
Council of Europe: social rights report. Devastating effects of Covid-19 on the elderly. Insufficient measures against poverty

There is little progress on social security. This is according to a report released in Strasbourg today by the Council of Europe's European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR). The report shows that the poverty rate is still too high. "Inadequate minimum level of income-replacement benefits is still the main ground of non-conformity" with the Social Charter. "The minimum levels of unemployment, sickness and disability benefits in many countries fall below 40% of median equivalised income", the ECSR reports. Moreover, "in many cases the level of social assistance paid to a single person without resources remains below the poverty threshold". In addition, "excessive length of residence requirements often prevents lawfully resident foreigners from accessing social and medical assistance". In many States, older persons lack adequate resources enabling them to lead a decent life and play an active role in the community. The Committee also notes the devastating effects of Covid-19 on older persons, stressing the "importance of moving away from institutionalisation towards community-based care and independent living for older persons". The measures taken to combat poverty have been insufficient and "the situation has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic". The ECSR, however, welcomes the adoption in some countries of various measures to strengthen health and safety at work, access to healthcare for the homeless and health education in schools.

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