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European guidelines to counter social dumping and labour exploitation

Reply to Recommendation[1]: Recommendation 2307 (2026)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully considered Recommendation 2307 (2026) of the Parliamentary Assembly "European guidelines to counter social dumping and labour exploitation" which it transmitted to the European Committee of Social Rights (ESCR), the Governmental Committee of the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security (GC), and to the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH), for information and possible comments. It welcomes the Parliamentary Assembly's continued and detailed engagement with the European Social Charter as the foundational instrument for the protection of social rights in Europe, including rights of workers, particularly the most vulnerable.

2. The Committee of Ministers acknowledges the Assembly's emphasis on the importance of the Charter, including both its original and revised versions, as a comprehensive framework guiding the national efforts of member States in the fight against social dumping and labour exploitation. Next to the specific instruments and standards of the Council of Europe, particularly the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, the Charter sets benchmarks for national legal and regulatory frameworks in prohibiting forced labour and exploitation, protecting victims, and ensuring fair and just conditions of work, including reasonable working hours and adequate remuneration.

3. The Committee of Ministers, in accordance with the provisions of the Declaration adopted at the High-Level Conference on Social Rights in Chişinău, reaffirms its full commitment to the protection and implementation of social rights, while keeping under review the possibilities for accepting further provisions. In this respect, the Committee of Ministers recalls the CDDH report identifying good practices and proposing measures to improve social rights, which concluded that wide ratification of the Revised Charter and acceptance of its additional core provisions, notably the collective complaints procedure, would considerably strengthen the impact and practical effect of the Charter treaty system. In this context, it further draws attention to the Declaration adopted at the High-Level Conference on Social Rights (Chişinău, 2026), encouraging all member States to consider ratifying the Revised Charter and the 1995 Additional Protocol on collective complaints. Therefore, the Committee of Ministers will continue to encourage member States to actively consider ratifying the Revised Charter, accepting additional provisions, and adopting the collective complaints procedure, and maintain engagement with relevant bodies to identify avenues for enhanced collaboration and implementation.

4. The Committee of Ministers draws the attention of national governments to the recommendations for action contained in Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2653 (2026). These recommendations are valuable for guiding efforts to counteract social dumping and exploitation and should be interpreted in light of relevant treaty obligations and established European standards.

1. Adopted at the 1572nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (14 October 2026).

5. The Committee of Ministers notes the Assembly's call to accelerate negotiations for an international, legally binding instrument grounded in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Member States are encouraged, as appropriate, to actively support this process and to ensure that the standards applying to socio-economic rights – including those established at European level, and in particular in the European Social Charter – are duly taken into account in future negotiations and instruments.

6. The Committee of Ministers notes the important role of national courts and institutions in protecting social rights, and encourages that international commitments and standards, including those of the Charter and of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, be given due regard in judicial and administrative practice.

7. Finally, the Committee of Ministers affirms its commitment to the promotion and protection of social rights across Europe and to supporting co-ordinated national and international efforts to counter social dumping and labour exploitation. In this context, it encourages member States to give due consideration to constructively engaging with the proposals of the Parliamentary Assembly.