

Council of Europe
Conseil de l'Europe



European Commission
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***SEMINAR AND CONFERENCE
SHARED SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
securing trust and sustainable social cohesion in a context of transition
28 February 2011 - 1st March 2011***

Introduction

The purpose of this event, organised jointly by the Council of Europe and the European Commission, is to confirm social cohesion as an objective for Europe. By calling for shared social responsibility - the key principle of the Council of Europe's Revised Social Cohesion Strategy and the European Union's European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion - our institutions are seeking to ensure a better understanding and awareness of the strong interdependencies linking stakeholders and citizens.

Shared social responsibilities is not a denial of specific responsibilities, but rather the link between them in terms of the joint commitments to be taken in addressing the challenges of today: the fight against poverty, social, environmental and intergenerational justice, the preservation of universal rights and democratic institutions, harmonious co-existence in pluralist societies.

Shared social responsibility requires us to revitalise the strong values on which Europe is based, to take stock of what has been achieved and identify the shortcomings in dealing with the new requirements of regulation and social balance, which call for innovative institutional and organisational solutions. To this end, it is imperative to acknowledge that "everyone" - stakeholders at all levels and citizens alike - has his or her rightful part to play.

Shared social responsibility requires reciprocity in order to reduce uncertainty over the future. It seeks to find a new consensus on the priority to be given to the practical implementation of fundamental rights and the protection of common goods - material and non-material - which are a source of full development for present generations and constitute the assets of future generations.

The substance of a future European Charter of Shared Social Responsibilities will be discussed on 28 February. The value of this concept for securing social cohesion will be analysed on 1 March, with the contribution of senior European civil servants and scientific and political analysts. The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, and the prospects opened up by the European Union's strategy 2020 and by the Council of Europe's Social Cohesion Plan will be presented at this conference.

The aim of the discussions at this conference is to help strengthen our capacity for action to preserve our values, enhance citizens' confidence in our democratic institutions and put forward ways of achieving consensus and promoting the collective competencies which are indispensable for asserting the attractiveness of Europe in our radically changing world.