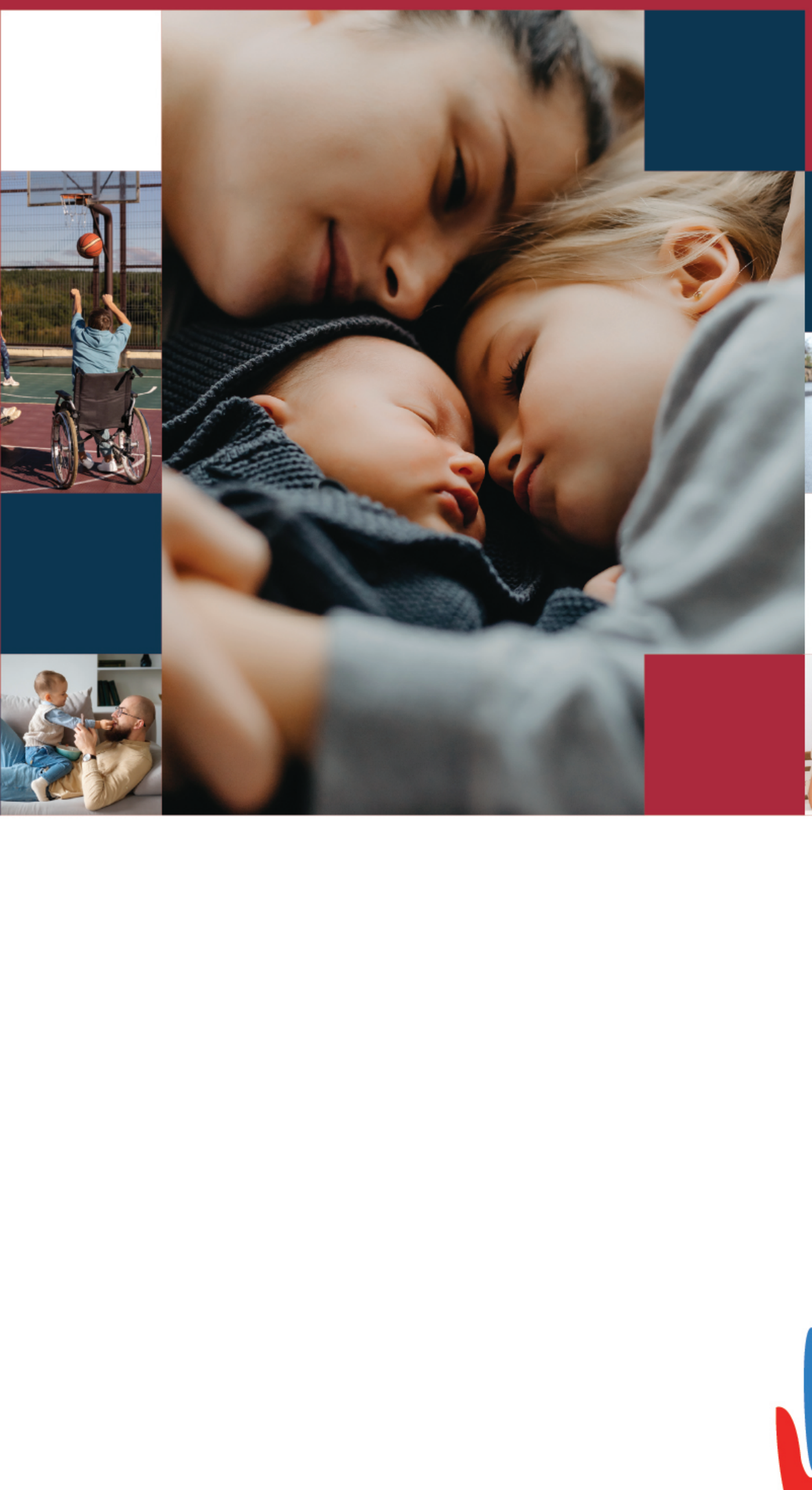



CO-OPERATION PROJECTS IN THE AREA OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

implemented by the Department of Social Rights







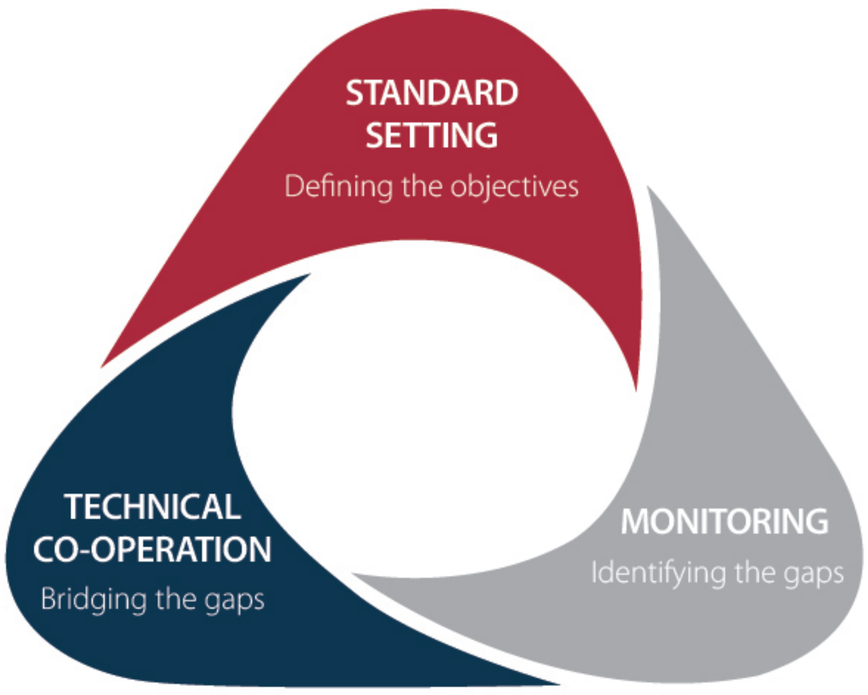

European Social Charter | Charte sociale européenne

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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BACKGROUND

Enhancing social human rights in line with the standards of the European Social Charter contributes to the achievement of sustainable democracy.

The effective enjoyment of social rights is possible only if national legislation and practices align with international standards and requirements, particularly those stipulated in the European Social Charter.



The Council of Europe is the only European organisation that provides a comprehensive "full cycle" of support to its member states. The Council of Europe's technical assistance programmes form an integral part of a unique strategic triangle: standard setting, monitoring, and co-operation. This includes the development of legally binding standards, monitoring by independent mechanisms, and technical co-operation to facilitate their implementation.

The Department of Social Rights implements co-operation projects to assist national authorities in addressing issues related to social and labour rights, the social protection of vulnerable groups, the effective provision of social services, etc. In line with the virtuous cycle, these co-operation projects are informed by the findings of the European Committee of Social Rights regarding states' compliance with the rights enshrined in the European Social Charter, which sets the standards in this field.

Sustainability is a fundamental aspect integrated into all co-operation projects. It is ensured through close co-ordination with partner authorities and stakeholders, continuous institutional strengthening and capacity development, as well as the creation of a sense of ownership and responsibility for sustaining the results achieved.

COUNTRIES WHERE CO-OPERATION PROJECTS ARE IMPLEMENTED

- Armenia
- Republic of Moldova
- Ukraine

EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS FOR CURRENT CO-OPERATION PROJECTS

Total: 3 315 000 EUR

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Civil Society Organisatios – CSOs
European Social Charter (revised) – the Charter
European Committee of Social Rights – ECSR
Vocational education and training – VET
Young people who are not in employment, education and training – NEET youth







I. PROJECT "ENHANCING SOCIAL HUMAN RIGHTS IN ARMENIA"

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Council of Europe's project "Enhancing social human rights in Armenia" is the first fully fledged initiative on social rights in Armenia.

The project is part of the Council of Europe's comprehensive response to the 2023 refugee influx in Armenia and is an integral component of the Council of Europe's Action Plan for Armenia 2023–2026. Recognising the fundamental role of social rights in building sustainable democracy, the project aims to support the Armenian authorities in addressing pressing social rights issues, enhancing protection of social rights in line with the European Social Charter and other international standards, and responding effectively to crisis situations.

The **overall objective** of the project is to enhance the protection of social rights in Armenia in line with international standards to respond to crisis situations.

Objectives:

- Strengthen the capacities of Armenian authorities to align national policies and practices concerning social rights, including housing, employment, and labour rights, with relevant European standards, providing for proper protection and implementation of these rights.
- Support national and local authorities, the Human Rights Defender, and CSOs to promote the social rights of people from vulnerable groups, including displaced persons from the Karabakh region and the public at large.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: January 2024 – December 2026

BUDGET: 950 000.00 EUR















II. PROJECT "ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA"

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project "Advancing employment rights in the Republic of Moldova" is implemented by the **Council of Europe within the framework of the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2025-2028**. The project aims at enhancing the observance of labour and employment rights in line with international standards and facilitating the access of people from vulnerable groups to vocational education, training and subsequent employment.

Objectives:

- Develop the capacities of national authorities to further promote and protect labour and employment rights of people from vulnerable groups, in line with European Standards.
- Facilitate the access of people from vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, VET students with special needs and NEET youth to the VET system and labour market.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: January 2026 – December 2028

BUDGET: 1 500 000.00 EUR

III. PROJECT "STRENGTHENING THE SOCIAL DIMENSION IN UKRAINE"

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project "Enhanced social protection in Ukraine" is implemented by the Council of Europe within the framework of the **Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine "Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction" for 2023-2026**. The project aims to ensure that general public and people from vulnerable groups, including war-affected population in Ukraine, benefit from targeted social protection and support.

Objectives:

- Align the policy and legislative framework on social, labour rights, and social dialogue with the European standards, more particularly the European Social Charter and case law of the European Committee of Social Rights.
- Enhance the capacities of national and local authorities to effectively implement social and labour policies and to operate efficiently during times of war and in post-war contexts, as well as to enable legal professionals, social partners, and civil society activists to effectively apply the Charter standards in their activities.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: April 2025 - December 2026

BUDGET: 865 000.00 EUR

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE OF COOPERATION PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

ENHANCED CAPACITIES OF NATIONAL AUTHORITIES TO ALIGN THE NATIONAL POLICIES, LEGISLATION AND PRACTICES IN THE AREA OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS WITH RELEVANT EUROPEAN STANDARDS, IN PARTICULAR THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER AND THE CASE LAW OF THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

ARMENIA

- Supported the Government of Armenia in developing its social housing strategy through expert discussions and the submission of a report on social housing.
- Strengthened authorities' understanding regarding the inclusion of people with disabilities in vocational education and training through expert discussions and the development of a comprehensive report.
- Facilitated dialogue on expanding European Social Charter commitments, leading Armenian authorities to initiate ratification of Article 11 and strengthen protection of the right to health.

GEORGIA

- National stakeholders enhanced their knowledge and understanding of the European Social Charter system, including the substantive scope of Article 15 (rights of persons with disabilities) and Article 23 (rights of older persons).
- Georgian authorities, decision-makers, and parties to the tripartite social dialogue strengthened their understanding of the need to further integrate a coherent and comprehensive, gender-sensitive policy and legislative framework for the protection and promotion of older persons and persons with disabilities, in line with the European Social Charter relevant provisions.
- Progress made toward alignment with the European Social Charter, including work on five additional provisions potentially to be accepted by Georgia.

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

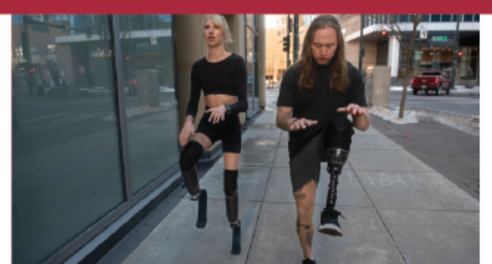
- Moldova expanded its commitments under the European Social Charter by ratifying eight additional provisions, bringing the total number of accepted provisions to 71 out of 98.
- Two needs assessments, on labour and employment rights for vulnerable groups and on NEET youth in vocational education and training, led to roadmaps of legislative and institutional actions, which were taken on board by national stakeholders.
- Expert support enabled national authorities to harmonise the public and occupational health framework, including workplace accident statistics, with European standards, leading to the adoption of new amendments to the Law on Occupational Safety and Health No. 186/2008 by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova in July 2025.

UKRAINE

- Expert support was provided to national authorities to develop the draft Social Code, draft Labour Code (approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in January 2026), draft Law "On Collective Labour Disputes" (registered in the Parliament of Ukraine in September 2024), draft Law "On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine on Ensuring the Rights of People with Disabilities to Work" " (entered into force in January 2026), draft Law "On Social Dialogue", draft Law "On the Basic Principles of the State Policy of a Barrier-Free Society".
- The concept of the Social Code of Ukraine was developed in coordination with national authorities.







STRENGTHENED CAPACITIES OF NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS TO APPLY AND MONITOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS AS GUARANTEED BY THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

ARMENIA

- Strengthened institutional capacity of labour inspectors, Human Rights Defender's Office, trade unions, employers organisations and civil society on the Charter and in social rights monitoring and advocacy.Two alternative reports submitted in 2025 to the ESCR by the Confederation of Trade Unions and by Disability Rights Agenda, marking an important step in national-level reporting and advocacy.

GEORGIA

- National authorities significantly improved quality, structure, and timeliness of national reports, with better data use and alignment with European Committee of Social Rights requirements.
- Established sustainable practice of alternative reporting, involving the Public Defender's Office and civil society organisations such as the Social Justice Centre and Georgian Young Lawyers' Association.
- Supported the submission of the first alternative report addressing non-accepted provisions of the European Social Charter by the Public Defender's Office.

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

- All labour inspectors enhanced their knowledge of the Charter standards, ECSR case law, integrity, communication, and enforcement against undeclared work, and were equipped with an adopted Code of Conduct.
- A nationwide NEET Network was created to share knowledge and develop strategies for better integration of NEET youth into the VET system.
- A network of 45 VET teachers delivered trainings on inclusiveness, gender equality, soft skills, and labour rights, improving knowledge among 205 VET teachers and 422 VET students.
- National stakeholders improved their ability to prepare reports to ECSR, and the Ombudsperson Institution and Equality Council submitted their first alternative reports on the cost-of-living crisis and labour rights.

UKRAINE

- An Action plan and recommendations for the implementation of the European Court of Human Rights decisions in the group of cases Ivanov, Zhovner, Burmych v Ukraine were taken on board by the authorities.
- The Ombudsperson Institution, supported in its efforts, enhanced social rights monitoring in Ukraine by visiting 110 establishments, holding expert meetings, and procuring equipment.
- Analytical and communication support facilitated the implementation of Ukraine's National Barrier-Free Strategy until 2030, with awareness materials reaching around 500,000 users.
- National authorities and the Ombudsperson Institution enhanced their skills in preparing high-quality reports to the ECSR, with the Ombudsperson submitting alternative reports in 2023 and 2025.





RAISED AWARENESS ON THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER SYSTEM AMONG NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

ARMENIA

- Supported Armenia's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs by developing awareness-raising materials for the recently introduced vulnerability assessment system.
- Raised national stakeholders' awareness of the social rights of vulnerable groups by producing and disseminating information materials including factsheets on social rights.
- Promoted multistakeholder engagement and dialogue on social rights by organising two donor coordination meetings.

GEORGIA

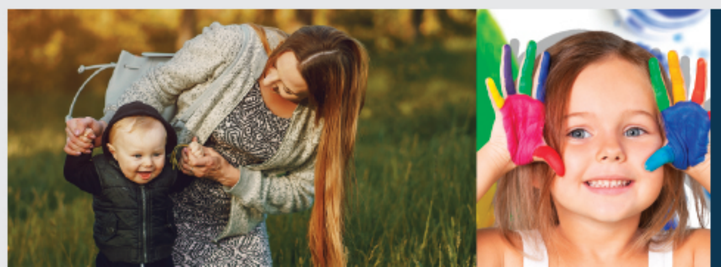
- Legal professionals improved practical application of the Charter and the ECSR case law in labour rights and non-discrimination cases.
- Law students developed hands-on expertise through trainings, Moot Court, and study visits, strengthening future national application of European social rights standards.
- Labour Inspection Office staff enhanced knowledge of labour standards, communication, inclusivity, and organisational effectiveness, improving labour rights enforcement.
- Public Defender's Office strengthened capacity to promote social rights and replicate awareness-raising models nationwide.
- Citizens gained a deeper understanding of their social rights, including the right to education, housing, safety at the workplace, and maternity leave through awareness raising campaigns reaching over 1500 citizens.

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

- Legal professionals and labours inspectors increased their awareness of the Charter standards with regard to labour rights, completing the HELP course "Labour rights as Human Rights".
- Representatives from government institutions, the Ombudsperson Institution, the Equality Council, social partners, and CSOs improved their understanding of the Charter system through targeted activities, as well as the use of translated publications.

UKRAINE

- The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine approved an European Social Charter course and curriculum for grades 5–11, with over 6,000 teachers completing the course.
- Law students from three universities in Ukraine enhanced their understanding of the Charter standards as a result of newly introduced specialized courses.
- The Free Legal Aid System introduced an online course on the Charter and the case law of the ECSR on its educational platform, completed by over 200 lawyers.
- Awareness of the Charter system was enhanced among national and local authorities through targeted activities and the use of more than 15 translated publications.
- Awareness of social rights among the general public was increased through organised social media campaigns, reaching over 1.5 million users.







Department of Social Rights

Project “Enhancing social human rights in Armenia”

Project "Strengthening the social dimension in Ukraine"

Project “Advancing employment rights in the Republic of Moldova”

ENG

www.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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