



Resolution 2257 (2019)¹

Discrimination in access to employment

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The right to work is a fundamental right, guaranteed by many international instruments on the protection of fundamental rights, including the European Social Charter (revised) (ETS No. 163). Access to the labour market can, moreover, be a very powerful factor of integration and social cohesion.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly notes with concern that in a large number of European countries, developments in the labour market and the rise in job insecurity are making it increasingly difficult for individuals to have access to long-term employment. As a result, many people find themselves seeking a job more and more often and for longer and longer periods of time.

3. The Assembly is also concerned that for some people these problems are compounded by discrimination based on grounds such as their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, national, ethnic or social origin, belonging to a national or ethnic minority, colour, language, family name, religion, political opinions, trade union activities, pregnancy, disability, state of health or physical appearance or any other real or supposed situation.

4. Discrimination can have dramatic consequences and can irreversibly impact the victims' career path, prompting them to give up on an occupation linked to their qualifications or to leave their country to find a better job abroad. For States, this represents not only a waste of human resources but also an economic burden and highlights the urgent need to take action to step up the fight against discrimination in access to employment.

5. The Assembly has already made a number of recommendations to member States of the Council of Europe aimed at remedying the structural inequalities affecting certain groups within our societies who find it harder than others to access employment or who are more subject to discrimination in this field. Several recent resolutions address these issues, such as [Resolution 2235 \(2018\)](#) on empowering women in the economy, [Resolution 2153 \(2017\)](#) on promoting the inclusion of Roma and Travellers, [Resolution 2039 \(2015\)](#) on equality and inclusion for people with disabilities, [Resolution 1958 \(2013\)](#) on combating discrimination against older persons on the labour market, [Resolution 2014 \(2014\)](#) on raising the status of vocational education and training, and [Resolution 1993 \(2014\)](#) on decent work for all.

6. In order to combat discrimination in access to employment effectively, States must take both general measures to promote access to employment for groups that are disadvantaged in this field and measures to encourage employers, both public and private, to eliminate all forms of discrimination in their recruitment procedures. These measures must also take account of the increasing role played by artificial intelligence, based on algorithms, in the shortlisting of applicants used in large and medium-sized enterprises and in the civil service.

7. In the light of the foregoing, the Assembly calls on Council of Europe member and observer States and States whose parliaments enjoy observer or partner for democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly to:

7.1. in order to identify the most urgent measures, collect data regularly on access to employment, broken down according to as wide a range of grounds of discrimination as possible, and at least according to all the grounds recognised at national level;

1. *Assembly debate* on 23 January 2019 (6th Sitting) (see [Doc. 14666](#), report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Mr Damien Thiéry). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 23 January 2019 (6th Sitting).



- 7.2. ensure that anti-discrimination law is complete, covering all grounds of discrimination, and includes accessible and effective legal remedies for people who are victims of discrimination in access to employment;
- 7.3. adopt an integrated policy designed to promote access to employment for disadvantaged groups in this area, and in this context to:
 - 7.3.1. promote access to education and training for members of disadvantaged groups in the field of employment;
 - 7.3.2. take effective measures to help the long-term unemployed to return to work;
 - 7.3.3. help people learn the official language or languages of the country or region in which they reside;
 - 7.3.4. bearing in mind that employers have the same prejudices as the general public, combat these prejudices and the stereotypes that prevail among the population;
- 7.4. take measures to actively encourage employers to identify and bring to a halt all discrimination in their recruitment procedures and, to this end, to:
 - 7.4.1. make it compulsory for large and medium-sized enterprises to use anonymous CVs, and encourage them to use standardised application forms and design all algorithms used in these procedures in such a way as to eliminate any risk of discrimination;
 - 7.4.2. promote optional unconscious bias training and the establishment of standardised interviews;
 - 7.4.3. promote the introduction by public and private companies of in-house diversity auditing;
 - 7.4.4. support various measures liable to have an indirect positive impact on access to employment for people who are disadvantaged in this field, such as recruitment grants, deploying employment mediators or creating diversity labels, and carry out regular evaluations of the effectiveness of these measures;
 - 7.4.5. introduce a legal obligation for public-sector employers to promote diversity;
 - 7.4.6. support voluntary initiatives by public and private companies to promote in-house diversity and convey positive messages about diversity in society, placing particular emphasis on initiatives which incorporate regular reporting on the results obtained.
- 7.5. with regard to the Council of Europe member States, ratify the European Social Charter (revised) and the Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter providing for a system of collective complaints (ETS No. 158), if they have not already done so.