

**EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER  
(REVISED)**

**Strasbourg, 3.V.1996**

## Preamble

The governments signatory hereto, being members of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is the achievement of greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and of facilitating their economic and social progress, in particular by the maintenance and further realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

Considering that in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms signed at Rome on 4 November 1950, and the Protocols thereto, the member States of the Council of Europe agreed to secure to their populations the civil and political rights and freedoms therein specified;

Considering that in the European Social Charter opened for signature in Turin on 18 October 1961 and the Protocols thereto, the member States of the Council of Europe agreed to secure to their populations the social rights specified therein in order to improve their standard of living and their social well-being;

Recalling that the Ministerial Conference on Human Rights held in Rome on 5 November 1990 stressed the need, on the one hand, to preserve the indivisible nature of all human rights, be they civil, political, economic, social or cultural and, on the other hand, to give the European Social Charter fresh impetus;

Resolved, as was decided during the Ministerial Conference held in Turin on 21 and 22 October 1991, to update and adapt the substantive contents of the Charter in order to take account in particular of the fundamental social changes which have occurred since the text was adopted;

Recognising the advantage of embodying in a Revised Charter, designed progressively to take the place of the European Social Charter, the rights guaranteed by the Charter as amended, the rights guaranteed by the Additional Protocol of 1988 and to add new rights,

Have agreed as follows:

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**Part I**

The Parties accept as the aim of their policy, to be pursued by all appropriate means both national and international in character, the attainment of conditions in which the following rights and principles may be effectively realised:

- 1 Everyone shall have the opportunity to earn his living in an occupation freely entered upon.
- 2 All workers have the right to just conditions of work.
- 3 All workers have the right to safe and healthy working conditions.
- 4 All workers have the right to a fair remuneration sufficient for a decent standard of living for themselves and their families.
- 5 All workers and employers have the right to freedom of association in national or international organisations for the protection of their economic and social interests.
- 6 All workers and employers have the right to bargain collectively.
- 7 Children and young persons have the right to a special protection against the physical and moral hazards to which they are exposed.
- 8 Employed women, in case of maternity, have the right to a special protection.
- 9 Everyone has the right to appropriate facilities for vocational guidance with a view to helping him choose an occupation suited to his personal aptitude and interests.
- 10 Everyone has the right to appropriate facilities for vocational training.
- 11 Everyone has the right to benefit from any measures enabling him to enjoy the highest possible standard of health attainable.
- 12 All workers and their dependents have the right to social security.
- 13 Anyone without adequate resources has the right to social and medical assistance.
- 14 Everyone has the right to benefit from social welfare services.
- 15 Disabled persons have the right to independence, social integration and participation in the life of the community.
- 16 The family as a fundamental unit of society has the right to appropriate social, legal and economic protection to ensure its full development.
- 17 Children and young persons have the right to appropriate social, legal and economic protection.

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- 18 The nationals of any one of the Parties have the right to engage in any gainful occupation in the territory of any one of the others on a footing of equality with the nationals of the latter, subject to restrictions based on cogent economic or social reasons.
- 19 Migrant workers who are nationals of a Party and their families have the right to protection and assistance in the territory of any other Party.
- 20 All workers have the right to equal opportunities and equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation without discrimination on the grounds of sex.
- 21 Workers have the right to be informed and to be consulted within the undertaking.
- 22 Workers have the right to take part in the determination and improvement of the working conditions and working environment in the undertaking.
- 23 Every elderly person has the right to social protection.
- 24 All workers have the right to protection in cases of termination of employment.
- 25 All workers have the right to protection of their claims in the event of the insolvency of their employer.
- 26 All workers have the right to dignity at work.
- 27 All persons with family responsibilities and who are engaged or wish to engage in employment have a right to do so without being subject to discrimination and as far as possible without conflict between their employment and family responsibilities.
- 28 Workers' representatives in undertakings have the right to protection against acts prejudicial to them and should be afforded appropriate facilities to carry out their functions.
- 29 All workers have the right to be informed and consulted in collective redundancy procedures.
- 30 Everyone has the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion.
- 31 Everyone has the right to housing.

**Part II**

The Parties undertake, as provided for in Part III, to consider themselves bound by the obligations laid down in the following articles and paragraphs.

**Article 1 - The right to work**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to work, the Parties undertake:

- 1 to accept as one of their primary aims and responsibilities the achievement and maintenance of as high and stable a level of employment as possible, with a view to the attainment of full employment;

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- 2 to protect effectively the right of the worker to earn his living in an occupation freely entered upon;
- 3 to establish or maintain free employment services for all workers;
- 4 to provide or promote appropriate vocational guidance, training and rehabilitation.

#### **Article 2 – The right to just conditions of work**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to just conditions of work, the Parties undertake:

- 1 to provide for reasonable daily and weekly working hours, the working week to be progressively reduced to the extent that the increase of productivity and other relevant factors permit;
- 2 to provide for public holidays with pay;
- 3 to provide for a minimum of four weeks' annual holiday with pay;
- 4 to eliminate risks in inherently dangerous or unhealthy occupations, and where it has not yet been possible to eliminate or reduce sufficiently these risks, to provide for either a reduction of working hours or additional paid holidays for workers engaged in such occupations;
- 5 to ensure a weekly rest period which shall, as far as possible, coincide with the day recognised by tradition or custom in the country or region concerned as a day of rest;
- 6 to ensure that workers are informed in written form, as soon as possible, and in any event not later than two months after the date of commencing their employment, of the essential aspects of the contract or employment relationship;
- 7 to ensure that workers performing night work benefit from measures which take account of the special nature of the work.

#### **Article 3 – The right to safe and healthy working conditions**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to safe and healthy working conditions, the Parties undertake, in consultation with employers' and workers' organisations:

- 1 to formulate, implement and periodically review a coherent national policy on occupational safety, occupational health and the working environment. The primary aim of this policy shall be to improve occupational safety and health and to prevent accidents and injury to health arising out of, linked with or occurring in the course of work, particularly by minimising the causes of hazards inherent in the working environment;
- 2 to issue safety and health regulations;

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- 3 to provide for the enforcement of such regulations by measures of supervision;
- 4 to promote the progressive development of occupational health services for all workers with essentially preventive and advisory functions.

**Article 4 - The right to a fair remuneration**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to a fair remuneration, the Parties undertake:

- 1 to recognise the right of workers to a remuneration such as will give them and their families a decent standard of living;
- 2 to recognise the right of workers to an increased rate of remuneration for overtime work, subject to exceptions in particular cases;
- 3 to recognise the right of men and women workers to equal pay for work of equal value;
- 4 to recognise the right of all workers to a reasonable period of notice for termination of employment;
- 5 to permit deductions from wages only under conditions and to the extent prescribed by national laws or regulations or fixed by collective agreements or arbitration awards.

The exercise of these rights shall be achieved by freely concluded collective agreements, by statutory wage-fixing machinery, or by other means appropriate to national conditions.

**Article 5 - The right to organise**

With a view to ensuring or promoting the freedom of workers and employers to form local, national or international organisations for the protection of their economic and social interests and to join those organisations, the Parties undertake that national law shall not be such as to impair, nor shall it be so applied as to impair, this freedom. The extent to which the guarantees provided for in this article shall apply to the police shall be determined by national laws or regulations. The principle governing the application to the members of the armed forces of these guarantees and the extent to which they shall apply to persons in this category shall equally be determined by national laws or regulations.

**Article 6 - The right to bargain collectively**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to bargain collectively, the Parties undertake:

- 1 to promote joint consultation between workers and employers;
- 2 to promote, where necessary and appropriate, machinery for voluntary negotiations between employers or employers' organisations and workers' organisations, with a view to the regulation of terms and conditions of employment by means of collective agreements;

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- 3 to promote the establishment and use of appropriate machinery for conciliation and voluntary arbitration for the settlement of labour disputes;

and recognise:

- 4 the right of workers and employers to collective action in cases of conflicts of interest, including the right to strike, subject to obligations that might arise out of collective agreements previously entered into.

#### **Article 7 – The right of children and young persons to protection**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of children and young persons to protection, the Parties undertake:

- 1 to provide that the minimum age of admission to employment shall be 15 years, subject to exceptions for children employed in prescribed light work without harm to their health, morals or education;
- 2 to provide that the minimum age of admission to employment shall be 18 years with respect to prescribed occupations regarded as dangerous or unhealthy;
- 3 to provide that persons who are still subject to compulsory education shall not be employed in such work as would deprive them of the full benefit of their education;
- 4 to provide that the working hours of persons under 18 years of age shall be limited in accordance with the needs of their development, and particularly with their need for vocational training;
- 5 to recognise the right of young workers and apprentices to a fair wage or other appropriate allowances;
- 6 to provide that the time spent by young persons in vocational training during the normal working hours with the consent of the employer shall be treated as forming part of the working day;
- 7 to provide that employed persons of under 18 years of age shall be entitled to a minimum of four weeks' annual holiday with pay;
- 8 to provide that persons under 18 years of age shall not be employed in night work with the exception of certain occupations provided for by national laws or regulations;
- 9 to provide that persons under 18 years of age employed in occupations prescribed by national laws or regulations shall be subject to regular medical control;
- 10 to ensure special protection against physical and moral dangers to which children and young persons are exposed, and particularly against those resulting directly or indirectly from their work.

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**Article 8 - The right of employed women to protection of maternity**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of employed women to the protection of maternity, the Parties undertake:

- 1 to provide either by paid leave, by adequate social security benefits or by benefits from public funds for employed women to take leave before and after childbirth up to a total of at least fourteen weeks;
- 2 to consider it as unlawful for an employer to give a woman notice of dismissal during the period from the time she notifies her employer that she is pregnant until the end of her maternity leave, or to give her notice of dismissal at such a time that the notice would expire during such a period;
- 3 to provide that mothers who are nursing their infants shall be entitled to sufficient time off for this purpose;
- 4 to regulate the employment in night work of pregnant women, women who have recently given birth and women nursing their infants;
- 5 to prohibit the employment of pregnant women, women who have recently given birth or who are nursing their infants in underground mining and all other work which is unsuitable by reason of its dangerous, unhealthy or arduous nature and to take appropriate measures to protect the employment rights of these women.

**Article 9 - The right to vocational guidance**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to vocational guidance, the Parties undertake to provide or promote, as necessary, a service which will assist all persons, including the handicapped, to solve problems related to occupational choice and progress, with due regard to the individual's characteristics and their relation to occupational opportunity: this assistance should be available free of charge, both to young persons, including schoolchildren, and to adults.

**Article 10 - The right to vocational training**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to vocational training, the Parties undertake:

- 1 to provide or promote, as necessary, the technical and vocational training of all persons, including the handicapped, in consultation with employers' and workers' organisations, and to grant facilities for access to higher technical and university education, based solely on individual aptitude;
- 2 to provide or promote a system of apprenticeship and other systematic arrangements for training young boys and girls in their various employments;
- 3 to provide or promote, as necessary:
  - a adequate and readily available training facilities for adult workers;



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- b special facilities for the retraining of adult workers needed as a result of technological development or new trends in employment;
- 4 to provide or promote, as necessary, special measures for the retraining and reintegration of the long-term unemployed;
- 5 to encourage the full utilisation of the facilities provided by appropriate measures such as:
- a reducing or abolishing any fees or charges;
  - b granting financial assistance in appropriate cases;
  - c including in the normal working hours time spent on supplementary training taken by the worker, at the request of his employer, during employment;
  - d ensuring, through adequate supervision, in consultation with the employers' and workers' organisations, the efficiency of apprenticeship and other training arrangements for young workers, and the adequate protection of young workers generally.

#### **Article 11 - The right to protection of health**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to protection of health, the Parties undertake, either directly or in co-operation with public or private organisations, to take appropriate measures designed *inter alia*:

- 1 to remove as far as possible the causes of ill-health;
- 2 to provide advisory and educational facilities for the promotion of health and the encouragement of individual responsibility in matters of health;
- 3 to prevent as far as possible epidemic, endemic and other diseases, as well as accidents.

#### **Article 12 - The right to social security**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to social security, the Parties undertake:

- 1 to establish or maintain a system of social security;
- 2 to maintain the social security system at a satisfactory level at least equal to that necessary for the ratification of the European Code of Social Security;
- 3 to endeavour to raise progressively the system of social security to a higher level;
- 4 to take steps, by the conclusion of appropriate bilateral and multilateral agreements or by other means, and subject to the conditions laid down in such agreements, in order to ensure:

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- a equal treatment with their own nationals of the nationals of other Parties in respect of social security rights, including the retention of benefits arising out of social security legislation, whatever movements the persons protected may undertake between the territories of the Parties;
- b the granting, maintenance and resumption of social security rights by such means as the accumulation of insurance or employment periods completed under the legislation of each of the Parties.

**Article 13 – The right to social and medical assistance**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to social and medical assistance, the Parties undertake:

- 1 to ensure that any person who is without adequate resources and who is unable to secure such resources either by his own efforts or from other sources, in particular by benefits under a social security scheme, be granted adequate assistance, and, in case of sickness, the care necessitated by his condition;
- 2 to ensure that persons receiving such assistance shall not, for that reason, suffer from a diminution of their political or social rights;
- 3 to provide that everyone may receive by appropriate public or private services such advice and personal help as may be required to prevent, to remove, or to alleviate personal or family want;
- 4 to apply the provisions referred to in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of this article on an equal footing with their nationals to nationals of other Parties lawfully within their territories, in accordance with their obligations under the European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance, signed at Paris on 11 December 1953.

**Article 14 – The right to benefit from social welfare services**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to benefit from social welfare services, the Parties undertake:

- 1 to promote or provide services which, by using methods of social work, would contribute to the welfare and development of both individuals and groups in the community, and to their adjustment to the social environment;
- 2 to encourage the participation of individuals and voluntary or other organisations in the establishment and maintenance of such services.

**Article 15 – The right of persons with disabilities to independence, social integration and participation in the life of the community**

With a view to ensuring to persons with disabilities, irrespective of age and the nature and origin of their disabilities, the effective exercise of the right to independence, social integration and participation in the life of the community, the Parties undertake, in particular:

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- 1 to take the necessary measures to provide persons with disabilities with guidance, education and vocational training in the framework of general schemes wherever possible or, where this is not possible, through specialised bodies, public or private;
- 2 to promote their access to employment through all measures tending to encourage employers to hire and keep in employment persons with disabilities in the ordinary working environment and to adjust the working conditions to the needs of the disabled or, where this is not possible by reason of the disability, by arranging for or creating sheltered employment according to the level of disability. In certain cases, such measures may require recourse to specialised placement and support services;
- 3 to promote their full social integration and participation in the life of the community in particular through measures, including technical aids, aiming to overcome barriers to communication and mobility and enabling access to transport, housing, cultural activities and leisure.

**Article 16 - The right of the family to social, legal and economic protection**

With a view to ensuring the necessary conditions for the full development of the family, which is a fundamental unit of society, the Parties undertake to promote the economic, legal and social protection of family life by such means as social and family benefits, fiscal arrangements, provision of family housing, benefits for the newly married and other appropriate means.

**Article 17 - The right of children and young persons to social, legal and economic protection**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of children and young persons to grow up in an environment which encourages the full development of their personality and of their physical and mental capacities, the Parties undertake, either directly or in co-operation with public and private organisations, to take all appropriate and necessary measures designed:

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  - a to ensure that children and young persons, taking account of the rights and duties of their parents, have the care, the assistance, the education and the training they need, in particular by providing for the establishment or maintenance of institutions and services sufficient and adequate for this purpose;
  - b to protect children and young persons against negligence, violence or exploitation;
  - c to provide protection and special aid from the state for children and young persons temporarily or definitively deprived of their family's support;
- 2 to provide to children and young persons a free primary and secondary education as well as to encourage regular attendance at schools.

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**Article 18 – The right to engage in a gainful occupation in the territory of other Parties**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to engage in a gainful occupation in the territory of any other Party, the Parties undertake:

- 1 to apply existing regulations in a spirit of liberality;
  - 2 to simplify existing formalities and to reduce or abolish chancery dues and other charges payable by foreign workers or their employers;
  - 3 to liberalise, individually or collectively, regulations governing the employment of foreign workers;
- and recognise:
- 4 the right of their nationals to leave the country to engage in a gainful occupation in the territories of the other Parties.

**Article 19 – The right of migrant workers and their families to protection and assistance**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of migrant workers and their families to protection and assistance in the territory of any other Party, the Parties undertake:

- 1 to maintain or to satisfy themselves that there are maintained adequate and free services to assist such workers, particularly in obtaining accurate information, and to take all appropriate steps, so far as national laws and regulations permit, against misleading propaganda relating to emigration and immigration;
- 2 to adopt appropriate measures within their own jurisdiction to facilitate the departure, journey and reception of such workers and their families, and to provide, within their own jurisdiction, appropriate services for health, medical attention and good hygienic conditions during the journey;
- 3 to promote co-operation, as appropriate, between social services, public and private, in emigration and immigration countries;
- 4 to secure for such workers lawfully within their territories, insofar as such matters are regulated by law or regulations or are subject to the control of administrative authorities, treatment not less favourable than that of their own nationals in respect of the following matters:
  - a remuneration and other employment and working conditions;
  - b membership of trade unions and enjoyment of the benefits of collective bargaining;
  - c accommodation;

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- 5 to secure for such workers lawfully within their territories treatment not less favourable than that of their own nationals with regard to employment taxes, dues or contributions payable in respect of employed persons;
- 6 to facilitate as far as possible the reunion of the family of a foreign worker permitted to establish himself in the territory;
- 7 to secure for such workers lawfully within their territories treatment not less favourable than that of their own nationals in respect of legal proceedings relating to matters referred to in this article;
- 8 to secure that such workers lawfully residing within their territories are not expelled unless they endanger national security or offend against public interest or morality;
- 9 to permit, within legal limits, the transfer of such parts of the earnings and savings of such workers as they may desire;
- 10 to extend the protection and assistance provided for in this article to self-employed migrants insofar as such measures apply;
- 11 to promote and facilitate the teaching of the national language of the receiving state or, if there are several, one of these languages, to migrant workers and members of their families;
- 12 to promote and facilitate, as far as practicable, the teaching of the migrant worker's mother tongue to the children of the migrant worker.

**Article 20 – The right to equal opportunities and equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation without discrimination on the grounds of sex**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to equal opportunities and equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation without discrimination on the grounds of sex, the Parties undertake to recognise that right and to take appropriate measures to ensure or promote its application in the following fields:

- a access to employment, protection against dismissal and occupational reintegration;
- b vocational guidance, training, retraining and rehabilitation;
- c terms of employment and working conditions, including remuneration;
- d career development, including promotion.

**Article 21 – The right to information and consultation**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of workers to be informed and consulted within the undertaking, the Parties undertake to adopt or encourage measures enabling workers or their representatives, in accordance with national legislation and practice:

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- a to be informed regularly or at the appropriate time and in a comprehensible way about the economic and financial situation of the undertaking employing them, on the understanding that the disclosure of certain information which could be prejudicial to the undertaking may be refused or subject to confidentiality; and
- b to be consulted in good time on proposed decisions which could substantially affect the interests of workers, particularly on those decisions which could have an important impact on the employment situation in the undertaking.

**Article 22 - The right to take part in the determination and improvement of the working conditions and working environment**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of workers to take part in the determination and improvement of the working conditions and working environment in the undertaking, the Parties undertake to adopt or encourage measures enabling workers or their representatives, in accordance with national legislation and practice, to contribute:

- a to the determination and the improvement of the working conditions, work organisation and working environment;
- b to the protection of health and safety within the undertaking;
- c to the organisation of social and socio-cultural services and facilities within the undertaking;
- d to the supervision of the observance of regulations on these matters.

**Article 23 - The right of elderly persons to social protection**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of elderly persons to social protection, the Parties undertake to adopt or encourage, either directly or in co-operation with public or private organisations, appropriate measures designed in particular:

- to enable elderly persons to remain full members of society for as long as possible, by means of:
  - a adequate resources enabling them to lead a decent life and play an active part in public, social and cultural life;
  - b provision of information about services and facilities available for elderly persons and their opportunities to make use of them;
- to enable elderly persons to choose their life-style freely and to lead independent lives in their familiar surroundings for as long as they wish and are able, by means of:
  - a provision of housing suited to their needs and their state of health or of adequate support for adapting their housing;
  - b the health care and the services necessitated by their state;

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- to guarantee elderly persons living in institutions appropriate support, while respecting their privacy, and participation in decisions concerning living conditions in the institution.

**Article 24 - The right to protection in cases of termination of employment**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of workers to protection in cases of termination of employment, the Parties undertake to recognise:

- a the right of all workers not to have their employment terminated without valid reasons for such termination connected with their capacity or conduct or based on the operational requirements of the undertaking, establishment or service;
- b the right of workers whose employment is terminated without a valid reason to adequate compensation or other appropriate relief.

To this end the Parties undertake to ensure that a worker who considers that his employment has been terminated without a valid reason shall have the right to appeal to an impartial body.

**Article 25 - The right of workers to the protection of their claims in the event of the insolvency of their employer**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of workers to the protection of their claims in the event of the insolvency of their employer, the Parties undertake to provide that workers' claims arising from contracts of employment or employment relationships be guaranteed by a guarantee institution or by any other effective form of protection.

**Article 26 - The right to dignity at work**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of all workers to protection of their dignity at work, the Parties undertake, in consultation with employers' and workers' organisations:

- 1 to promote awareness, information and prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace or in relation to work and to take all appropriate measures to protect workers from such conduct;
- 2 to promote awareness, information and prevention of recurrent reprehensible or distinctly negative and offensive actions directed against individual workers in the workplace or in relation to work and to take all appropriate measures to protect workers from such conduct.

**Article 27 - The right of workers with family responsibilities to equal opportunities and equal treatment**

With a view to ensuring the exercise of the right to equality of opportunity and treatment for men and women workers with family responsibilities and between such workers and other workers, the Parties undertake:

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- 1 to take appropriate measures:
  - a to enable workers with family responsibilities to enter and remain in employment, as well as to re-enter employment after an absence due to those responsibilities, including measures in the field of vocational guidance and training;
  - b to take account of their needs in terms of conditions of employment and social security;
  - c to develop or promote services, public or private, in particular child daycare services and other childcare arrangements;
- 2 to provide a possibility for either parent to obtain, during a period after maternity leave, parental leave to take care of a child, the duration and conditions of which should be determined by national legislation, collective agreements or practice;
- 3 to ensure that family responsibilities shall not, as such, constitute a valid reason for termination of employment.

**Article 28 – The right of workers’ representatives to protection in the undertaking and facilities to be accorded to them**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of workers’ representatives to carry out their functions, the Parties undertake to ensure that in the undertaking:

- a they enjoy effective protection against acts prejudicial to them, including dismissal, based on their status or activities as workers’ representatives within the undertaking;
- b they are afforded such facilities as may be appropriate in order to enable them to carry out their functions promptly and efficiently, account being taken of the industrial relations system of the country and the needs, size and capabilities of the undertaking concerned.

**Article 29 – The right to information and consultation in collective redundancy procedures**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of workers to be informed and consulted in situations of collective redundancies, the Parties undertake to ensure that employers shall inform and consult workers’ representatives, in good time prior to such collective redundancies, on ways and means of avoiding collective redundancies or limiting their occurrence and mitigating their consequences, for example by recourse to accompanying social measures aimed, in particular, at aid for the redeployment or retraining of the workers concerned.

**Article 30 – The right to protection against poverty and social exclusion**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion, the Parties undertake:



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- a to take measures within the framework of an overall and co-ordinated approach to promote the effective access of persons who live or risk living in a situation of social exclusion or poverty, as well as their families, to, in particular, employment, housing, training, education, culture and social and medical assistance;
- b to review these measures with a view to their adaptation if necessary.

#### **Article 31 - The right to housing**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to housing, the Parties undertake to take measures designed:

- 1 to promote access to housing of an adequate standard;
- 2 to prevent and reduce homelessness with a view to its gradual elimination;
- 3 to make the price of housing accessible to those without adequate resources.

### **Part III**

#### **Article A - Undertakings**

- 1 Subject to the provisions of Article B below, each of the Parties undertakes:
  - a to consider Part I of this Charter as a declaration of the aims which it will pursue by all appropriate means, as stated in the introductory paragraph of that part;
  - b to consider itself bound by at least six of the following nine articles of Part II of this Charter: Articles 1, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 16, 19 and 20;
  - c to consider itself bound by an additional number of articles or numbered paragraphs of Part II of the Charter which it may select, provided that the total number of articles or numbered paragraphs by which it is bound is not less than sixteen articles or sixty-three numbered paragraphs.
- 2 The articles or paragraphs selected in accordance with sub-paragraphs b and c of paragraph 1 of this article shall be notified to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe at the time when the instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval is deposited.
- 3 Any Party may, at a later date, declare by notification addressed to the Secretary General that it considers itself bound by any articles or any numbered paragraphs of Part II of the Charter which it has not already accepted under the terms of paragraph 1 of this article. Such undertakings subsequently given shall be deemed to be an integral part of the ratification, acceptance or approval and shall have the same effect as from the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of one month after the date of the notification.
- 4 Each Party shall maintain a system of labour inspection appropriate to national conditions.

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**Article B - Links with the European Social Charter and the 1988 Additional Protocol**

- 1 No Contracting Party to the European Social Charter or Party to the Additional Protocol of 5 May 1988 may ratify, accept or approve this Charter without considering itself bound by at least the provisions corresponding to the provisions of the European Social Charter and, where appropriate, of the Additional Protocol, to which it was bound.
- 2 Acceptance of the obligations of any provision of this Charter shall, from the date of entry into force of those obligations for the Party concerned, result in the corresponding provision of the European Social Charter and, where appropriate, of its Additional Protocol of 1988 ceasing to apply to the Party concerned in the event of that Party being bound by the first of those instruments or by both instruments.

**Part IV****Article C - Supervision of the implementation of the undertakings contained in this Charter**

The implementation of the legal obligations contained in this Charter shall be submitted to the same supervision as the European Social Charter.

**Article D - Collective complaints**

- 1 The provisions of the Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter providing for a system of collective complaints shall apply to the undertakings given in this Charter for the States which have ratified the said Protocol.
- 2 Any State which is not bound by the Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter providing for a system of collective complaints may when depositing its instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval of this Charter or at any time thereafter, declare by notification addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, that it accepts the supervision of its obligations under this Charter following the procedure provided for in the said Protocol.

**Part V****Article E - Non-discrimination**

The enjoyment of the rights set forth in this Charter shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national extraction or social origin, health, association with a national minority, birth or other status.

**Article F - Derogations in time of war or public emergency**

- 1 In time of war or other public emergency threatening the life of the nation any Party may take measures derogating from its obligations under this Charter to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation, provided that such measures are not inconsistent with its other obligations under international law.

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- 2 Any Party which has availed itself of this right of derogation shall, within a reasonable lapse of time, keep the Secretary General of the Council of Europe fully informed of the measures taken and of the reasons therefor. It shall likewise inform the Secretary General when such measures have ceased to operate and the provisions of the Charter which it has accepted are again being fully executed.

#### **Article G - Restrictions**

- 1 The rights and principles set forth in Part I when effectively realised, and their effective exercise as provided for in Part II, shall not be subject to any restrictions or limitations not specified in those parts, except such as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others or for the protection of public interest, national security, public health, or morals.
- 2 The restrictions permitted under this Charter to the rights and obligations set forth herein shall not be applied for any purpose other than that for which they have been prescribed.

#### **Article H - Relations between the Charter and domestic law or international agreements**

The provisions of this Charter shall not prejudice the provisions of domestic law or of any bilateral or multilateral treaties, conventions or agreements which are already in force, or may come into force, under which more favourable treatment would be accorded to the persons protected.

#### **Article I - Implementation of the undertakings given**

- 1 Without prejudice to the methods of implementation foreseen in these articles the relevant provisions of Articles 1 to 31 of Part II of this Charter shall be implemented by:
  - a laws or regulations;
  - b agreements between employers or employers' organisations and workers' organisations;
  - c a combination of those two methods;
  - d other appropriate means.
- 2 Compliance with the undertakings deriving from the provisions of paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 of Article 2, paragraphs 4, 6 and 7 of Article 7, paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 5 of Article 10 and Articles 21 and 22 of Part II of this Charter shall be regarded as effective if the provisions are applied, in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article, to the great majority of the workers concerned.

#### **Article J - Amendments**

- 1 Any amendment to Parts I and II of this Charter with the purpose of extending the rights guaranteed in this Charter as well as any amendment to Parts III to VI, proposed by a Party or by the Governmental Committee, shall be communicated to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and forwarded by the Secretary General to the Parties to this Charter.

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- 2 Any amendment proposed in accordance with the provisions of the preceding paragraph shall be examined by the Governmental Committee which shall submit the text adopted to the Committee of Ministers for approval after consultation with the Parliamentary Assembly. After its approval by the Committee of Ministers this text shall be forwarded to the Parties for acceptance.
- 3 Any amendment to Part I and to Part II of this Charter shall enter into force, in respect of those Parties which have accepted it, on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of one month after the date on which three Parties have informed the Secretary General that they have accepted it.

In respect of any Party which subsequently accepts it, the amendment shall enter into force on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of one month after the date on which that Party has informed the Secretary General of its acceptance.

- 4 Any amendment to Parts III to VI of this Charter shall enter into force on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of one month after the date on which all Parties have informed the Secretary General that they have accepted it.

**Part VI****Article K – Signature, ratification and entry into force**

- 1 This Charter shall be open for signature by the member States of the Council of Europe. It shall be subject to ratification, acceptance or approval. Instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval shall be deposited with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.
- 2 This Charter shall enter into force on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of one month after the date on which three member States of the Council of Europe have expressed their consent to be bound by this Charter in accordance with the preceding paragraph.
- 3 In respect of any member State which subsequently expresses its consent to be bound by this Charter, it shall enter into force on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of one month after the date of the deposit of the instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval.

**Article L – Territorial application**

- 1 This Charter shall apply to the metropolitan territory of each Party. Each signatory may, at the time of signature or of the deposit of its instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval, specify, by declaration addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the territory which shall be considered to be its metropolitan territory for this purpose.
- 2 Any signatory may, at the time of signature or of the deposit of its instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval, or at any time thereafter, declare by notification addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, that the Charter shall extend in whole or in part to a non-metropolitan territory or territories specified in the said declaration for whose international relations it is responsible or for which it assumes international responsibility. It shall specify in the declaration the articles or paragraphs of Part II of the Charter which it accepts as binding in respect of the territories named in the declaration.

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- 3 The Charter shall extend its application to the territory or territories named in the aforesaid declaration as from the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of one month after the date of receipt of the notification of such declaration by the Secretary General.
- 4 Any Party may declare at a later date by notification addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe that, in respect of one or more of the territories to which the Charter has been applied in accordance with paragraph 2 of this article, it accepts as binding any articles or any numbered paragraphs which it has not already accepted in respect of that territory or territories. Such undertakings subsequently given shall be deemed to be an integral part of the original declaration in respect of the territory concerned, and shall have the same effect as from the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of one month after the date of receipt of such notification by the Secretary General.

**Article M - Denunciation**

- 1 Any Party may denounce this Charter only at the end of a period of five years from the date on which the Charter entered into force for it, or at the end of any subsequent period of two years, and in either case after giving six months' notice to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe who shall inform the other Parties accordingly.
- 2 Any Party may, in accordance with the provisions set out in the preceding paragraph, denounce any article or paragraph of Part II of the Charter accepted by it provided that the number of articles or paragraphs by which this Party is bound shall never be less than sixteen in the former case and sixty-three in the latter and that this number of articles or paragraphs shall continue to include the articles selected by the Party among those to which special reference is made in Article A, paragraph 1, sub-paragraph b.
- 3 Any Party may denounce the present Charter or any of the articles or paragraphs of Part II of the Charter under the conditions specified in paragraph 1 of this article in respect of any territory to which the said Charter is applicable, by virtue of a declaration made in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article L.

**Article N - Appendix**

The appendix to this Charter shall form an integral part of it.

**Article O - Notifications**

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe shall notify the member States of the Council and the Director General of the International Labour Office of:

- a any signature;
- b the deposit of any instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval;
- c any date of entry into force of this Charter in accordance with Article K;
- d any declaration made in application of Articles A, paragraphs 2 and 3, D, paragraphs 1 and 2, F, paragraph 2, L, paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4;

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- e any amendment in accordance with Article J;
- f any denunciation in accordance with Article M;
- g any other act, notification or communication relating to this Charter.

In witness whereof, the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto, have signed this revised Charter.

Done at Strasbourg, this 3rd day of May 1996, in English and French, both texts being equally authentic, in a single copy which shall be deposited in the archives of the Council of Europe. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe shall transmit certified copies to each member State of the Council of Europe and to the Director General of the International Labour Office.

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**Appendix to the Revised European Social Charter****Scope of the Revised European Social Charter in terms of persons protected**

- 1 Without prejudice to Article 12, paragraph 4, and Article 13, paragraph 4, the persons covered by Articles 1 to 17 and 20 to 31 include foreigners only in so far as they are nationals of other Parties lawfully resident or working regularly within the territory of the Party concerned, subject to the understanding that these articles are to be interpreted in the light of the provisions of Articles 18 and 19.

This interpretation would not prejudice the extension of similar facilities to other persons by any of the Parties.

- 2 Each Party will grant to refugees as defined in the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, signed in Geneva on 28 July 1951 and in the Protocol of 31 January 1967, and lawfully staying in its territory, treatment as favourable as possible, and in any case not less favourable than under the obligations accepted by the Party under the said convention and under any other existing international instruments applicable to those refugees.
- 3 Each Party will grant to stateless persons as defined in the Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons done in New York on 28 September 1954 and lawfully staying in its territory, treatment as favourable as possible and in any case not less favourable than under the obligations accepted by the Party under the said instrument and under any other existing international instruments applicable to those stateless persons.

**Part I, paragraph 18, and Part II, Article 18, paragraph 1**

It is understood that these provisions are not concerned with the question of entry into the territories of the Parties and do not prejudice the provisions of the European Convention on Establishment, signed in Paris on 13 December 1955.

**Part II****Article 1, paragraph 2**

This provision shall not be interpreted as prohibiting or authorising any union security clause or practice.

**Article 2, paragraph 6**

Parties may provide that this provision shall not apply:

- a to workers having a contract or employment relationship with a total duration not exceeding one month and/or with a working week not exceeding eight hours;
- b where the contract or employment relationship is of a casual and/or specific nature, provided, in these cases, that its non-application is justified by objective considerations.

**Article 3, paragraph 4**

It is understood that for the purposes of this provision the functions, organisation and conditions of operation of these services shall be determined by national laws or regulations, collective agreements or other means appropriate to national conditions.

**Article 4, paragraph 4**

This provision shall be so understood as not to prohibit immediate dismissal for any serious offence.

**Article 4, paragraph 5**

It is understood that a Party may give the undertaking required in this paragraph if the great majority of workers are not permitted to suffer deductions from wages either by law or through collective agreements or arbitration awards, the exceptions being those persons not so covered.

**Article 6, paragraph 4**

It is understood that each Party may, insofar as it is concerned, regulate the exercise of the right to strike by law, provided that any further restriction that this might place on the right can be justified under the terms of Article G.

**Article 7, paragraph 2**

This provision does not prevent Parties from providing in their legislation that young persons not having reached the minimum age laid down may perform work in so far as it is absolutely necessary for their vocational training where such work is carried out in accordance with conditions prescribed by the competent authority and measures are taken to protect the health and safety of these young persons.

**Article 7, paragraph 8**

It is understood that a Party may give the undertaking required in this paragraph if it fulfils the spirit of the undertaking by providing by law that the great majority of persons under eighteen years of age shall not be employed in night work.

**Article 8, paragraph 2**

This provision shall not be interpreted as laying down an absolute prohibition. Exceptions could be made, for instance, in the following cases:

- a if an employed woman has been guilty of misconduct which justifies breaking off the employment relationship;
- b if the undertaking concerned ceases to operate;
- c if the period prescribed in the employment contract has expired.



**Article 12, paragraph 4**

The words “and subject to the conditions laid down in such agreements” in the introduction to this paragraph are taken to imply *inter alia* that with regard to benefits which are available independently of any insurance contribution, a Party may require the completion of a prescribed period of residence before granting such benefits to nationals of other Parties.

**Article 13, paragraph 4**

Governments not Parties to the European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance may ratify the Charter in respect of this paragraph provided that they grant to nationals of other Parties a treatment which is in conformity with the provisions of the said convention.

**Article 16**

It is understood that the protection afforded in this provision covers single-parent families.

**Article 17**

It is understood that this provision covers all persons below the age of 18 years, unless under the law applicable to the child majority is attained earlier, without prejudice to the other specific provisions provided by the Charter, particularly Article 7.

This does not imply an obligation to provide compulsory education up to the above-mentioned age.

**Article 19, paragraph 6**

For the purpose of applying this provision, the term “family of a foreign worker” is understood to mean at least the worker’s spouse and unmarried children, as long as the latter are considered to be minors by the receiving State and are dependent on the migrant worker.

**Article 20**

- 1 It is understood that social security matters, as well as other provisions relating to unemployment benefit, old age benefit and survivor’s benefit, may be excluded from the scope of this article.
- 2 Provisions concerning the protection of women, particularly as regards pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, shall not be deemed to be discrimination as referred to in this article.
- 3 This article shall not prevent the adoption of specific measures aimed at removing *de facto* inequalities.
- 4 Occupational activities which, by reason of their nature or the context in which they are carried out, can be entrusted only to persons of a particular sex may be excluded from the scope of this article or some of its provisions. This provision is not to be interpreted as requiring the Parties to embody in laws or regulations a list of occupations which, by reason of their nature or the context in which they are carried out, may be reserved to persons of a particular sex.

**Articles 21 and 22**

- 1 For the purpose of the application of these articles, the term “workers’ representatives” means persons who are recognised as such under national legislation or practice.
- 2 The terms “national legislation and practice” embrace as the case may be, in addition to laws and regulations, collective agreements, other agreements between employers and workers’ representatives, customs as well as relevant case law.
- 3 For the purpose of the application of these articles, the term “undertaking” is understood as referring to a set of tangible and intangible components, with or without legal personality, formed to produce goods or provide services for financial gain and with power to determine its own market policy.
- 4 It is understood that religious communities and their institutions may be excluded from the application of these articles, even if these institutions are “undertakings” within the meaning of paragraph 3. Establishments pursuing activities which are inspired by certain ideals or guided by certain moral concepts, ideals and concepts which are protected by national legislation, may be excluded from the application of these articles to such an extent as is necessary to protect the orientation of the undertaking.
- 5 It is understood that where in a state the rights set out in these articles are exercised in the various establishments of the undertaking, the Party concerned is to be considered as fulfilling the obligations deriving from these provisions.
- 6 The Parties may exclude from the field of application of these articles, those undertakings employing less than a certain number of workers, to be determined by national legislation or practice.

**Article 22**

- 1 This provision affects neither the powers and obligations of states as regards the adoption of health and safety regulations for workplaces, nor the powers and responsibilities of the bodies in charge of monitoring their application.
- 2 The terms “social and socio-cultural services and facilities” are understood as referring to the social and/or cultural facilities for workers provided by some undertakings such as welfare assistance, sports fields, rooms for nursing mothers, libraries, children’s holiday camps, etc.

**Article 23, paragraph 1**

For the purpose of the application of this paragraph, the term “for as long as possible” refers to the elderly person’s physical, psychological and intellectual capacities.

**Article 24**

- 1 It is understood that for the purposes of this article the terms “termination of employment” and “terminated” mean termination of employment at the initiative of the employer.
- 2 It is understood that this article covers all workers but that a Party may exclude from some or all of its protection the following categories of employed persons:
  - a workers engaged under a contract of employment for a specified period of time or a specified task;
  - b workers undergoing a period of probation or a qualifying period of employment, provided that this is determined in advance and is of a reasonable duration;
  - c workers engaged on a casual basis for a short period.
- 3 For the purpose of this article the following, in particular, shall not constitute valid reasons for termination of employment:
  - a trade union membership or participation in union activities outside working hours, or, with the consent of the employer, within working hours;
  - b seeking office as, acting or having acted in the capacity of a workers’ representative;
  - c the filing of a complaint or the participation in proceedings against an employer involving alleged violation of laws or regulations or recourse to competent administrative authorities;
  - d race, colour, sex, marital status, family responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin;
  - e maternity or parental leave;
  - f temporary absence from work due to illness or injury.
- 4 It is understood that compensation or other appropriate relief in case of termination of employment without valid reasons shall be determined by national laws or regulations, collective agreements or other means appropriate to national conditions.

**Article 25**

- 1 It is understood that the competent national authority may, by way of exemption and after consulting organisations of employers and workers, exclude certain categories of workers from the protection provided in this provision by reason of the special nature of their employment relationship.
- 2 It is understood that the definition of the term “insolvency” must be determined by national law and practice.
- 3 The workers’ claims covered by this provision shall include at least:
  - a the workers’ claims for wages relating to a prescribed period, which shall not be less than three months under a privilege system and eight weeks under a guarantee system, prior to the insolvency or to the termination of employment;
  - b the workers’ claims for holiday pay due as a result of work performed during the year in which the insolvency or the termination of employment occurred;
  - c the workers’ claims for amounts due in respect of other types of paid absence relating to a prescribed period, which shall not be less than three months under a privilege system and eight weeks under a guarantee system, prior to the insolvency or the termination of the employment.
- 4 National laws or regulations may limit the protection of workers’ claims to a prescribed amount, which shall be of a socially acceptable level.

**Article 26**

It is understood that this article does not require that legislation be enacted by the Parties.

It is understood that paragraph 2 does not cover sexual harassment.

**Article 27**

It is understood that this article applies to men and women workers with family responsibilities in relation to their dependent children as well as in relation to other members of their immediate family who clearly need their care or support where such responsibilities restrict their possibilities of preparing for, entering, participating in or advancing in economic activity. The terms “dependent children” and “other members of their immediate family who clearly need their care and support” mean persons defined as such by the national legislation of the Party concerned.

**Articles 28 and 29**

For the purpose of the application of this article, the term “workers’ representatives” means persons who are recognised as such under national legislation or practice.

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**Part III**

It is understood that the Charter contains legal obligations of an international character, the application of which is submitted solely to the supervision provided for in Part IV thereof.

**Article A, paragraph 1**

It is understood that the numbered paragraphs may include articles consisting of only one paragraph.

**Article B, paragraph 2**

For the purpose of paragraph 2 of Article B, the provisions of the revised Charter correspond to the provisions of the Charter with the same article or paragraph number with the exception of:

- a Article 3, paragraph 2, of the revised Charter which corresponds to Article 3, paragraphs 1 and 3, of the Charter;
- b Article 3, paragraph 3, of the revised Charter which corresponds to Article 3, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Charter;
- c Article 10, paragraph 5, of the revised Charter which corresponds to Article 10, paragraph 4, of the Charter;
- d Article 17, paragraph 1, of the revised Charter which corresponds to Article 17 of the Charter.

**Part V****Article E**

A differential treatment based on an objective and reasonable justification shall not be deemed discriminatory.

**Article F**

The terms "in time of war or other public emergency" shall be so understood as to cover also the *threat* of war.

**Article I**

It is understood that workers excluded in accordance with the appendix to Articles 21 and 22 are not taken into account in establishing the number of workers concerned.

**Article J**

The term "amendment" shall be extended so as to cover also the addition of new articles to the Charter.