

HIGH-LEVEL CONVERSATION FROM DOHA 2025 TO CHIȘINĂU 2026

Advancing Social Rights and
Democratic Stability



Side Event in margins of
the UN Human Rights Council 61st Session

24 February 2026
Geneva, Switzerland

11:00-12:00 CET
Palais des Nations, Building A,
Room IX, United Nations



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Background

The Council of Europe proposes to convene a focused side event during the United Nations Human Rights Council 61st session in Geneva on 24 February 2026, to build a bridge from the outcomes of the Second World Summit for Social Development in Doha, in November 2025, to the forthcoming Council of Europe High-Level Conference on Social Rights in Chişinău, in March 2026.

The Doha Summit reaffirmed that social rights are foundational to peaceful, inclusive and resilient societies, and called for accelerated investments in decent work, social protection, housing, health, and youth opportunities, including within the framework of the Global Coalition for Social Justice. At a time when economic pressures, inequality, demographic shifts, and geopolitical tensions are testing democratic societies, Europe has a responsibility and an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in turning these global principles into tangible rights-based guarantees.

This initiative offers a unique opportunity to translate renewed global ambition on social development into concrete, rights-based commitments enshrined in the European Social Charter which reinforce social justice, democratic resilience, and stability.

The side event will extract strategic messages from Doha, align them with Europe's next social rights milestone in Chişinău, and foster dialogue among governments, social partners, civil society, and youth organisations to identify priority actions and strengthen cooperation mechanisms.

By convening this discussion in Geneva, the Council of Europe aims to strengthen multilateral cooperation and synergies between the UN and European social-rights frameworks, promote coherence in implementation, and demonstrate that advancing social rights is central to safeguarding democratic values, social cohesion, and public trust. Social rights and social justice are key topics in the Council of Europe's ongoing political and strategic consultations for a [*New Democratic Pact for Europe*](#).

Objectives

To highlight the importance of social rights as the catalyst for multilateral cooperation, to achieve greater stability in societies and to translate the Doha global commitments into European social rights systems-anchored actions that advance social justice, democratic resilience, and stability across Council of Europe Member states, paving the way toward the High-Level Conference on Social Rights in Chişinău in March 2026.

PROGRAMME

10:45 WELCOME COFFEE

Moderator: Mr Rafael Benitez, Director of Social Rights, Health and Environment, Council of Europe

11:00 HIGH LEVEL CONVERSATION

- ▶ **Mr Alain Berset**, Secretary General of the Council of Europe
- ▶ **Mr Gilbert F. Hounqbo**, Director General of the ILO
- ▶ **Mr Mihai Popșoi**, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova
- ▶ **Ms Mariam bint Ali bin Nasser Al-Misnad**, Minister for International Cooperation, State of Qatar
- ▶ **Ms Ana Isabel Xavier**, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal
- ▶ **Ms Tatiana Molcean**, Executive Secretary of the UNECE

Q&A

12:00 CLOSING OF THE EVENT

Partnerships

Co-organisers: **Council of Europe, ILO, the Republic of Moldova, Portugal, Qatar**

Co-Sponsors: **EU, Armenia, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Iraq, Malta, Morocco, Spain**

Key Themes

SOCIAL RIGHTS AS A FOUNDATION OF DEMOCRATIC STABILITY:

Across Europe and beyond, democratic systems are under strain from inequality, cost-of-living pressures, security concerns, and geopolitical instability. How can investment in social rights — including decent work, housing, social protection, health, and youth opportunities — be repositioned not as social spending, but as a strategic instrument of democratic resilience and public trust, including through strengthened international cooperation on decent work and social justice.

FROM GLOBAL COMMITMENTS TO POLITICAL PRIORITIES:

In Doha 2025, governments reaffirmed social rights as pillars of democratic stability — but political prioritisation remains uneven. How can the key social-development commitments made in Doha be translated into concrete, rights-based actions within the European social rights framework, and what should be the top priorities for Chişinău 2026.

MULTILATERAL LEADERSHIP IN THE CURRENT GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT:

As multilateralism faces increasing political strain how can the UN system and the Council of Europe jointly provide credible political leadership on social rights, accelerate reforms in areas such as decent work, social protection, housing, health, and youth opportunities and avoid a widening gap between international promises and domestic delivery.

Format

A 60 minute session featuring a high level discussion with the Council of Europe Secretary General, Ministers, leaders from UN and ILO.

Working language will be English. Access for UN badge holders only.



◀ To follow the event on-line join

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