



Resolution 2180 (2017)¹

The “Turin process”: reinforcing social rights in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Social rights are fundamental human rights. Only the enjoyment of socio-economic rights and social inclusion allows people to fully exercise their civil and political rights. In Europe, many benefit from social rights guarantees at respectable levels, and protection through strong legal instruments and mechanisms, but too many still remain trapped in cycles of disadvantage and poverty. Moreover, an overall trend towards downgrading social rights guarantees can be observed across Council of Europe member States and the inequality gap between the rich and the poor is widening in terms of income and wealth.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly stresses that a healthy democracy is inextricably linked to economic, educational and social policies; these should respond to the needs of the people and aim to reduce social inequalities that breed political disaffection, distrust and resentment against the political establishment and that lead to populism and sometimes violent reactions.

3. In the light of this evident need for action, the Assembly is concerned about the current level of compliance with major European social rights standards such as the European Social Charter (revised) (ETS No. 163) and its protocols. It considers that the potential of this social rights instrument and its related mechanisms is not being fully exploited, in particular because of the ratifications still pending from several member States.

4. The Assembly is also concerned about a lack of coherence between the legal systems and case law related to different European organisations, in particular the Council of Europe and the European Union, which has the capacity to undermine the effectiveness of the respective instruments. Thus, decisions by the Court of Justice of the European Union do not always fully take into consideration Council of Europe standards. Moreover, the collective complaints mechanism linked to the European Social Charter treaty system clearly needs to be strengthened and to receive wider support from Council of Europe member States, including European Union member States.

5. The Assembly has always promoted the European Social Charter (revised) as the most comprehensive social rights standard in Europe. It will continue to do so in close co-operation with other Council of Europe bodies, in particular the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR). It also commits to stepping up dialogue and co-operation with the European Parliament and other European bodies, such as the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC). The Assembly firmly intends to further strengthen the dialogue between national delegations and parliaments initiated through the “Turin Process” for the European Social Charter, which was launched by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe in October 2014 as a political process aimed at reinforcing the normative system of the European Social Charter and at improving the implementation of social and economic rights.

1. *Assembly debate* on 30 June 2017 (27th Sitting) (see [Doc. 14343](#), report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Ms Sílvia Eloïsa Bonet; and [Doc. 14370](#), opinion of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr Jordi Xuclà). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 30 June 2017 (27th Sitting).

See also [Recommendation 2112 \(2017\)](#).



6. Beyond the Turin Process at Council of Europe level and the European Pillar of Social Rights as an expression of political commitment within the European Union, the ambitious objectives of a future, comprehensive and sustainable “European strategy of social rights” should be equal opportunities for all, social cohesion and less income inequality including for the most vulnerable groups, in order to preserve European democracies and the overall peace that Europe has known for several decades.

7. The Assembly thus calls on Council of Europe member States to support, through their governments and parliaments, debates and co-operation launched under the Turin Process and to proceed as follows:

- 7.1. contribute to strengthening the European Social Charter as a normative system by:
 - 7.1.1. reaffirming the principles of the indivisibility and interdependence of human rights in the public discourse and in legislative and policy papers;
 - 7.1.2. in the case of the 13 member States which have not yet done so, ratifying the European Social Charter (revised), to improve levels of compliance with this major social rights standard;
 - 7.1.3. in the case of the four countries which have not yet done so (Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom), ratifying the Protocol amending the European Social Charter (ETS No. 142, “Turin Protocol”) to allow for the election of ECSR members by the Assembly, as already requested in [Recommendation 1976 \(2011\)](#) on the role of parliaments in the consolidation and development of social rights in Europe;
 - 7.1.4. in the case of the member States which have not yet done so, ratifying the Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter Providing for a System of Collective Complaints (ETS No. 158), in order to ensure more effective monitoring of social rights compliance;
 - 7.1.5. participating actively in the parliamentary activities aimed at promoting the European Social Charter treaty system and at enhancing its implementation, which are regularly organised by the Assembly in co-operation with other Council of Europe bodies, notably the ECSR, and providing voluntary contributions to this end;
- 7.2. strengthen the pan-European dialogue on social rights and the co-ordination of legal and political action with other European institutions, notably the European Union and its bodies, by:
 - 7.2.1. stimulating and actively participating in regular exchanges between specific committees of the Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament;
 - 7.2.2. promoting the formal incorporation of provisions of the European Social Charter (revised) into the European Pillar of Social Rights as a common benchmark, and the consideration of rights guaranteed by the Charter in the subsequent implementation process by member States of the European Union;
 - 7.2.3. promoting and supporting a pan-European “parliamentary dialogue on social rights” to bring together European parliamentary bodies and national parliaments for regular debates with other partners (including governments and civil society), and possibly organising a high-level conference on social rights in Europe;
 - 7.2.4. based on existing European normative systems, notably the European Social Charter (revised) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, promoting the development of a European strategy of social rights and related indicators;
- 7.3. improve compliance with the highest social rights standards at the national level, by:
 - 7.3.1. regularly checking the conformity of national policies with the priorities identified by political processes at the European level, including the Turin Process, the European Pillar of Social Rights and the relevant resolutions of the Assembly;
 - 7.3.2. based on various European standards and recommendations, developing targeted national strategies to address specific but complex socio-economic challenges, such as equal opportunities for all (including by improving rates of youth employment and female participation in the labour market), social cohesion and more income equality (thus preventing cycles of disadvantage and reducing child poverty), including for the most vulnerable groups.