THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL COHESION

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INTRODUCTION

The European Social Model.
The European social model, characteristic of most Western European societies since the early 1960s, confers on its citizens a wide-ranging set of political, civil and social rights, anchored in national and supra-state legal systems and procedures. Through a set of social security and taxation programmes designed for the purpose of income redistribution and poverty alleviation, the regulation of the labour market and the presence of a network of social services, the vast majority of the Western European population has been traditionally protected and enjoys a high level of security about their future. European governance has been traditionally understood as a process whereby different groups and sectors of the population have the capacity to organize and be represented in the public sphere and are granted claims and entitlements against the state and public resources. The state takes an interventionist stance on the economy, acting either on its own or in association with 'the social partners', seeking to exert control of the market, setting standards for wages and working conditions, and making arrangements for the redistribution of income, opportunities and life chances. As a consequence, the European Social Model has been able to guarantee high levels of social integration and stability, while avoiding economic polarization, for the majority of its population. Despite these achievements, within the last decade the European Social Model has been faced with a number of challenges.

Recent Socio-Economic Trends in the European Context.
Harmonization of macro-economic policies in EU countries and prospective EU member states has produced increasing fiscal pressures on governments to reduce social security spending and limit public services.

The ageing of the European population is affecting the proportion of active participants in the labor force in relation to those dependent on social insurance mechanisms (particularly pension schemes). Health care systems are under pressure from escalating health care costs and their duty to provide the whole population with access to quality health care. Recent globalization trends and EU-integration processes are strongly influencing population flows into and within Europe, impacting on the legal, social, cultural and economic fabric of nation states and their international relationships throughout the European continent and beyond. Eastern European countries in transition currently face challenges with the privatization of their economies and the provision of social services.

Children and young people, the elderly, the unemployed and lone parent families have a particularly high risk of poverty. Ageing is increasingly becoming one of the most salient social, economic and demographic phenomena of our times. In Europe, as in other continents of the world, the problem will be acute. It is estimated that by 2050, the number of people over 60 in Europe will have doubled to 40% of the total population or 60% of the working age population. The implications for this dramatic demographic shift - and the need to match this change in public policy –are manifold.

Income inequality remains a widespread phenomenon even among some of our most prosperous societies. The latest information available concerning the European Union suggests that the bottom (poorest) 20% of the population received only 8% of total income in 1998, while the top (richest) 20% received 39% of total income, i.e. 5.4 times as much. Before social transfers, 26% of the EU population would have been living below the poverty line in 1998. After social transfers, 18% of the

population was actually <u>living below the poverty</u> line in 1998. If this is the scenario among EU countries, income inequalities associated with extreme poverty are much more dramatic in <u>Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe</u>, where wealthy minorities enjoy high standards of living whilst the majority of the population live in poverty without access to decent levels of basic resources. The poverty rate is between 40% and 75% in some of the CIS countries. As a result of globalization and EU-integration processes, the risk is that the "iron curtain" separating Western and Eastern Europe during the Cold War be now replaced by an equally (if not more) resistant "poverty curtain" on the new border of the enlarged European Union.

Social Exclusion, Social Insecurity and the Risk of Social Fragmentation.
There is evidence that a significant sub-section of the population cannot benefit from the general economic prosperity. Phenomena of <u>social exclusion</u> -- loosing one's place in society and the ability to fully enjoy civic, political and social rights-- are on the rise in Europe. The growing insecurity of a part of the population in terms of access to a decent job, income, housing, health service and education or the feeling of insecurity, which affects an even larger part of the population, are creating the threat of a two-speed society, in which significant sections of the population are consigned to living in poverty and social exclusion.

A sense of <u>social insecurity</u> is spreading across Europe. Present-day Europeans are aware that their future welfare is becoming more uncertain. Social and crime problems in run-down areas of cities may make people feel less secure in their daily lives. Others again see growing multiculturalism as a threat to traditional identities. At the same time, new risks of poverty and exclusion are emerging, such as inadequate access to new information and communication technologies or to privatized utilities. Under the current scenario of rapid economic and social change, the risk of <u>social fragmentation</u> is high; clear are the challenges to democracy and social stability.

The European approach now faces a series of questions and strains. The challenge for Europe in the twenty-first century is to find ways of adapting these social policy achievements to changing needs and changing circumstances without losing their essential character. These trends and several other elements have come together in recent years leading to the decision by the Council of Europe commit itself to a strategy for social cohesion.

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL COHESION

The Council of Europe: a commitment to human rights, democracy and the rule of law.
As a vehicle for international cooperation on social cohesion, the <u>Council of Europe</u> offers its unique situation as a pan-European forum bringing together forty-five States united by their commitment to a Europe based on pluralist democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law. The Council of Europe is the oldest European intergovernmental organization, and the one with the widest membership. We now cover practically the whole of geographical Europe. That includes all but one all of the countries of the former Soviet Union. The fact that Russia is a member State means that China is now one of our immediate neighbors!

Through <u>fifty years of intergovernmental cooperation</u>, the Council of Europe has established European norms for social rights and built up a wealth of accumulated experience through the

supervisory mechanisms of its legal instruments as well as in the form of Recommendations and reports. Its various committees and working parties make it a forum for exchange of ideas and experience across the whole European continent. Increasingly, moreover, through its cooperation programmes, the Council of Europe assists its member States in putting the Organization's standards into practice in their specific national situations. Its many and varied means of action give it the potential to exert a considerable influence on social development across the European continent.

Towards a Strategy for Social Cohesion: The Human Dignity and Social Exclusion Project (1994-1998).
The Human Dignity and Social Exclusion Project (HDSE Project), a pan-European initiative launched by the Council of Europe in 1994 and completed in 1998, conducted the analysis of the status of poverty and social exclusion in Europe and submitted proposals of actions, validated by the Final Conference of the Project which took place in Helsinki on 18-20 May 1998. The project proposed to tackle five major themes: health, housing, employment, social protection and education. It focused mostly on producing "alarm indicators" that record reductions in freedoms and rights, increases in unemployment, violence and conflicts, worsening of social and health care services, etc. –mapping out the presence of social exclusion. The goal was to present a series of corrective intervention measures in these fields aimed at integrating the excluded into the labor market and social society as a whole.

The Council of Europe Second Summit of Heads of State and Governments: committing to a Strategy for Social Cohesion (1998-2002).
Through this work the Council of Europe realized that it is necessary for the member States not only to find ways of dealing with the problems of those who find themselves excluded from society, but also, more ambitiously, to see how to build more cohesive societies in which the risks of social exclusion will be minimized.

Social cohesion therefore concerns society as a whole and all its members, and not only those who find themselves marginalized. Moving from a "negative-based approach" to a "positive-based approach" is a crucial step for the active development of social cohesion. This is not a question of making sure that no one is excluded or unemployed but that society as a whole has the ability to provide all its members with access to a reasonable or even good quality of life. Accordingly, the central issue is to give the appropriate form and substance to aspirations for a life of quality.

The Council of Europe decided to review its approach and develop a strategy for social cohesion rather than a strategy for combating social exclusion. Heads of State and Government of the member States of the Council of Europe, meeting in October 1997 for the Organization's Second Summit, identified social cohesion as "one of the foremost needs of the wider Europe and … an essential complement to the promotion of human rights and dignity" (Final Declaration). They went on to instruct the Committee of Ministers "to define a social strategy to respond to the challenges in society and to carry out the appropriate structural reforms within the Council of Europe". The first step taken by the Committee of Ministers was to set up a new intergovernmental steering committee, the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS), bringing together several formerly separate areas of work. The Committee's terms of reference state that "the first task of the Committee will be to prepare a strategy for the development of social cohesion activities within the Council of Europe

for consideration by the Committee of Ministers"; it is further indicated that this strategy should contain "a programme of work for the medium term".

The Revised Strategy for Social Cohesion (2003).
Building on the first five years work of the CDCS, the Committee of Ministers has now adopted a more comprehensive definition of social cohesion and upgraded strategy to guide the Council of Europe's social cohesion work during the next few years. The Revised Social Cohesion Strategy put forward by the Council of Europe in 2003 is one that, based on the rule of law, democracy, and human rights, provides the most elements for understanding and confronting the changes in our societies while safeguarding their fundamental principles.

DEFINING SOCIAL COHESION

Three types of definition[1].
Cohesion is an ideal towards which societies have to strive continually. It is a goal to which they aspire, but never fully achieve. This makes precise definition elusive. Nonetheless, in devising a strategy for social cohesion, it is essential to try and clarify the terminology used. In its original etymological sense, cohesion means the property of a group all of whose parts are closely united. Just as in the physical world a body's cohesion results from the links between its elementary parts, the molecules, social cohesion results from links between individuals and bodies. Cohesion is the opposite of disintegration or division: links and unity are its defining components. For our purposes, we will focus on three types of definitions found in the literature on social cohesion. We will then propose a fourth definition, as developed by the Council of Europe.

a) Social Cohesion as "shared values and a sense of belonging": The notion that shared values and a sense of belonging are the basis of social cohesion originated with the sociologist Emile Durkheim, who was the first to use the term, which he considered to be "the interdependence between the members of the society, shared loyalties and solidarity" (Jenson, 1998b, quoted by Regina Berger-Schmidt). According to a specialist dictionary, social cohesion is considered to be "The degree to which participants in social systems feel committed to the system and the well-being of other participants."[2] Most recent definitions focus on shared values and a sense of belonging to the same community. According to the Social Cohesion Network, "Social cohesion is the ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity based on a sense of hope, trust and reciprocity" (Stanley, 2001[3]); These concepts also appear in official definitions

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[1] Council of Europe, Methodological Guide to the Development of Social Cohesion Indicators, (DRAFT, forthcoming)

[2] http://www.iversonsoftware.com/sociology/social_cohesion.htm

[3] Stanley, D., 2001, *'Holding the centre: what we know about social cohesion'*, Strategic Research and Analysis and the Social Cohesion Network, (Online at http://www.criteres.umontreal.ca/Stanley-communication-e.pdf);
"Social Cohesion involves building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community." (Rossel, 1995, quoted in Omariba, 2001Omariba, W., 2002, *'Social cohesion in Europe: a bibliography'*, (Online at http://www.ssc.uwo.ca/sociology/ftsc/Bibliography%20of%20Papers%20on%20Social%20Cohesion%20in%20Europe.PDF; …a society which offers opportunities to all its members within a framework of accepted values and institutions Berger-Schmitt, R., 2000, 'Social cohesion as an aspect of the quality of societies: concept and measurement', EuReporting.

adopted by governments: The French Government's national planning commission (1997) considers that social cohesion comprises "all the social processes which help individuals to feel they belong to the same community and are identified as belonging to that community." (Jenson, 1998,5[4]);

b) Social Cohesion as "the commitment and ability to work together": Another form of definition is concerned with the conduct and commitment of members of a community *vis-à-vis* others and their ability to work together. For example: "Social cohesion is a state of affairs in which a group of people (delineated by a geographical region, like a country) demonstrates an aptitude for collaboration that produces a climate for change." (Ritzen et al, 2000[5]). Certain public bodies have adopted similar definitions. For example, according to the Canadian Senate "Social cohesion is defined as the capacity of citizens living under different social or economic circumstances to live together in harmony, with a sense of mutual commitment." (Dragojević, 2001[6])

c) Social Cohesion as "the promotion of social bonds and relationships": The third type of definition emphasizes social bonds and relationships, thus drawing on the term's etymological sense. For example: "[Social cohesion is]… the promotion of stable, co-operative and sustainable communities" (Matarasso & Shell, 1998[7]); The World Bank, which treats social capital and social cohesion as synonyms, adopts a functional definition: "Social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions.[8]"

The Council of Europe's definition of Social Cohesion.
In existing formulations the definition of social cohesion is generally based on a necessary condition, such as shared values and objectives, the sense of belonging to the same community or interpersonal commitment, or on the expected outcome of social cohesion, such as the ability to work together, stable, co-operative and lasting communities or social interaction. Similarly, etymological definitions emphasizing links only focus on a particular aspect of social cohesion. We will adopt a functional definition rather than a descriptive one, highlighting four aspects of individual and collective well-being that are fostered by social cohesion: equity, individual and collective dignity, autonomy and participation.

"Social cohesion is the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimizing disparities and avoiding polarization. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means".

[3] Miller, C., 1998, *'Managing for social cohesion'*, Office for Public Management Discussion Paper, (Online at http://www.opm.co.uk/download/soc-ex1.pdf)
[4] Jenson, J., 1998, '*Les contours de la cohésion sociale: l'état de la recherche au Canada',* Étude des RCRPP, N°F/03, Ottawa.
[5] Ritzen, J., Easterly, W., Woolcock, M., 2000, *'On "good" politicians and "bad" policies: social cohesion, institutions and growth'*, (Online at http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/Research/workpapers.nsf/568b4463f7c6e237852567e500514be6/ecf6a93d3c4126fe8525695f006fb0ef/$FILE/wps2448.pdf); b) "Social cohesion is the extent to which people respond collectively to achieve their valued outcomes and to deal with the economic, social, political, or environmental stresses (positive or negative) that affect them." Reimer, B., Wilkinson, D., Woodrow, A., 2002, 'Social cohesion in rural Canada: a book outline and notes', (Online at http://alcor.concordia.ca/~reimer/files/socobook4.pdf)

[6] Dragojević, S., '*Social cohesion and culture: contrasting some European and Canadian approaches and experiences'*, Culturelink review, no.33/April 2001 (Online at http://www.culturelink.org/review/33/cl33dos.html)
[7] Matarasso, F. and Chell, J., 1998, '*Vital signs: mapping community arts in Belfast'*, Comedia, Stroud, Gloucestershire.
[8] World Bank, 1999, *'What is social capital'*, (Online at http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital/whatsc.htm)

THE DETERMINANTS OF SOCIAL COHESION

Adopting the Council of Europe's definition of social cohesion means adopting the promotion of a society where human dignity, equity, pluralism, sustainability and responsibility are the fundamental determinants of social life. In this framework, the Council of Europe believes that the state and the economic sector have both a fundamental role to play in ensuring the social cohesion of society, as well as civil society and the community as a whole. Therefore, we have identified four major determinants of social cohesion for any given society.

1. Guaranteeing the Essential Role of the State through Legislative and Policy Instruments.
At a time when the proper role of the State is the subject of much debate, it is necessary to clarify and reaffirm the essential responsibilities of government in the area of social policy. In the first place, the State acts as guarantor of human rights (including social rights) and participatory democracy. Rights provide the firmest foundation for social policy. Rights put all members of society on an equal footing. With a basis in human rights, the action of the State in the social policy field is no longer a matter of charity or welfare directed at the less fortunate members of society; it is a question of guaranteeing rights that are the same for all. Welfare implies not only equity and non-discrimination in access to human rights but also:
-       the dignity of each person and the recognition of their abilities and their contribution to society, fully respecting the diversity of cultures, opinions and religious beliefs;
-       the freedom of each individual to pursue their personal development throughout their life;
-       the possibility for each person to participate actively as a full member of society.

Equality between women and men is also a fundamental commitment that is highly relevant to a social cohesion strategy.

Secondly, the State restores a sufficient degree of equity in the distribution of wealth through mechanisms of solidarity such as redistributive taxation and social security. Social security systems, indeed, are one of the most powerful institutional expressions of social solidarity. A strategy for social cohesion must therefore have as a main aim the strengthening of sustainable social security systems, especially at a time when many questions are posed about their future development and financing.

Thirdly, the State acts to protect vulnerable groups at risk of social exclusion. Social protection systems therefore provide not only social security, which is designed to protect all members of society against life's risks, but also social assistance and social services for those in particular need.

Although these responsibilities of the State remain essential, the manner in which the State fulfils them is changing. In many countries there is a tendency to bring social services closer to the people by devolving responsibility to regional and local authorities. In addition to this, governments increasingly find that the best way of facilitating access to social rights is by working in partnership with civil society in order to achieve shared goals of social cohesion. The well-established tradition of dialogue with the social partners needs to be maintained and adapted to changing circumstances. A newer development is the growing partnership between government and non-governmental organizations in dealing with social problems. In identifying and meeting new social needs, NGO's

can often play a valuable complementary role alongside official bodies in ensuring access to social rights for the more vulnerable members of society.

Social cohesion cannot rest content with ad hoc policies designed to deal with crises or emergencies, but must be the focus of a new commitment by member States in the social field. Good governance is recognized increasingly as one of the pre-conditions for social and economic progress. The fight against corruption is of particular importance in this context.

2. Integrating the Social Dimension into Economic Life.
Sound macro-economic policies are of crucial importance in establishing stable conditions for growth. They cannot, however, be directed solely by market mechanisms without risking damaging social consequences. Market economies, like any other economic system, produce inequalities in wealth and social status and at present we see a growth of such inequalities in many European countries. Such disparities will be tolerated as long as people feel that they have equality of opportunity to improve their situation.

Particularly since the Johannesburg Summit, it has been increasingly recognized that sustainable economic development depends on sustainable social development as well as a sustainable environment. For these reasons, economic policy and social policy need to be brought into a much closer relationship with one another than has been customary.

The right to work is a fundamental right and a key element of citizenship. Access to decent and adequately remunerated employment is probably the most important single factor in combating poverty and exclusion. This is why social protection systems now try to assist as many people as possible to move from a situation of passive welfare dependence to active participation in the economy. In a knowledge-based economy, investment in human resources is one of the most crucial areas of investment for future economic growth.

The social responsibility of economic actors is emerging as a crucial question for post-industrial societies. There is growing interest in the question of the social responsibility of business and numerous instruments are being developed to put this responsibility into practice. Private actors, business and corporation have now an economic weight and a capacity to mobilize resources and transfer technologies that largely outshine that of international institutions, and they can have an enormous impact on development processes. It is crucial that their action be embedded in a system of rules and in a greater ethos of responsibility for the consequences of their undertakings, contributing to the well-being of society as a whole and not just of a privileged minority. It is important to develop ways of measuring the impact of economic activity on social cohesion as well as legal and financial mechanisms for recognizing and encouraging such contributions (e.g. certification, tax advantages).

We are also beginning to see a concern on the part of individuals to develop new forms of economic action capable of contributing to social cohesion. People are using the means of action that are open to them as individuals such as their power as consumers and the way in which they use their savings. In all this, the challenge is to find ways of ensuring that the market economy contributes to social cohesion and does not function so as to exclude those who are least attractive as consumers. This is a vital issue at a time when more and more areas of life, including in some cases utilities formerly provided as public services, are governed by market mechanisms.

3. The Family, the Community and Civil Society as the Fabric of Social Cohesion.
Human beings find their fulfillment above all in relationship with others. A social cohesion strategy, while fully respecting the autonomy of the private sphere and of civil society, must therefore seek to be supportive of <u>families and other networks and relationships</u> which bring individuals together into wider circles of solidarity.

<u>Families</u> are the place where social cohesion is first experienced and learnt. They play a crucial part in preparing children for life in society. They are often called upon to support elderly people as they become more dependent. They are also the place of last-resort social protection in time of need. Changes in values and behavior are resulting in a much greater variety of family patterns than in the past, but this does not in any way detract from the social role of families, which remains as fundamental as ever. In a complex and changing society, it is necessary to support families in fulfilling their functions. In particular, parents need help in counteracting harmful social and market pressures, in reconciling the demands of work and family life and in adapting to a situation in which children are seen as bearers of their own rights as individuals.

Society has a special responsibility towards those who, for one reason or another, cannot count on the support and protection of a family or other social network. The rights and dignity of <u>children or elderly people</u> in need of care have to be the subject of special attention. Traditional care institutions play a diminishing role and it is important to develop alternative means of care wherever possible.

Individuals participate in many other networks and institutions that help to knit society together. A variety of civil society bodies, including <u>churches, political parties and trades unions</u>, are also important factors of social cohesion, although in most countries each of these has seen some loss in membership and influence, a reflection perhaps of a society that gives more importance to individual freedom than to collective belonging. On the other hand, <u>non-governmental organizations and voluntary bodies</u> of all kinds are flourishing and everywhere becoming indispensable partners of government in building social cohesion. Charitable, sports and cultural associations, together with organizations for children and young people, play a particularly important part in building social cohesion. It is bodies of these kinds that often make suitable partners for government-sponsored programmes to build social cohesion. Non-governmental organizations need to be recognized in law and provided with support in order to help them play a more active part in strengthening social cohesion.

4. Promoting values of diversity, pluralism and solidarity.
A strategy for social cohesion must first identify the factors of division within society and then design or facilitate mechanisms, processes and institutions that prevent them from becoming so acute as to endanger social peace. <u>Diversity</u> is not in itself divisive. European societies have been learning, albeit rather hesitantly, to see ethnic, religious, cultural and ideological pluralism not as an obstacle to social cohesion but as a source of wealth, dynamism, adaptability and strength. The question is how to manage diversity so that it becomes a source of mutual enrichment rather than a factor of division and conflict. A cohesive society is one which has developed satisfactory ways of coping with these and other strains in an open and democratic manner.

To manage diversity in a way which releases its potential for good is, however, a challenge. It involves <u>fighting racial, ethnic, religious, gender and other forms of discrimination</u>; and it requires

active policies to integrate migrants and all kinds of minorities and groups with particular needs into mainstream society on the basis of respect for their difference and full recognition of their rights.

An important part of social cohesion is to find an adequate balance between the <u>responsibility</u> of the individual and the <u>solidarity</u> of society. Without solidarity the individual will not be ready to adapt to the structural changes brought about by a more and more rapidly changing economy and social structure. The challenge is to develop a greater sense of interdependence, of mutual responsibility and belonging, between the diverse individuals and groups who make up modern European societies.

PUTTING THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S SOCIAL COHESION STRATEGY INTO PRACTICE: AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT ACTIVITIES

As its 45 member States now cover practically the whole of geographical Europe, the Council of Europe has a special and distinctive role in promoting social cohesion across the whole continent. Building and maintaining social cohesion in Europe is, first and foremost, the duty and responsibility of each Member State. The role of the Council of Europe is to inspire and support their efforts by means of its standard-setting instruments, its intergovernmental cooperation machinery and targeted activities designed to assist individual States or group of States in putting Council of Europe standards and recommendations into practice.

Council of Europe's bodies involved in implementing the social cohesion strategy.
Recognizing that social cohesion can only be built by means of integrated measures involving many partners, the CDCS has worked closely with other Council of Europe bodies such as the <u>Parliamentary Assembly</u>, the <u>Congress of Regional and Local Authorities of Europe</u>, other intergovernmental committees, the organs of the <u>European Social Charter</u> and <u>non-governmental organizations</u> with [participatory] status. Moreover, good working relations have been developed with other international bodies working in related fields. In particular, some work has been pursued as part of <u>Joint Programmes with the European Commission</u>, and the <u>ILO</u> is closely associated with the work on social security. As an international financial institution working for social development, the <u>Council of Europe Development Bank</u> plays a major part in giving practical effect to the strategy for social cohesion.

Integrating policy fields: employment, social protection, housing, health and education.
In launching a social cohesion strategy, the Council of Europe has decided to integrate its work in a number of fields which were formerly separate, namely social security, social policy and employment. Work on social cohesion is therefore based on a multidisciplinary approach. Just as governments have in many cases found it necessary to set up special taskforces to bring together the contributions of several different departments whose work has a bearing on social problems, so now at the level of the Council of Europe it is for the European Committee on Social Cohesion and the Directorate-General for Social Cohesion to <u>integrate the work across a broad field</u>.

A social cohesion strategy involves action to combat poverty and social exclusion, particularly in areas such as <u>housing, health, employment and income distribution, training, education and social services</u>.

Through its activities the Council of Europe seeks to help member States tackle the following challenges:

-        how to make economic and social rights more effective and enable people to claim their rights through appropriate procedures, promoting access to social rights within the universal spirit of the Council of Europe's many conventions and recommendations, particularly in the fields of employment, education, health, social protection and housing;
-        how to reduce unacceptably high levels of unemployment in a globalizing economic system and to promote access to employment with appropriate economic policies and measures to support employment;
-        how to improve the standard of services to the public and ensure that all members of society have effective access to them;
-        how to achieve and maintain a high level of social protection at a time when many pressures make it necessary to look afresh at traditional concepts;
-        how to respond to the needs of an ageing population, including the need to finance pension systems and to establish inter-generational solidarity;
-        how to create a new sense of social solidarity and mutual responsibility in a society characterized by the pursuit of individual fulfillment;
-        how to respond to changing patterns of family life and their effects on children, for example the need to reconcile family and working life;
-        how to develop policies for the protection and participation of children and youth in society;
-        how to integrate migrants into society and combat effectively all forms of racism and discrimination;
-        how to make growing ethnic and cultural diversity a source of strength in a globalizing world.

Activities are of <u>four types</u>:

(A)   Standard-Setting and Monitoring of the Application of International Legal Instruments: The *European Social Charter* and the *European Code of Social Security.*

Social rights are the starting-point for the Council of Europe's social cohesion strategy[9]. The Summit Conference called for the "widest possible adherence" to the European Social Charter and other standard-setting instruments in the social field. In the social field the most important standards of the Council of Europe are the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security as well as the revised versions and the protocols[10]. The *European Social Charter (1961)* and the *European*

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[9] The European Convention on Human Rights (1950) , the most famous normative instrument of the Council of Europe, does not contain social rights properly speaking, but concentrates on civil and political rights. The distinctive feature of the European Convention on Human Rights is that it serves as basis for a truly judicial control of violations of the rights by the member States. Thus both other contracting States as well as individuals can file complaints. On this basis the European Court of Human Rights has developed interpretations to all the rights contained in the convention, a jurisprudence that can be compared to the jurisprudence of national constitutional courts. The jurisprudence of the Court has also repercussions on the interpretation of the social rights, e.g. when certain social security benefits are understood as property.
[10] Nussberger, A. European Standards in the Field of Social Security – A Critical Analysis, Council of Europe Working Papers, Directorate General Social Cohesion, 2000

Social Charter (Revised) _(1996)_[11] protect quite a broad range of social rights encompassing labor rights such as the right to work and the right to just conditions of work as well as social security rights strictly speaking. In addition to that, the Charter provides for the right to social and medical assistance and the right to benefit from social services as well as for the protection of certain disadvantaged groups. The revised Social Charter reinforces this by introducing several new rights. The right to protection against poverty and social exclusion and the prohibition of discrimination on the ground of sex are especially important. The Charter's <u>supervisory machinery</u> plays a decisive role in the implementation of the rights. Based on the examination of <u>national reports</u>, it allows a regular and systematic legal appraisal of the observance of States' undertakings. By now, all the 45 member countries of the Council of Europe have either signed or ratified the European Social Charter or the European Social Charter (Revised). This means that both relatively prosperous countries and countries in difficult economic situations adhere to these common standards _(for a complete list of signatures and ratifications see Appendix I)._

The proclamation of these rights is very important. But still it is only one step in a process. Rights have to be formulated in a way that is concrete enough to serve as an operational basis. That is especially true for the right to social security. For these reasons, the Council of Europe not only advocates access to social protection but <u>minimum standards of social protection for all,</u> (in their various forms of health-care, old-age pension schemes, unemployment benefits, sickness and work injury schemes, maternity insurance, child benefits and so on) as the foundation of a society free from extreme poverty and inequality.

Setting standards is a prerequisite for the fulfillment of rights in the social field. Therefore the Council of Europe guarantees rights on the one hand and sets standards on the other hand. The <u>European Code of Social Security and its Protocol</u> (1964), and the <u>revised Code of Social Security</u> (1990)[12], guarantee a minimum level of protection in the nine traditional branches of social security. They prescribe a certain level of protection, specify the risks and the benefits to be provided. The control procedure is also based on national reports[13].

Minimum standards promote social stability, ensuring a less fragmented society, with lower levels of social conflict and smaller social disparities. These instruments help the vulnerable sectors of society to manage or mitigate social risks derived from economic instability, avoiding huge income gaps between social groups. Minimum social standards improve productivity. When people are well protected, they don't have to live in fear and insecurity –and their long-term productivity and job continuity greatly benefits from their situation, providing them with steady income.

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[11] Council of Europe, European Social Charter and Protocol, Council of Europe Publishing 2000; cf. Council of Europe, European Social Charter. Short Guide 2000.

[12] Council of Europe, European Code of Social Security and Protocol to the European Social Security (Strasbourg, 16.4.1964), European Treaty Series n.48, Council of Europe Publishing, 2000.

[13] The <u>European Convention on Social Security (1972)</u> that revises two preliminary instruments dating back to the 1950s deals basically with the social security rights of migrant workers. The basic principles are equality of treatment, maintenance of acquired rights and rights in the course of acquisition as well as payment of benefits abroad. This <u>European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers (1977)</u> is concerned with the legal situation of migrant workers in general, in particular recruitment, occupational tests, residence permits, work permits etc, but social security and social and medical assistance are included as well.

To this end, a big effort is under way at the Council of Europe to <u>prepare for the ratification of the</u> <u>European Code of Social Security</u> by the newer member States. It is likely that several countries of Central and Eastern Europe will ratify the Code in the next few years. In other countries where ratification seems a more distant prospect, the emphasis has been on trying to ensure that reforms of social security are compatible with ratification at some time in the future. The CDCS collects <u>comparative information on social security systems</u> and serves as a forum for debate on current issues and challenges in this field. This is done through the work of the Committee of Experts on Standard-Setting Instruments in the Field of Social Security (CS-CO) and through the MISSCEO information system, which has been greatly improved and coordinated with the MISSOC network of the European Union.

(B)   Policy development: promoting access to social rights.
However strong the legal protection of rights, it is never a simple matter to ensure that all members of society, especially those in the weakest position, in reality benefit from their rights. It is one thing to legislate for social rights, but it is quite another to guarantee that all members of the population, including those most in need of protection, effectively benefit from their rights. Paradoxically, those who most need the protection of their rights are often least well equipped to claim them. This is why legal protection of rights has to be accompanied by determined social policy measures to ensure that everyone in practice has access to their rights. This is why, The Council of Europe considers that <u>access to social rights</u> must be based on the following principles:

- equality of rights for all, without discrimination;

- availability of quality services for all;

- giving special attention to the needs of the vulnerable members of society;

- avoiding stigmatization of those with special needs;

- maintenance of equitable and sustainable social protection policies;

- participation of users.

The larger part of the work carried out under the responsibility of the CDCS aims at allowing governments to <u>exchange and compare experience</u> on the design and implementation of social policies with a view to identifying best practice. We are working with some of the least prosperous of our member States to see how they can open up access to social rights and so help to cope with the widespread poverty. Such work, carried out through committees of experts and seminars, typically results in the adoption of reports, handbooks and guidelines.

A major programme of work on <u>access to social rights</u> has led to the adoption of policy guidelines on <u>access to social protection, access to employment and access to housing</u>; a comprehensive Report on access to social rights and a Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers.

From time to time, draft recommendations will be prepared as a way of giving enhanced political weight to the results of this work. In addition to intergovernmental activities, an extensive <u>programme of bilateral activities</u> has been developed, essentially for transition countries, in order to

provide advice and assistance in applying the social cohesion strategy of the Council of Europe in the particular circumstances of individual member States or sub-regional groups of States.

In connection with the <u>Stability Pact Initiative for Social Cohesion</u>, an extensive cooperation programme has been developed with the countries of South-East Europe. Numerous activities have been implemented in the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the South Caucasus region. Emphasis has been placed on access to social rights (especially employment and social protection), children in care and vagrant children, and dependent elderly people.

The Council of Europe's rights-based approach implies a particular commitment to making a reality of the rights and needs of those individuals and groups in society which are at particular risk of becoming <u>vulnerable</u>:

- children as laid down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights;

- young people in general, who must play an essential part in any vision of social cohesion which is concerned for the welfare of future generations from the point of view of sustainable development;

- families in precarious life-situations;

- migrants and ethnic minorities, whose needs are often neglected;
- people with disabilities, whose specific needs must be fully integrated into the pursuit of the welfare of all;
- elderly people, especially those who are living alone or who no longer have the support of a family.

Fore example, a <u>Programme for Children</u> was successfully completed and led on to the creation of a new body, the Forum for Children and Families. The Forum brings together a very wide range of actors in this field in order to examine such topics as child labor, corporal punishment of children and the role of ombudsmen for children. A two-year programme of work, concentrating on child day-care, children at risk or in care, and children, democracy and participation has just been completed. The work on children and families will continue with a new project on Helping families to support children in realizing their full potential in order to participate fully in society. The emphasis of this project will be on preparing children to take their place as active and responsible citizens capable of contributing to social cohesion in the future. Likewise, <u>the needs of elderly</u> persons will be the focus of specific activities. The CDCS will also be looking to examine the broader implications of ageing for sustainable social development in European societies. This will raise issues in many fields, such as employment, social protection and social services.

Guaranteeing Concrete Access to Social Rights: Removing the Barriers.
Although the arguments for social rights and minimum standards are as strong if not stronger than ever, there is compelling evidence, from our work on access to social rights that <u>formal entitlement to a social right is no guarantee that a right will or can be realized in practice</u>. What is needed is concrete access to social rights for all individuals. This is why the Council of Europe has recently carried out a comprehensive study on the administrative, legal and psychological barriers which prevent in practice access to social rights and the necessary policies to be implemented in order to

remove them. The Council of Europe report on *"Access to Social Rights in Europe"* has encountered widespread success among our member countries and has been translated as of today in 17 European languages.

Among the Barriers identified by the report which prevent concrete Access to Social Rights, the Most Important are: The legal framework. The legal framework and the structure and form of provision whereby the social right is legally codified and organized are crucial. The kinds of obstacles that arise here have the effect not just of creating difficulties for the realization of rights but of actually excluding some people. Inadequate resources. The resources necessary to service providers for the realization of social rights include financial resources as well as human resources and personal capacities. Poor information and communication. People continue to be under-informed about their entitlements, that lack of information may lead to loss of or delay in benefits and that the views of rights holders do not sufficiently inform service provision. Psychological and socio-cultural obstacles. Among service providers, they are caused by such factors as negative attitudes to or stigmatization of beneficiaries and the failure, on the part of officials and others, to appreciate that applicants or potential applicants may subscribe to a particular sub-culture that is different to mainstream culture. Failure to give due attention to the particular situation and needs of vulnerable groups and specific regions.

Despite these obstacles, most of the architecture necessary for the achievement of social rights is already in place in Europe. While there are some gaps, problems where they exist derive in many cases from shortcomings in the operation or functioning of existing provision or the specification of rights. This is why the Council of Europe is proposing this set of guidelines for the purpose of eliminating barriers to social rights. Some *key recommendations and policies* include: The personalized approach: each client of the employment and social services should be treated as an individual in need of an integrated package of benefits, training and other forms of assistance tailor-made to their particular needs. The "activation" approach: people should be given the help and encouragement they need in order to build a new future for themselves in which they will become active subjects of their own lives rather than passive recipients of benefits and services. A revolution in communication: public agencies must find much more innovative ways of informing people about their rights, listening to their ideas and proposals and helping them to navigate through the labyrinths of bureaucracy. This should be seen as a fundamental duty of the public services in a democracy and it is therefore entirely natural that this conference is supported by our Integrated Project Making democratic institutions work. The partnership approach: government bodies cannot achieve their objectives by working in isolation. If they are to be effective in fighting poverty and social exclusion, the various public agencies must work together with one another and with the social partners, non-governmental organizations and private sector providers.

(C)   Project development: The role of the Council of Europe Development Bank.
Our instrument for providing financial resources for fostering social cohesion in Europe is the **Council of Europe Development Bank.** Created in the mid-'50s as a source of long-term financing to support the effort of Member States to solve problems relating to migration and resettlement of displaced populations, the Council of Europe Development Bank evolved in the late '90s into a multilateral financial institution with an exclusively social mandate, the only International Financial Institution with an exclusive focus on social cohesion and one of the largest providers of loans for social development projects throughout Europe. The Bank operates in 35 Member States, both Western and Eastern European states, covering a wide range of situations and providing a value

added in different ways. It invests around 1.6 billion euros every year for about 35 projects in 28 countries of operation. The idea of a social Bank originates from our experience that any strategy for promoting greater European integration, which merely focuses on legal and political dialogue, is incomplete and that advocating social change and expansion of social rights without caring about the resources needed to enforce them is a false promise. The Bank is a "social bank" in that it provides finance for basic social infrastructures in fields that are the building blocks of social cohesion: job creation in Small and medium-sized business enterprises in disadvantaged regions, social housing, education and health care, protection of the environment, rural modernization and lastly, protection of the historical heritage. Moreover, the Bank is a "social bank" because it devotes all its financing efforts for the benefit of the most vulnerable populations (low-income families, migrants, refugees, ethnic minorities, and victims of natural disasters), mitigating risks of income gaps vis-à-vis the rest of the population.

(D) Measuring Social Cohesion: Towards a "Social Cohesion Index".
The Council of Europe is also seeking to develop operational tools for monitoring progress in social cohesion. A *Methodological Guide for the Use of Social Cohesion Indicators* is currently being developed and will be presented in 2004 to member States. Work is now in progress to test out this methodology in selected countries and regions. The Social Cohesion indicators differ greatly from the indicators employed by other organizations such as the European Union[14] and the OECD. The latter utilize more a "negative definition" of social cohesion, focusing on the concept of social exclusion and poverty, measuring therefore "alert indicators" of the <u>dysfunction of society</u>[15]. The "alarm" indicators aimed at identifying the symptoms of the "pathologies of society" also serve as a common frame of reference for an even more heterogeneous group of countries. Several indicators proposed by the OECD[16] to provide a comparative overview of developed societies are of this type.

Based on a "positive definition" of social cohesion, the Council of Europe has developed 26 main indicators that focus on four main aspects of social life (equity, dignity, participation). *For a detailed list of these indicators, see Appendix III.* Each aspect includes several dozens of sub-indicators that can be used to analyse in greater detail the situation of a particular country. These 26 indicators are being used to develop a Social Cohesion Index, to be employed by member states to measure the degree of social cohesion in the Organization's forty-five countries and adapt the strategy to their

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[14] These are: 1. Low income rate after transfers with low-income threshold set at 60% of median income (with breakdowns by gender, age, most frequent activity status, household type and tenure status; as illustrative examples, the values for typical households); 2. Distribution of income (income quintile ratio); 3. Persistence of low income; 4. Median low income gap; 5. Regional cohesion; 6. Long term unemployment rate; 7. People living in jobless households; 8. Early school leavers not in further education or training; 9. Life expectancy at birth; 10. Self perceived health status.

[15] European Union, Social Protection Committee, Report On Indicators in the field of poverty and social exclusion, October 2001.

[16] The 16 social cohesion indicators proposed by the OECD are: 1. Divorce rate; 2. Fertility rate; 3. Percentage of lone-parent families; 4. Membership of local associations; 5. Rate of participation in elections ; 6. Population born abroad; 7. Mixed marriages; 8. Asylum-seekers; 9. Suicide rate; 10. Age of women at birth of first child; 11. Working women with children; 12. Crime rate; 13. Mortality rate due to drug use; 14. Work stoppages; 15. Persons detained at penal establishments; 16. Acquisition of nationality. Cf. OECD, DEELSA/ELSA, Social Indicators: A Proposed Framework and Structure, October 1999.

most concrete needs. Through a balanced weighting formula for each indicator, the Social Cohesion Index, which is currently being developed by the Development Division of the Directorate of Social Cohesion, will duly take into account the different degrees of socio-economic development of the 45-member states of the Council of Europe.

CONCLUSIONS

The acceptance by society and the State that people have, on an equal basis, social rights to good quality employment, income support, health care, education and training, housing, access to cultural pursuits, and that society, mainly through the State, is responsible for honouring these rights, is one of the main foundations of a socially cohesive society. This acceptance, however, needs to be constantly promoted particularly at times of economic difficulties and great change. The best way to achieve the aim of social cohesion is through open and democratic means. This requires having structures in place that facilitate open, democratic and participative methods. It is here that civil and political rights are crucial. Social rights, of course, are equally essential for a democracy to function, as they enable people to participate in the democratic process and help to create a more equal, supportive and open society in which democracy can flourish.

All societies have divisions and potential divisions. Divisions in European societies include divisions between the rich and the poor, ethnic and cultural divisions, and imbalances between different regions and between different parts of Europe.   Social cohesion means taking action to ensure that these divisions do not become excessive do not grow so as to threaten the stability of society. The best way of achieving social cohesion is by building consensus among all stakeholders at all levels, fostering participation and social responsibility among all members of society.

APPENDIX I. TABLE OF RATIFICATIONS

European Social Charter
(Charte sociale européenne)
ETS n° : 035
Treaty open for signature by the member States of the Council of Europe

Opening for signature :
Place : Turin
Date : 18/10/61

Entry into force :
Conditions : 5 Ratifications.
Date : 26/02/65

Member States of the Council of Europe:

States	Date of signature	Date of ratification	Date of entry into force	Notes	R.	D.	A.	T.	C.	O.
Albania										
Andorra										
Armenia										
Austria	22/07/63	29/10/69	28/11/69			X				
Azerbaijan										
Belgium	18/10/61	16/10/90	15/11/90			X				
Bosnia and Herzegovina										
Bulgaria										
Croatia	08/03/99	26/02/03	28/03/03			X				
Cyprus	22/05/67	07/03/68	06/04/68			X				
Czech Republic	27/05/92	03/11/99	03/12/99	3		X				
Denmark	18/10/61	03/03/65	02/04/65			X		X		
Estonia										
Finland	09/02/90	29/04/91	29/05/91			X				
France	18/10/61	09/03/73	08/04/73		X	X				
Georgia										
Germany	18/10/61	27/01/65	26/02/65			X		X		
Greece	18/10/61	06/06/84	06/07/84			X				
Hungary	13/12/91	08/07/99	07/08/99			X				
Iceland	15/01/76	15/01/76	14/02/76			X				
Ireland	18/10/61	07/10/64	26/02/65			X				
Italy	18/10/61	22/10/65	21/11/65			X				
Latvia	29/05/97	31/01/02	02/03/02			X				
Liechtenstein	09/10/91									
Lithuania										
Luxembourg	18/10/61	10/10/91	09/11/91			X				
Malta	26/05/88	04/10/88	03/11/88			X				
Moldova						X		X		
Netherlands	18/10/61	22/04/80	22/05/80			X		X		
Norway	18/10/61	26/10/62	26/02/65		X	X		X		

Country										
Poland	26/11/91	25/06/97	25/07/97			X				
Portugal	01/06/82	30/09/91	30/10/91		X	X				
Romania	04/10/94									
Russia										
San Marino										
Serbia and Montenegro										
Slovakia	27/05/92	22/06/98	21/07/98	3		X				
Slovenia	11/10/97									
Spain	27/04/78	06/05/80	05/06/80			X				
Sweden	18/10/61	17/12/62	26/02/65			X				
Switzerland	06/05/76									
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	05/05/98									
Turkey	18/10/61	24/11/89	24/12/89			X				
Ukraine	02/05/96									
United Kingdom	18/10/61	11/07/62	26/02/65			X		X		

Total number of signatures not followed by ratifications :	6
Total number of ratifications/accessions :	26

Notes :
(3) Date of signature by the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic.
a: Accession - s: Signature without reservation as to ratification - su: Succession - r: Signature "ad referendum".
R.: Reservations - D.: Declarations - A.: Authorities - T.: Territorial Application - C.: Communication - O.: Objection.
Source: Treaty Office on http://conventions.coe.int

European Social Charter (revised)
(Charte sociale européenne (révisée))
ETS n° : 163
Treaty open for signature by the member States of the Council of Europe

Opening for signature :
Place : Strasbourg
Date : 03/05/96

Entry into force :
Conditions : 3 Ratifications.
Date : 01/07/99

Member States of the Council of Europe:

States	Date of signature	Date of ratification	Date of entry into force	Notes	R.	D.	A.	T.	C.	O.
Albania	21/09/98	14/11/02	01/01/03			X				
Andorra	04/11/00					X				
Armenia	18/10/01									
Austria	07/05/99									
Azerbaijan	18/10/01									
Belgium	03/05/96									
Bosnia and Herzegovina										
Bulgaria	21/09/98	07/06/00	01/08/00			X				
Croatia										
Cyprus	03/05/96	27/09/00	01/11/00			X				
Czech Republic	04/11/00									
Denmark	03/05/96					X				
Estonia	04/05/98	11/09/00	01/11/00			X				
Finland	03/05/96	21/06/02	01/08/02			X				
France	03/05/96	07/05/99	01/07/99							
Georgia	30/06/00									
Germany										
Greece	03/05/96									
Hungary										
Iceland	04/11/98									
Ireland	04/11/00	04/11/00	01/01/01			X				
Italy	03/05/96	05/07/99	01/09/99			X				
Latvia										
Liechtenstein										
Lithuania	08/09/97	29/06/01	01/08/01			X				
Luxembourg	11/02/98									
Malta										
Moldova	03/11/98	08/11/01	01/01/02			X				
Netherlands										
Norway	07/05/01	07/05/01	01/07/01			X		X		
Poland										
Portugal	03/05/96	30/05/02	01/07/02		X					
Romania	14/05/97	07/05/99	01/07/99			X				
Russia	14/09/00									

San Marino	18/10/01									
Serbia and Montenegro										
Slovakia	18/11/99									
Slovenia	11/10/97	07/05/99	01/07/99		X					
Spain	23/10/00									
Sweden	03/05/96	29/05/98	01/07/99		X					
Switzerland										
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia										
Turkey										
Ukraine	07/05/99									
United Kingdom	07/11/97									

Total number of signatures not followed by ratifications :	17
Total number of ratifications/accessions :	15

Notes :

a: Accession - s: Signature without reservation as to ratification - su: Succession - r: Signature "ad referendum".
R.: Reservations - D.: Declarations - A.: Authorities - T.: Territorial Application - C.: Communication - O.: Objection.
Source: Treaty Office on http://conventions.coe.int

European Code of Social Security
(Code européen de sécurité sociale)
ETS n° : 048
Treaty open for signature by the member States and for accession by non-member States

Opening for signature :
Place : Strasbourg
Date : 16/04/64

Entry into force :
Conditions : 3 Ratifications.
Date : 17/03/68

Member States of the Council of Europe:

States	Date of signature	Date of ratification	Date of entry into force	Notes	R.	D.	A.	T.	C.	O.
Albania										
Andorra										
Armenia										
Austria	17/02/70									
Azerbaijan										
Belgium	13/05/64	13/08/69	14/08/70			X				
Bosnia and Herzegovina										
Bulgaria										
Croatia										
Cyprus	15/04/92	15/04/92	16/04/93			X				
Czech Republic	10/02/00	08/09/00	09/09/01			X				
Denmark	16/04/64	16/02/73	17/02/74			X		X		
Estonia	24/01/00									
Finland										
France	04/10/76	17/02/86	18/02/87			X				
Georgia										
Germany	16/04/64	27/01/71	28/01/72			X		X		
Greece	21/04/77	09/06/81	10/06/82			X				
Hungary										
Iceland										
Ireland	16/02/71	16/02/71	17/02/72			X				
Italy	16/04/64	20/01/77	21/01/78			X				
Latvia										
Liechtenstein										
Lithuania										
Luxembourg	16/04/64	03/04/68	04/04/69			X				
Malta										
Moldova	16/09/03									
Netherlands	15/07/64	16/03/67	17/03/68			X				
Norway	16/04/64	25/03/66	17/03/68			X		X		
Poland										
Portugal	19/11/81	15/05/84	16/05/85			X				
Romania	22/05/02									
Russia										

States	Date of signature	Date of ratification	Date of entry into force	Notes	R.	D.	A.	T.	C.	O.
San Marino										
Serbia and Montenegro										
Slovakia										
Slovenia	20/01/03									
Spain	12/02/93	08/03/94	09/03/95			X				
Sweden	16/04/64	25/09/65	17/03/68			X				
Switzerland	01/12/76	16/09/77	17/09/78			X				
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia										
Turkey	13/05/64	07/03/80	08/03/81		X	X				
Ukraine										
United Kingdom	14/03/67	12/01/68	13/01/69			X				

Non-member States of the Council of Europe:

States	Date of signature	Date of ratification	Date of entry into force	Notes	R.	D.	A.	T.	C.	O.

Total number of signatures not followed by ratifications :	5
Total number of ratifications/accessions :	18

Notes :

a: Accession - s: Signature without reservation as to ratification - su: Succession - r: Signature "ad referendum".

R.: Reservations - D.: Declarations - A.: Authorities - T.: Territorial Application - C.: Communication - O.: Objection.

Source: Treaty Office on http://conventions.coe.int

Appendix II. The Main Types of Factors Impeding Access to Social Rights (from: Council of Europe, Access to Social Rights in Europe, 2003)

Type	Obstacles
Specification of Right and Adequacy of Legal and Other Provision	Lack of precision in the specification of the right or entitlement Rights limited to particular sectors of the population Gaps in the social safety net Lack of specification of a basic threshold or minimum standard Exclusive conditions of access or entitlement Mismatches between the nature of provision and need
Inadequate Monitoring and Enforcement	Inadequate monitoring Inadequate protection against the non-realisation of rights Discrimination and/or differential treatment Inadequate responsibility to users
Resource Shortages	For Providers: Insufficiency of a range of resources (funding, staffing, facilities, equipment) Failure to guarantee or provide resources on a long-term basis Imbalance in resources between levels of administration For Users or Rights' Claimants: Insufficiency of a range of resources and capacities including financial resources, educational capacities, personal resources, social skills and contacts
Management and Procedural Difficulties	Fragmentation between levels of administration and among services Inadequate integration of and consultation with NGOs and users Complexity of procedures Obstacles arising from the mode and practice of service delivery
Information and Communication Difficulties	Insufficient stock and flow of high-quality information Inappropriate form and nature of information provided Underuse of 'new' or alternative channels
Psychological and Socio-cultural Obstacles	On the Part of Providers: Negative expectations of and predisposition towards certain groups Stigmatisation of certain groups Lack of understanding of minority cultures On the Part of Users or Rights' Claimants: Fear and insecurity induced in and by public procedures and settings Low self-esteem Cultural obstacles

Appendix III. Social Indicators (DRAFT)

	Phenomenon to be measured	Main statistical indicators
Equity	Equity in income	Ratio of equivalent average income between the richest 20% and the poorest 20% (S80/20 of EUE)
	Equity in health	- Life expectancy + % of persons who have renounced to medical care due to financial reasons
	Equity in access to social security	% of population not covered by social security
	Equity in housing	% of homeless people (1)
	Equity in access to labor	Long-term unemployment rate
Dignity/ recognition	Employment	Ratio between average income of men and women
		Ratio between employment rate of poorly and highly qualified people
	Labor market Access	Ratio between the average unemployment rate of women and men
		Ratio between the unemployment rate of the foreign population and the population in general
	Labor market	% of people between 25 and 49 without any qualification and a precarious job
	People without income	% of people under 65 benefiting from a minimum Income and ratio MI/average income
		% of people over 65 benefiting from a minimum social support and ratio minimum social support/average income
	Learning	% of population with a level 1 of learning
	Access to higher education	% of population over 18 with an advanced training or with an advanced training in progress
	Academic performance for children of disadvantaged social strata	Ratio between the % of students with a blue-collar father and the % of blue-collar workers in the working population
	Financial autonomy/ Excessive debts of households	Number of cases of debts filed per year/ total number of households
Participation /involvement	Vitality of partnerships/associations	Number of paid jobs in associations/Total number of jobs
	Participation in elections	Participation rate in elections of people aged 18-34
	State's involvement	Social public expense/ total public expense
	Business' involvement	Active people in training/Total working population
		Employment rate of people with disabilities in the private sector
	Citizens' involvement	Number of equitable economy institutions/1000 inhabitants (2)

	Degree of confidence and social links	Confidence in institutions (3)
		Number of suicides/100000 inhabitants (4)
	Violence rate	Number of homicides/100000 inhabitants (5)