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**STEERING COMMITTEE ON  
THE MEDIA AND NEW COMMUNICATION SERVICES**

**(CDMC)**

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**Comments by the Steering Committee on the Media and New Communication Services  
(CDMC) on Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1963 (2011)  
on combating poverty**

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1. The CDMC welcomes the Recommendation 1963 (2011) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on Combating Poverty and shares the opinion that the Council of Europe member states should uphold their commitments to securing fundamental rights and freedoms for all. Furthermore, governments should take further steps towards the ratification of the relevant European treaties, in particular those that can have a direct impact on the situation of people who are experiencing poverty.
2. The Recommendation is timely due to the situation of serious economic crisis and severe financial cuts. It presents the position of the Council of Europe, emphasising the importance of the human rights approach to social problems. It complements the already adopted Recommendation on human rights and business, calling for protection of the most economically-disadvantaged individuals against poverty and social exclusion.
3. The Resolution and the Recommendation rightly point out that coping with poverty in the modern world is indispensable to the full enjoyment of human rights and their proper and universal implementation. Poverty is perilous to the exercise of social and cultural rights and has a particularly negative effect on freedom of expression, which is a fundamental value in a democracy. Poor people run the risk of being marginalised not only economically and socially but also of being isolated from the communication process and neglected by the media.
4. The problem of poverty and social exclusion is multi-dimensional as it relates to the full enjoyment of rights and opportunities in a democratic society. It also pertains to the wellbeing and integration of different vulnerable social groups – migrants, asylum seekers and people with disabilities. In particular, it has a special gender perspective. In some countries women represent the poorer segment of the population with limited opportunities in different social areas. The fight to eradicate poverty, in the way that it particularly affects women, should be a significant element of every anti-discrimination policy in a democratic society in order to achieve social cohesion.
5. The representation in the media is essential as it can draw public attention to the necessity for dialogue with isolated and marginalised groups and for the recognition of their contribution to economic growth and prosperity. Through the media, and, more particularly, through the public service and community media, people living in poverty can raise their voice, take part in public affairs and make their problems visible.
6. Eradication of poverty and economic suffering is a basic prerequisite for the building of a just, inclusive and knowledge-based society where any member can freely contribute to its prosperity. In this context it should be underlined that it is not possible to make the best use of the achievements of the technological development and to establish an “information society for all” without addressing key societal challenges and maintaining equal opportunities for different groups and communities.

7. Recalling Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to promote the public service value of the Internet, the CDMC underlines that appropriate use of ICTs should uphold human rights and strengthen the participation and involvement of all citizens contributing to more dynamic, inclusive and direct forms of democracy. Subject to Committee of Ministers decision yet to be adopted in respect of steering committees' terms of reference and programme of activities for 2012 and beyond, the CDMC would encourage exploring further the positive use of ICTs including in respect of subjects raised in the PACE Recommendation