



# THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS

How can the European Social Charter help to uphold social rights?

## Parliamentary Conference

Friday, 5 December 2025

📍 **Assemblée nationale, 9 rue de Bourgogne, Paris (France)**  
Olympe de Gouges building

Organised by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in cooperation with the Department of Social Rights and the Parliamentary and Electoral Cooperation Division of PACE

9:30 - 10:00 **Opening Session |**  
Social rights as a democratic pillar



**SASKIA KLUIT** Chairperson of the PACE Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

**AOIFE NOLAN** President of the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR)

**PAUL GALLES** Chairperson of the PACE Sub-Committee on the European Social Charter

10:00 - 12:30 **Session 1 |**  
Facing the cost-of-living crisis: the strengths of the European Social Charter?

*This session will provide expert insights into the ad hoc review and show how the Charter's monitoring system can guide debates and reform priorities. It will explore the role of civil society and social partners in the collective complaints procedure, and how parliaments can benefit from engaging with them.*

### THE 2025 AD HOC REVIEW

**AOIFE NOLAN** President of the ECSR

**GEORGE THEODOSIS** Vice-President of the ECSR

**CAROLE NIVARD** Professor at Université de Rouen

10:45-11:00 *Coffee-Break*

### HOW DOES THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER'S MONITORING SYSTEM FUNCTION?

**TATIANA PUIU** Vice-President of the ECSR

**OLIVIER DE SCHUTTER** member of the ECSR

**STEFAN CLAUWAERT** European Trade Union Confederation

### CIVIL SOCIETY, YOUTH, SOCIAL PARTNERS AND COLLECTIVE COMPLAINTS

**PIOTR SADOWSKI** Vice-President of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe

**DEBBIE KOHNER** Secretary General of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI)

**RAREȘ VOICU** President of the European Youth Forum

**EMILIE PROUZET** member of the French Economic, Social and Environmental Council (CESE)

12:30 - 14:00

*Lunch offered by the Council of Europe*

## 14:00 - 16:00 Session 2 |

Parliamentary responses: turning Charter commitments into national action

*In an interactive format, this peer-driven session will enable parliamentarians to exchange practical experiences and explore concrete tools for translating Charter commitments into effective national action.*

### INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND FRAMEWORKS – WHY ALIGNMENT MATTERS?

**OLIVER RÖPKE** President of the European Economic and Social Committee

**KATARINA IVANKOVIC** Director of DG Employment Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission

**OLIVIER DE SCHUTTER** United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights

### HOW DO PARLIAMENTS LEGISLATE, SCRUTINISE AND BUDGET FOR SOCIAL RIGHTS?

**PACE members**

**LI ANDERSSON** Chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament

### HOW DO PARLIAMENTS INTERACT WITH GOVERNMENTS AND THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS?

**AONGUS HORGAN** President of the Governmental Committee

**DASTID KORESHI** Ambassador of Albania and Chair of the Rapporteur Group for Social and Health Questions of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

### HOW CAN PARLIAMENTS GROUND THEIR DECISIONS IN SOLID EVIDENCE AND TRENDS?

**MICHELE CONSOLINI** Research Officer, Social Policies Research Unit, Eurofound

## 16:00 - 16:45 Chartering the way forward and closing round

**PAUL GALLES** Chairperson of the PACE Sub-Committee on the European Social Charter

**GIANLUCA ESPOSITO**, Director General for Human Rights and the Rule of Law



**SALLY BAILEY-RAVET**, Council of Europe



#### **Disclaimer:**

*The programme is subject to modification at the organizer's discretion. Speakers and session formats are provisional and remain subject to confirmation*

# CONCEPT NOTE

## BACKGROUND

In the **Reykjavik Declaration**, European leaders expressed their firm commitment to protecting and implementing fundamental economic and social rights as set out in the revised European Social Charter (Charter). Ensuring that everyone in Europe can enjoy their socioeconomic rights will also help pushback against threats to democracy, making it “stronger, more adaptable and more inclusive” as stated in the Roadmap Towards a **New Democratic Pact for Europe**.

In this context, the **European Pillar of Social Rights** provides a complementary framework, reinforcing the political commitment of EU institutions and member States to social justice in line with the binding standards of the Charter. This approach also resonates with the United Nations **2030 Agenda** and its Sustainable Development Goals, notably in pursuing antipoverty action, securing decent work and ensuring balanced economic development that help reduce inequalities.

In response to the severe socio-economic impacts of the crisis in Europe, the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) – the Charter’s monitoring body – published an **ad hoc review in March 2025 on social rights and the cost-of-living crisis**. The review examines how State Parties addressed social protection, employment, housing, food and energy access, and the rights of vulnerable groups. It explains how the Charter applies to cost-of-living crises and offers recommendations to ensure social rights are protected when essential costs rise faster than average household incomes.

## OBJECTIVES

This conference aims to reinforce the role of parliamentarians in promoting and implementing the Charter and to contribute to the upcoming High-Level Conference on the Charter in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, on 18–19 March 2026.

The conference will focus on four main objectives:

- **Enhancing knowledge of the Charter** and the ECSR Ad Hoc Review recommendations to address socio-economic inequalities.
- **Sharing good practices** from successful Charter-based reforms at the national level.
- **Promoting alignment** between Charter standards, the European Pillar of Social Rights, and the SDGs, including strategies to expand acceptance of Charter provisions and ratify the Collective Complaints Protocol and the Turin Protocol
- **Strengthening parliamentary cooperation** through peer-to-peer exchanges and sharing technical expertise among national parliaments.

By combining knowledge-building, practice-sharing, and cooperation, the conference will reinforce parliamentarians’ capacity to advance social rights across Europe.

## DELIVERABLE

The conference is expected to contribute towards developing a set of **concise and action-oriented parliamentary action toolkit** entitled “Engaging with the European Social Charter: Practical steps for advancing social rights in Europe”.

## PARTICIPANTS

This conference will bring together parliamentarians, including PACE members, members of the European Parliament, national parliamentarians; institutional stakeholders, such as representatives of the ECSR, members of the Governmental Committee of the Charter, the Chair of the Rapporteur Group for Social and Health Questions of the Committee of Ministers, representative(s) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, and national social rights focal points involved in the Charter’s implementation; as well as civil society, social partners, and academics, including the Collaborative Platform on Social and Economic Rights, civil society organisations, social partners, researchers, legal experts, and youth representatives.

## WORKING LANGUAGES

Interpretation will be provided into English and French throughout the conference.