The spread of a new virus brought concerns to all, both rich and poor people alike. But as the pandemic progressed, we quickly realized that, once again and as in almost all matters, the poorer and the most fragile in our societies were facing more difficulties. The health concerns were quickly joined by economic concerns and questions remain on what changes will this pandemic bring to our societies. Will we come back to “business as usual” as soon as possible? Did the pandemic showcased flaws that will no longer be acceptable? Did it spark a new movement in favour of more solidarity, activism, and greater social and intergenerational justice?

While at the start of the pandemic, the concern was centered on the elderly and people with low access to healthcare, such as migrants, other groups quickly came to our attention. With the need for confinement, persons in residential care institutions, isolated individuals and persons with disabilities saw their usual support be put at risk. Decent housing, domestic violence and mental health problems have also been identified as growing concerns. Furthermore, the economic crisis looming already affected precarious jobs and young workers.

It is unclear when a new or old “normal” will be stable, but we have seen unprecedented government programs to address an unprecedented socio-economic crisis that is yet to fully reveal itself. In the next couple of years life will surely be different in many aspects. Change will be inevitable. The question now is if we maintain the usual frameworks or if we will adopt new ones that will turn into reality so many aspiring conventions, commitments and promises already made.

We will address how this pandemic revealed the inequalities in our societies, what were the responses and what still needs to be done. And in order to move this discussion forward we will be asking:

1) what is happening and what needs to happen to build a fairer society after this pandemic for all groups that tend to be more affected by inequalities? and

2) what needs to be put in place so that in future pandemics and other crisis, the most fragile in our communities are protected and cared for?
Draft programme

Moderation: Miguel Cabral, Vice-President of the Human Rights Committee

Introduction: Anna Rurka – President of the Conference of INGOs

The Social Determinants of Health and COVID-19, was there something we already knew? Speaker to be confirmed

Action undertaken at the local level to tackle inequalities by a member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

The role of the Council of Europe in Health and social protection before and after COVID-19? Will there be a difference? by a representative of the Council of Europe

Documenting and responding to the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on marginalised communities – a civil society perspective

What companies did and are doing to build a fairer society during and after COVID-19? Speaker to be confirmed

Poverty alleviation: an approach based on evidence. Speaker to be confirmed

How to sustain the volunteer movement. Speaker to be confirmed

The time for a Well-being agenda (and action) Speaker to be confirmed

Questions open for INGOs contributions:

1) what is happening and what needs to happen to build a fairer society after this pandemic for all groups that tend to be more affected by inequalities?

2) what needs to be put in place so that in future pandemics and other crisis, the most fragile in our communities are protected and cared for?