

34<sup>th</sup> International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

and

European Day against trafficking in human beings

“Decent and freely undertaken work for ALL, is it possible?”

18 October 2021, 12.30pm

**Speaking Notes of Ambassador Harry Alex Rusz,  
Chair of the Ministers' Deputies**

Welcome, all, and thank you for joining us at the 34<sup>th</sup> International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. Thank you also to the Conference of INGOs for organising the commemoration of this important day.

I am honoured to have been invited to address you all. However, I am equally saddened that such an address is still necessary. Since 1987, we have used this day to acknowledge the stark reality of poverty and have striven to abolish it. Yet too many people still face the prospect of having to survive without the comfort of basic rights. We cannot accept this.

This year's theme is “Decent Work for All”. Decent work is a cornerstone of a decent life; a life full of meaning, of opportunity, of realised potential. It is an essential aspect of individual and collective prosperity.

But it is not possible without the equal enjoyment of rights such as those guaranteed by the revised European Social Charter. Rights such as fair pay, just working conditions, health and social care. These are owed to all people, but sadly, many are yet to benefit from them.

Check against delivery!

Today we also observe the European Day against Human Trafficking. Without decent work, and the security it provides, desperation can lead to exploitation. Forced labour and slavery are amongst the worst crimes that can be committed against a person. Such practices rob the victims of their freedom, potential, and self-worth.

I am proud to say that earlier this year, the Committee of Ministers took a step towards combatting these crimes by setting up the Drafting Committee on Trafficking for the Purpose of Labour Exploitation. This group of experts will guide our efforts in combatting human trafficking in this specific context. However, the work does not stop there. More can always be done.

We are all aware of what we need to achieve. What we may be less sure of, though, is how to achieve it. The seminar organised by the Conference of INGOs this afternoon is therefore welcome. It will undoubtedly be a productive exchange that will provide food for thought for all stakeholders with the common objective of eradicating poverty, protecting those most at risk and ensuring decent and freely undertaken work for all.

Thank you.