



Resolution 1993 (2014)¹

Final version

Decent work for all

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Work is an essential aspect of human life. It underpins individual and collective well-being by providing a source of subsistence, development, self-accomplishment and social inclusion. International and European human rights law lays down obligations for States to achieve the full realisation of the right to work and to protect rights at work. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the European Committee on Social Rights of the Council of Europe also insist on the need to respect a full range of labour-related rights which make work decent and accessible for all. Decent work hence refers to productive employment in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

2. Across Europe, public anxiety keeps growing about the erosion of labour rights, job security and quality employment prospects, notably for young people and migrants. Protracted economic stagnation, market deregulation and austerity in developed countries have destroyed more jobs than new ones have been created, and in-work precariousness has sprawled. This contrasts with the dynamism in developing countries, which are making quick gains in competitiveness and living standards, but lag behind on labour rights. Global and intra-European asymmetries underlie a “race to the bottom” on salaries, social protection and employment conditions, thereby exacerbating inequalities and leading to social dumping. Youth unemployment rates in some member States are extremely high and reflect the difficulties faced by young people in finding jobs. The high number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) poses a threat for social cohesion.

3. Building an inclusive and prosperous society through decent work requires global solutions. The Parliamentary Assembly reiterates the importance of international co-operation and broader solidarity between richer and poorer States, not least towards promoting decent work under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the new sustainable development framework beyond 2015. European countries must work together to anchor human rights and decent work strategies more explicitly in the multilateral trade system and bilateral trade and investment agreements.

4. Council of Europe member States must also strengthen the implementation of the European Social Charter (ETS No. 35 and ETS No. 163). This instrument complements the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5) regarding social and economic rights by linking labour-related norms with legal and social protection, just employment conditions and free movement of persons. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union already refers explicitly to the European Social Charter. However, further steps are needed to improve the consistency of national measures for fulfilling international commitments and harmonising European social standards.

5. Only a healthy and safe working environment enables working people to realise their full potential. The Assembly considers that governments can make no concessions on occupational safety levels and must ensure that these are thoroughly respected by all employers. It moreover stresses the need for better enforcement of a ban on child labour for those under the age of 15, as stipulated in the European Social Charter. Regular labour inspections are crucial in this respect and need adequate resources at all times so as to play their role fully.

1. *Assembly debate* on 10 April 2014 (17th Sitting) (see [Doc. 13456](#), report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Mr Roel Deseyn). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 10 April 2014 (17th Sitting).



6. Solidarity action to improve social safety nets, re-skilling and the mobility of workers is no longer the exclusive responsibility of governments. Modernising a social contract in society requires a stronger partnership with the private sector and civil society to uphold the Decent Work Agenda. The Assembly calls for the strengthening of corporate social responsibility and ethics, in particular concerning the relationship of businesses with sub-contractors and their sourcing policies in third countries where the risks of exploitation of workers are substantial.

7. With a view to preserving social peace and justice through “more and better jobs”, the Assembly recommends that member States:

- 7.1. consolidate national strategies for securing decent work conditions for their entire population and promote intra-European convergence in this area;
- 7.2. ensure that work-related rights, conditions and protection, as well as binding social and environmental clauses with accompanying control mechanisms, are systematically built into bilateral and multilateral free trade and investment agreements and into the new sustainable development framework replacing MDGs after 2015;
- 7.3. guarantee coherent implementation of global core labour norms and relevant provisions of the European Social Charter, in particular those concerning freedom of association and collective bargaining, fair remuneration and social coverage, non-discrimination and employment services, protection of minors and a healthy and safe work environment;
- 7.4. adhere to the European Social Charter's collective complaints procedure, if they have not yet done so;
- 7.5. use contacts with employers' associations and trade unions with a view to enhancing corporate commitments to social dialogue; job creation, preservation and sharing; adequate remuneration of capital and labour; healthy workplace organisation and skills development;
- 7.6. ensure a level playing field for small, medium and large enterprises, promote fair competition through national taxation instruments and reinforce measures against tax avoidance;
- 7.7. secure a national living wage and social protection floors at a level that corresponds to domestic development needs;
- 7.8. facilitate the mission of labour inspectorates and dialogue between social partners to tackle irregular employment and abuses in working conditions (notably as regards minimum and maximum working hours, workplace safety and special protection for vulnerable population groups);
- 7.9. use the funding and project opportunities available through the Council of Europe Development Bank for targeted support to improve employment offers for young people, minorities and the disabled;
- 7.10. put in place new communication channels (including social media and networks) for reporting abuses of labour norms to public authorities;
- 7.11. provide for safeguards and tough sanctions against irregular employment and improve contractual social guarantees for posted, young, migrant and domestic workers;
- 7.12. eliminate the pay gap between women and men;
- 7.13. address effectively youth unemployment and especially the NEET category, by making interventions in the labour market and education through training and employment programmes.