Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 2610 (2025)[1]

Social mobilisation, social unrest and police reaction in Council of Europe member States: is there a need for a new social contract?

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its Resolution 2364 (2021) "Ethnic profiling in Europe: a matter of great concern", its Resolution 2435 (2022) and Recommendation 2230 (2022) "Fighting and preventing excessive and unjustified use of force by law-enforcement officers", its Resolution 2552 (2024) "Strengthening democracy through participatory and deliberative processes" and its Resolution 2553 (2024) "Strengthening the youth perspective in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly".

2. It also refers to Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on deliberative democracy and the Roadmap towards a new democratic pact for Europe – Building a resilient, inclusive and agile democracy, presented by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe at the 134th Session of the Committee of Ministers (Luxembourg, 13-14 May 2025).

3. The Assembly stresses that member States need to be innovative in their approaches in order to restore meaning and vitality to the democratic fabric of society, by strengthening the role of parliament and making participatory and deliberative democracy self-evident, and public debate a living force.

4. The feeling of having a say in essential decisions that affect them is a key component of the people's trust in institutions and democracy, and an in-depth dialogue between different political persuasions in disagreement on social issues can lead to broad compromises that help reduce social tensions.

5. A democracy based on open public debate, which fully integrates the voices of young people and adopts horizontal governance models, provides a safeguard against overly top-down, managerial and procedural approaches to public decision making.

6. The Assembly observes that social mobilisation is an essential element of democratic vitality and a bulwark against political disengagement, often identified as one of the main causes of the democratic deficit in contemporary societies. It believes that a relationship built on respect and trust between institutions and young people is a clear indicator of a vibrant and responsive democracy.

7. The growing complexity and difficulty of the tasks entrusted to law-enforcement authorities, as well as the daily commitment of their officers to ensuring the protection of people and property, deserve recognition from the authorities, and from society as a whole, commensurate with the responsibilities they bear.

8. The rapid evolution of the societal, technological and legal contexts necessitates a constant renewal of the professional skills of law-enforcement officers with a view to ensuring that their policies, guidelines and responses are effective, well-tailored to the situations encountered and respectful of the expectations and rights of all groups in society.

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1. *Assembly debate* on 25 June 2025 (24th sitting) (see Doc. 16191, report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Mr Pierre-Alain Fridez). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 25 June 2025 (24th sitting).

9. The Assembly considers that placing dialogue and mediation at the heart of law-enforcement management, developing strategies that do not pit law-enforcement authorities against demonstrators and limiting the use of intermediate weapons to a strict minimum provide a good framework to preserve the democratic nature of the right to protest and prevent the escalation of violence.

10. Law-enforcement authorities gain in legitimacy when they favour a preventive approach based on knowledge of local realities and consideration of any potential biases which might influence the approach taken, thus going beyond purely quantitative indicators.

11. Law-enforcement identity checks perceived as discriminatory, combined with the scaling down of community policing mechanisms, may contribute to a loss of trust in institutions among young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, making it difficult to build a relationship of trust.

12. In view of these elements, the Assembly calls on the member States of the Council of Europe which have not yet done so to:

12.1. draw inspiration from approaches based on a political culture of consensus, which promote inclusive debate in public policy making;

12.2. institutionalise forms of participatory democracy as a complement to traditional representative mechanisms, while ensuring that intermediary bodies play a central role;

12.3. adopt an approach to policing as a public service engaged in a continuously evolving relationship with the public, based on trust, accountability and the ability to question itself;

12.4. place listening, respect, communication and availability at the heart of law-enforcement authorities' activity and prevent delinquency at the grassroots level by getting to know local residents and local issues;

12.5. establish or reinforce a community-based police presence aimed at building a relationship of trust with local residents, particularly in disadvantaged neighbourhoods;

12.6. make long-term investments in the continuing training and equipment of law-enforcement officers to enable them to carry out their duties under the best possible conditions, in order to maintain security and social cohesion;

12.7. include in law-enforcement officers' training mandatory modules on cognitive and discriminatory biases, crowd management and the principles of procedural justice;

12.8. combat all forms of profiling, including ethnic profiling, during identity checks and implement an effective system for tracking and monitoring these checks in order to prevent any discriminatory practices, even if unintentional;

12.9. actively promote the right to protest in a democratic framework by prioritising de-escalation as the guiding principle in the management of demonstrations, rather than preventive arrests, prevention strategies and any repressive approach, and by strengthening dialogue and mediation before, during and after demonstrations;

12.10. reconsider the use of intermediate weapons in the context of maintaining order during demonstrations, reserving their use for specialised and properly trained units, and initiate a review of a possible total ban on the use of defence ball launchers in maintaining order.