

“Poverty: inequalities and enjoyment of rights”

In an era of increasing populism and of polarization of societies, we must face socio-economic inequalities, both as a source and as a product of populism. Poverty is one of the extremely complex problems of our time, because it is not only about the lack of money, as it leads to several other consequences that go beyond the economical sphere. People who live in poverty tend to suffer from other problems, such as health problems, are also often excluded from enjoying their rights to the fullest extent, and tend to not feel truly part of their society. On top of that, poverty tends to perpetuate itself passing from generation to generation, creating a cycle of poverty.

Numerous political documents have addressed the topic of poverty (the Common declaration of the four pillars “Acting together to eradicate extreme poverty in Europe”, and the Sustainable Development Goals are just a few), but much has to be done still. Specially, in this time of societal changes and increasing inequalities. Additionally, despite not being in extreme poverty, we must also keep in mind the increasing number of people that still live in poverty, sometimes due to the lack of decent work and pay. We must leave no one behind.

Due to this complexity, the Human Rights Committee proposes to address the overall topic of poverty in a transversal working group, with the active contribution from the other Thematic Committees, and its current Working Groups, while also having in mind the 3 axis of the INGO Conference: gender, youth, and migration, that are particularly relevant in this topic. We also intend this Working Group to work across the continuum of monitoring and action, so that we are able to understand and share at the european level what is happening at the local level, while also being able to act and stimulate action in this field. We propose the Working Group to work in an holistic approach to:

- Increase the enjoyment of social rights in Europe: One of the most important treaties on poverty is the Social Charter, since the true enjoyment of social rights would protect people and allow them to overcome poverty in many cases. As such, it is important to raise awareness about the political opportunities associated with it, while at the same time making use of them, in a strategic way. For example, by working in line with the cycles of the European Committee of Social Rights.

- Advocate for the access to adequate education as a tool for breaking systemic poverty: it is well documented that education is one of the ways out of poverty. As such, it is of uttermost importance to assure that adequate education is provided to all, in the different stages of life, as necessary. Additionally, greater focus should be provided to awareness of rights, civic participation, financial literacy and critical thinking.

- Contribute to overcoming social and cultural exclusion: Even though it is important to act for people experiencing poverty, it is equally important to act with them, empowering them, thus recognizing the dignity of every human being as a valuable actor in society. Only in this way will we be able to contribute to a better inclusion process, so that they can express themselves with dignity, transmit their practical knowledge, and feel part of society, wherever they might be.

Products:

Document submitted to the European Committee of Social Rights with relevant local information every time that it might be relevant: By making use of the assessments of the European Committee of Social Rights, a consultation of all INGOs should be held to reach the local level, raising awareness to this process and providing the Working Group with facts and best practises that might be used to push for action at the european level.

Online hub for the work done on the topic of poverty, by January 2020: Due to the complexity of this topic, the vast amount of work already produced by the Conference of INGOs and other institutions, there is a need for simplification and allowing new interested people in the field to be able to easily understand what is of greater relevance. Particularly, a toolbox of good practises would be ideal to have. This

hub would also allow greater communication and collaboration among the NGOs that work in the field, at all levels (local, national and european).

Celebration of the 17th October every year till 2020: Having in mind the continuation of the work done by many INGOs on this day, we propose to keep the tradition. However, there should be an effort to try new approaches to the celebration as well as to link it with the publication of products from the Working Group.