



THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER PROTECTING SOCIAL RIGHTS ACROSS EUROPE



What is the European Social Charter?

The **European Social Charter** is a Council of Europe treaty that guarantees fundamental social rights. It focuses on everyday human rights relating notably to: work, housing, health, and social protection.

Why does the Charter matter?

The Charter helps ensure that everyone can live with **dignity, fairness, and opportunity**. States that accept it commit to improving laws and policies so people can enjoy these rights in practice – not just on paper.

The Charter lays specific emphasis on the protection of vulnerable persons such as older persons, children, persons with disabilities and migrants. It requires that enjoyment of the abovementioned rights be guaranteed without discrimination.

How is the Charter monitored?

The **European Committee of Social Rights** is the monitoring body of the European Social Charter. It is composed of 15 independent, impartial member elected by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers for a period of six years, renewable once.

Key rights protected

- ▶ **Right to work** and protection against discrimination
- ▶ **Just working conditions** (safe workplaces, reasonable working time)
- ▶ **Fair remuneration** and **equal pay for work of equal value**
- ▶ **Social security and social assistance**
- ▶ **Housing rights**
- ▶ **Protection against poverty and social exclusion**
- ▶ **Health care** and protection of health
- ▶ **Rights of children, families, and older persons, rights of persons with disabilities**



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The European Committee of Social Rights rules on the conformity of the situation in States with the Charter under two complementary mechanisms:



- ▶ the **collective complaints procedure** on the basis of complaints lodged by the social partners and non-governmental organisations (Collective Complaints procedure) and;
- ▶ the reporting procedure on the basis of **national reports submitted** by the States Parties



The **Governmental Committee of the European Social Charter** and European Code of Social Security, composed of representatives of the States Parties to the Charter and assisted by observers representing European employers' organisations and trade unions (European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), Business Europe and International Organisation of Employers (IOE), provides follow-up to the conclusions of non-conformity adopted by the European Committee of Social Rights.



The CoE-FRA-ENNHRI-EQUINET Collaborative Platform on social and economic rights

The platform's main objective is to support National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and National Equality Bodies (NEBs) to strengthen the implementation of international instruments relating to social and economic rights and, at the same time, to find answers to fundamental rights challenges in Europe.



Social Rights at the Council of Europe

At the Council of Europe, social rights are transversal, as they are mainstreamed across the work of its various institutions and bodies including the **Parliamentary Assembly** of the Council of Europe, the **Congress of Local and Regional Authorities**, the Council of Europe Development Bank and many others, ensuring that social rights protection, equality, and human dignity are integrated into its standards and monitoring mechanisms.

In addition, the **European Court of Human Rights** has developed a **case law** that strengthens social rights protection through its interpretation of the European Convention on Human Rights.



Department of Social Rights



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Cooperation projects on social rights

The Council of Europe's technical assistance programmes are an integral part of the unique strategic triangle of standard-setting, monitoring and cooperation: the development of legally binding standards is combined with their monitoring by independent mechanisms and complemented by technical cooperation to facilitate implementation of the standards.

A stronger, fairer Europe

The European Social Charter promotes **social justice, inclusion, and equality** – key foundations for a stronger and more united Europe.

Investing in social rights is not only a duty, but also an economic strategy for building resilience and achieving sustainable development. Delivery of social rights is the foundation of democratic stability and security.