

## Resolution 1800 (2011)<sup>1</sup>

# Combating poverty

### Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly stresses the importance of safeguarding the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people, regardless of their economic situation.
2. The Assembly deplores the alarming increase in poverty in Europe in recent years, due, *inter alia*, to the economic crisis brought on by the financial crisis, new redistribution policies that disadvantage the poor in many countries, and massive cuts in social services.
3. Poverty is a barrier to exercising human rights, whether they be political, civil, social, economic or cultural. The Assembly therefore fully endorses the principle according to which everyone has the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion.
4. Poverty, which creates and leads to a lack of access to human rights, can only be eliminated if poverty reduction strategies are based on these rights. The Council of Europe is thus a major actor in combating poverty, as it provides the most effective human rights protection mechanisms in Europe.
5. Referring to its [Resolution 1558 \(2007\)](#) on the feminisation of poverty, the Assembly recalls that women are more affected by poverty than men and that their poverty is more extreme than that of men. Tackling the root causes of women's poverty, namely de facto gender inequality and discrimination, is not only a human rights obligation, but also a way to make full use of women's economic potential and their contribution to economic growth.
6. The Assembly calls upon member states to:
  - 6.1. commit to ending poverty: after having committed to ending poverty by 2015 through the Millennium Development Goals, the moment has come to commit to ending child poverty and extreme poverty by 2025;
  - 6.2. take action to combat the poverty of women and adopt a gender-specific perspective as a key component of all policies and national programmes to eradicate poverty and combat social exclusion;
  - 6.3. make the voice of people living in poverty heard: consider developing new forms of governance and participation to bring together and empower people and communities affected by poverty, and promote social inclusion for all;
  - 6.4. ensure that poverty reduction strategies are based on principles of human rights, securing, in particular, access to and full enjoyment of individual and community social rights by people and communities affected by poverty;
  - 6.5. adopt a plan of action that sets, in particular, specific, quantified goals;
  - 6.6. strengthen international assistance and co-operation aimed at reducing poverty, in particular through the Council of Europe standard-setting mechanisms in the field of social security;

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1. Assembly debate on 12 April 2011 (13th Sitting) (see [Doc. 12555](#), report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Volonté; and [Doc. 12577](#), opinion of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, rapporteur: Mrs Ferić-Vac). Text adopted by the Assembly on 12 April 2011 (13th Sitting). See also Recommendation 1963 (2011).



- 6.7. promote investment in human capital, business capital, infrastructure, in particular of poor areas, natural capital, public institutional capital, and knowledge capital, as there is no security and development without investment;
  - 6.8. increase investment in early childhood development, education and schooling, with a view to raising the level of qualification of young people leaving the education system and reducing the school drop-out rate;
  - 6.9. take measures to enable, in particular, full access to employment opportunities, adequate medical assistance and housing, without discrimination;
  - 6.10. secure the right to fair remuneration through the provision of an adequate minimum wage, recognising the right of workers to a remuneration that gives them and their families a decent standard of living;
  - 6.11. provide minimum-income guarantees to ensure the social inclusion of people for whom employment is not an option or who do not have the capacity to work;
  - 6.12. ensure that strategies and actions meet the needs of those affected by poverty, prevent people from falling into poverty by providing them with support in critical situations, and assist those who are in poverty to recover;
  - 6.13. adopt a multi-stakeholder approach to tackling poverty-related issues, taking due account of the responsibilities of those involved: trade unions, businesses, financial institutions, public governing bodies, and in particular central, regional and local governments, civil society, etc.;
  - 6.14. contribute to the development of science in order to find new solutions, to disseminate good practices and to address the unmet needs of people living in poverty;
  - 6.15. contribute to strengthening social cohesion through volunteering as an additional means to combat poverty;
  - 6.16. prevent the intergenerational transmission of poverty, in particular through the promotion of intergenerational solidarity and family cohesion. The dissolution of the family is one of the main causes of poverty and the strengthening of family ties is a significant part of integrated policies to combat poverty. Particular attention needs to be paid to large families because children from these families are very often poor;
  - 6.17. adopt a positive attitude, with the aim of promoting prosperity and improving well-being for all.
7. The European Social Charter (revised) (ETS No. 163) is the most advanced human rights protection instrument that includes protection against poverty among its provisions. Article 30 on the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion should therefore become one of the core provisions of the European Social Charter (revised), under Article A, paragraph 1.b, and all Council of Europe member states should agree to be bound by this provision. Countries should aim for the ratification and implementation of the European Social Charter (revised) in its entirety.
8. The Assembly strongly supports the Principles and Guidelines for a Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies proposed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) and invites member states to duly take into account the guidelines in their public policy making and relevant budgetary decisions.
9. The Assembly welcomes the establishment by the European Union of the “European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion”, and stresses the importance of strengthening co-operation with the European Union in this field.
10. The Assembly invites national parliaments to further promote the signature, ratification and implementation of the Council of Europe social rights protection instruments, namely the European Social Charter (revised) and protocols thereto, the European Convention on Social Security (ETS No. 78), the Supplementary Agreement for the Application thereof (ETS No. 78A), and its Protocol (ETS No. 154), and the European Code of Social Security (revised) (ETS No. 139).
11. The Assembly invites its members to raise public awareness of the benefits of social inclusion and the need to combat poverty by promoting a more positive attitude towards people in poverty and avoiding their stigmatisation.

12. The Assembly stresses the need to regularly monitor the effectiveness of measures taken, including through topical Parliamentary Assembly debates and the effective use of monitoring mechanisms provided in the Council of Europe conventions and other legal instruments, to combat poverty and promote prosperity and social cohesion.

13. In the framework of the biennial Assembly debates on human and social rights, the Assembly decides to return to the question of combating poverty in 2013, monitoring the progress made in this field.