

**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS
COMITE EUROPEEN DES DROITS SOCIAUX**

The President / La Présidente



European
Social
Charter

Charte
sociale
européenne



Ms Ragnhildur ARNLJÓTSÐÓTTIR
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Iceland to the Council of Europe
25, rue Trubner
67000 Strasbourg

Strasbourg, 2 March 2023

Subject: 4th Council of Europe Summit of Heads of State and Government

Dear Ambassador Arnljótsdóttir,

The upcoming Fourth Summit of Council of Europe Heads of State and Heads of Government is a “once in a generation” event. The Summit outcome document will be a map for the future of the Council of Europe.

The Summit is focused on human rights concerns (which necessarily include social rights), the rule of law, democracy, and accountability in the context of Russian aggression towards Ukraine. Social rights are fundamental to all of these issues: democracy and the rule of law cannot thrive where social rights are not guaranteed. Social progress is engraved into the Council of Europe’s Statute as one of the touchstones for lasting peace. Social rights and the European Social Charter form part of the common vision for the Council of Europe and are a key framework for meeting the challenges of today and tomorrow, including those related to the pandemic, inequality and the cost-of-living crisis, the recent earthquakes that have devastated parts of Türkiye and Syria, the ongoing conflict and future reconstruction in Ukraine, as well as the climate crisis. Social rights as set out in the European Social Charter are fundamental to ensuring a Council of Europe for everyone.

.../2

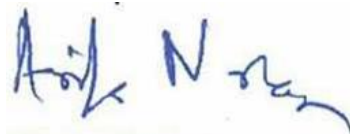
I would therefore respectfully invite you to consider including in the Summit outcome document a reference to the European Social Charter, which embodies the Council of Europe's statutory social progress objective. This would reflect the Charter's status as an integral part of the organisation's human rights framework. The procedures related to the Charter contribute to promoting equality and social justice and thus contribute to democratic security and sustainability. There would therefore also be merit to referring to these procedures in the Summit outcome document.

Against this background, it would be desirable that, when discussing the common vision for the Council of Europe, the Council of Europe Heads of State and Heads of Government reaffirm the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights, whether civil, political, economic, social, cultural or environmental. It would also be important for them to renew their commitment to social rights and to the European Social Charter system, expressing their support for the continuous strengthening of both the Charter's normative framework and the monitoring conducted in relation to the Charter.

The Council of Europe Heads of State and Heads of Government could also urge Member States that have not yet done so to ratify the revised European Social Charter and accept the collective complaints procedure. They could also invite all States Parties to the Charter to consider following the praiseworthy example of those that have accepted all—or almost all—Charter provisions.

I would finally point out, in the context of meeting the challenges of today and tomorrow, that Ukraine might usefully be invited to integrate social rights into the reconstruction process which will follow the brutal destruction that it has been suffering as a result of the Russian aggression. Ukraine could be invited to rely on the European Social Charter in this regard and to take advantage of related technical assistance that might be provided by the Council of Europe.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aoife Nolan', is written over a light yellow rectangular background.

Aoife Nolan