You are part of a big family of 800 million people!

Do you know that as a young European today you are part of a big family of 800 million people? You live in a world where you’re free to get to know other children and to learn about other languages, other ways of life, other countries and other ideas. But as a European, you also have to learn to love and respect other people and to accept differences.

We hope that with this book you will be able to discover and explore what we do within the Council of Europe in order to help you to protect your rights now and when you grow up!

Find out more at www.coe.int and www.coe.int/socialcharter
In 1961, the Council of Europe - an organisation based in Strasbourg and which now has 47 member countries from all over Europe - adopted a list of social and economic rights to ensure that the everyday life of children and adults was of a good standard. Because rights change over the years, this list of rights was extended in 1996.

This is the European Social Charter.

It guarantees, for example, the right to health care, the right to go to school, to live in decent housing, to work in safe conditions and to be paid for the work done, and the right to go on strike. The Charter gives everyone the same rights and protects everyone in the same way: boys and girls, women and men, people with disabilities or without, no matter what their religion, the colour of their skin or the language they speak.

When you read this book you will see that the Charter is meant to ensure the wellbeing of your family and friends and particularly to protect the vulnerable among us who cannot defend themselves. It supplements the European Convention on Human Rights, which protects everyone’s rights and freedoms: life, justice, religion, associations, press, meetings etc.

The European Committee of Social Rights in Strasbourg ensures that the countries which have accepted the Charter also respect the rights it contains.

This book presents the European Social Charter by describing some of the rights that apply to your everyday life. The aim is to make young people and children aware not only of their rights but also of the obligations which States must respect. You will discover these rights and obligations and have the opportunity to discuss them and give your impressions on the way they are put into practice, among your family and friends.

It is up to you to bring these rights to life, preserve them, make them known to others and develop them. In that way you will help to build a fairer Europe, the sort of place where everyone wants to live.

Maud de Boer-Buquicchio
Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe
Hi, my name is Adam and I’m ten years old. I live in Europe like you. My father has worked in several countries including France, Turkey and Ukraine. My little sister doesn’t like moving all the time but I do because it allows me to make new friends. I’ll soon have a second little sister and perhaps I’ll teach her to play football.

Today one of my French friends told me about the Council of Europe. It is a European organisation based in Strasbourg and it protects human rights. The member States of the Council of Europe have all signed the European Social Charter, which contains rights concerning children. Have you ever heard of it? If not, let me tell you something about it...
I'm glad to go back to school after the holidays. Well I don't want to go to school any more, I'd like to go out to work.

I'd like to be a famous inventor or banker. Or I could invent a superdrug! Then you'd have to study chemistry first.

But you have to go to a special school to learn to be a pilot. Or if not I know what I'd like to be! I'd like to be an astronaut or an airline pilot.

Or I could invent a new car that works on solar energy... To do that you'd have to become an engineer.

Or I could invent a ‘superdrug!’ Then you'd have to study chemistry first. In that case I'll build houses, But to do that you have to study architecture.

But you have to go to a special school to learn to be a pilot. You really have no imagination at all!

It's you who doesn't have any. If you don't go to school, you'll never find a job that you like.

Do you know that to get a job you have to go to school first?
I'm glad to go back to school after the holidays. Well I don't want to go to school any more. I'd like to go out to work. I'd like to be a famous inventor or banker. Or I could invent a superdrug! Then you'd have to study chemistry first. Well then I could invent a new car that works on solar energy... To do that you'd have to become an engineer.

But you have to go to a special school to learn to be a pilot. Or if not I know what I'd like to be! I'd like to be an astronaut or an airline pilot. In that case I'll build houses. But to do that you have to study architecture. You really have no imagination at all!

Do you know that to get a job you have to go to school first? It's you who doesn't have any. If you don't go to school, you'll never find a job that you like.
Do you know that people with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else and that if they are to take advantage of those rights special measures sometimes have to be taken?

I'm at a great school where we also have boys and girls with disabilities.

Have you remembered the rehearsal?

What are you going to rehearse?

A new dance. Why don't you come and watch?

A new dance. Why don't you come and watch?

What are you going to rehearse?

I heard somebody say that today it would be the tango.

The wheelchair dance section in our school is full of talent!

Anna lives in our block of flats too.

I know. She's already signed on for a course in numerical design.

She's older than me and she'll soon have finished school.

Super! Should be able to design a computer game for me.

She's a clever girl and she really wants to work in numerical design.

Hi Adam!

Hi Adam!

She's already signed on for a course in numerical design.

Yes. She's a clever girl and she really wants to work in numerical design.

Hi Adam.

Where's she going to get the money to pay for the course?

Dad, Mum, how much do you pay for my school?

Well Son, primary and secondary school are free of charge.

The government will help her to pay the costs.

Things are not easy for Anna's family.

Anna's family will get help from the government.

I'm glad that she can get help.

Dad, Mum, how much do you pay for my school?

Well Son, primary and secondary school are free of charge.

Anna's family will get help from the government.
Do you know that people with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else and that if they are to take advantage of those rights special measures sometimes have to be taken?

I'm at a great school where we also have boys and girls with disabilities. Have you remembered the rehearsal?

What are you going to rehearse?

A new dance. Why don't you come and watch?

I heard somebody say that today it would be the tango. The wheelchair dance section in our school is full of talent!

Anna lives in our block of flats too. She's older than me and she'll soon have finished school. Hi Adam!

I know. She's already signed on for a course in numerical design. She's a clever girl and she really wants to work in numerical design.

Things are not easy for Anna's family. Super! Should be able to design a computer game for me.

She's going to find the money to pay for the course? Where's she going to find the money to pay for the course?

Do you know that if you want to go to school but you don't have enough money you can get help?

Anna lives in our block of flats too. I know. She's already signed on for a course in numerical design.

She's older than me and she'll soon have finished school. Hi Adam!

I'm glad that she can get help. She’s a clever girl and she really wants to work in numerical design.

The government will help her to pay the costs.

Well Son, primary and secondary school are free of charge.
If you don't know what you want to do when you grow up, there are people who can help you decide.

Children! It's time to eat!

I'll set the table.

I'd like to be a cook one day. I don't really know what I want to be. Perhaps a singer or a firewoman...

Don't worry. When you're older, you can go to a centre where they give you advice and information on the different jobs and they'll help you see what you're best at.

A nurse, or a clown in the circus... Or how about an engineer?

There, they'll help to find your strengths.

No, they'll make you take several tests and then advise you on the job you could choose.

A nurse, or a clown in the circus... Or how about an engineer?

And after that? Will they show me different jobs?

Have you had any news of Djidjo? She hasn't been to school for a week.

I think she may have been made to go begging.

I was told that lots of Roma children are obliged to work. That's awful!

Sitting in the street and asking strangers for money? That's awful!

Nobody has the right to force her. Djidjo is only 10 years old, she's not supposed to work and certainly not to beg.

Nobody can force you either to work or to beg.

If you don't know what you want to do when you grow up, there are people who can help you decide.

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Sitting in the street and asking strangers for money? That's awful!

Nobody has the right to force her. Djidjo is only 10 years old, she's not supposed to work and certainly not to beg.

I'll ask my sister who works in the social welfare centre to talk to Djidjo's parents. I'm sure she'll find a solution.

It's easy for you to say that. You're an adult and you can decide for yourself what you want to do.

Do you know that nobody can force you either to work or to beg?
Do you know that if you don’t have a family, you have the right to assistance? You can’t be left to live on the streets.

Mum, there’s a boy sitting in the street I think he’s ill...

Then we should call a doctor and tell his family.

I’ve got a really sore tummy. Where do you live?

I haven’t got a house!

I’ll call 112 and ask for help.

He’s got appendicitis. It’s lucky you called me. You’ve just saved his life.

This child must be homeless.

I now know that the boy has found a foster family and that he will have a house to live in. Thank goodness!

I’ve got appendicitis. It’s lucky you called me. You’ve just saved his life.

The boy has had an operation and the police have found out that he doesn’t have a family.

This child must be homeless.

I now know that the boy has found a foster family and that he will have a house to live in. Thank goodness!

And where are they living now?

The town has given them, and all the others who suffered from the floods, somewhere to stay. They’ve also been given help to buy the things they really need.

Do you know that everyone has the right to housing and that those who don’t have anywhere to live can ask the State to help them?

We’re preparing parcels. What are you doing?

We’re going to send them to our family in Poland. What for?

There have been floods there and the river flooded their house. And everything inside – furniture, toys...

I have made some pretty book covers. My mother has made a parcel with some of my new clothes and shoes.

And we want to help them a little bit too. I’m going to send them toys.

And where are they living now?

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And where are you living now?

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My mother has made a parcel with some of my new clothes and shoes.

I have made some pretty book covers.
Do you know that you don’t have the right to work as long as you are a child?

Because I need some money.

Why would you want to do that?

You can’t work until you’re old enough.

But that’s not fair!

Of course it’s fair. Adults work while children have fun and learn their lessons.

But I want to buy a new bike!

Then you’ll have to save up your pocket money.

That’ll take too long.

Then perhaps we should stop giving you presents and put money in your piggy bank instead.

Do you know that if someone hurts you, even in your family or at school, you don’t need to be ashamed? You should talk about it.

There were policemen at school today.

That’s because yesterday there was a strange man hanging around the children.

He wanted me to get into his car and go for a ride with him.

Be careful! It’s important to defend yourself against any kind of violent behaviour and that you tell your parents or the police about it.

I’ve learned that nobody has the right to touch me unless I say so or to be violent towards me.

Do you know that if someone hurts you, even in your family or at school, you don’t need to be ashamed? You should talk about it.
Do you know that you don't have the right to work as long as you are a child?

You know Grandad, I think I'll have to start working.

Why would you want to do that?

Because I need some money.

You can't work until you're old enough.

But that's not fair!

Of course it's fair. Adults work while children have fun and learn their lessons.

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Do you know that if someone hurts you, even in your family or at school, you don't need to be ashamed? You should talk about it.
Do you know that the State has a duty to protect your health?

Ow! My arm hurts. It's that injection they gave you. Show it to Dad.

If Dad said so it's true.

Dad said it wouldn't hurt any more in a couple of days. But what if that's not true?

But I'm never going to have another injection. Never again.

You have to be vaccinated so that you don't fall ill.

Unfortunately not all children are lucky enough to be vaccinated like you. Always remember you have to look after yourself. Nothing is more important than being in good health!

Are all the children in the world vaccinated?

Nobody in our school has such beautiful lettuces and carrots.

That's because we are the best gardeners!

Today after class we're going to go and see our garden.

Do we have to?

I like the lettuce I planted. So do you! You put some in the sandwiches you bring to school every day.

Then you can carry the buckets of water.

Nobody in our school has such beautiful lettuces and carrots.

That's because we are the best gardeners!

Enjoy your meal! It's very important to learn to eat the right food.

Do you know that you have to learn how to stay healthy your whole life long?

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Do we have to?

I like the lettuce I planted. So do you! You put some in the sandwiches you bring to school every day.

Then you can carry the buckets of water.

There are more weeds and we have to pull them out. You like to eat vegetables don't you?

Enjoy your meal! It's very important to learn to eat the right food.

But I don't feel like pulling out weeds...

Do you know that you have to learn how to stay healthy your whole life long?

Nobody in our school has such beautiful lettuces and carrots.

That's because we are the best gardeners!
Do you know that your family has the right to protection?

Back already? It’s Monday today. You always used to go to Patrick’s on Mondays.

Who told them to do that?

Their parents decided that in court, but Patrick and his brother were also asked what they thought about it.

Everything’s changed. His parents got divorced and now Patrick and his little brother are going to stay with their mum one week and with their dad the next week.

Come on, we could play on the play station.

Hi Adam! We’re staying with our mum this week. Will you come and see us?

It’s great that you’re here! Of course I’ll come.

Do you have your own room at your dad’s too?

Of course! We have our own room, our own beds and our desks.

Adam, do Patrick and his brother go to one school one week and to another school the next week?

Of course not! They always go to the same school. Their mother and father both live close to the school.

Now we have two houses.

Do you know that every adult has the right to a job where they feel safe and are well treated, and where they earn enough to feed their family?

My father works in a shipyard, I’d like to see how ships are built.

Put your helmet on, Son. You have to be protected!

This is my son, Adam! These are my friends: Hana comes from Slovakia and Beni from Albania.

Dad, is it difficult to build a ship?

Yes it’s very difficult, but the best workers from different countries are working in this shipyard. They like their work and they are well-paid.

Dad, does that mean they’re all treated the same?

Of course! If they work here, it doesn’t matter where they come from, they are all equal.

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Can we go?

This is my son, Adam! These are my friends: Hana comes from Slovakia and Beni from Albania.

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Dad, does that mean they're all treated the same?

Of course! If they work here, it doesn't matter where they come from, they are all equal.
Do you know that anyone who loses his employment has the right to protection?

Has your father found a new job? Not yet.

Mum, I don’t think I’m going to go to summer camp.

But yesterday you couldn’t wait to go. Why have you changed your mind?

Robert is coming. I talked to his mother yesterday.

And how are they going to get the money? You know that his parents don’t have jobs.

When his father had a job, he paid some money into a special fund every month, and now he receives money until he finds a new job.

Do you know that people who have an accident or are ill are helped by Social Security?

There was an accident at the shipyard yesterday. Hana fell and broke her leg.

Did they put a plaster cast on it?

Hello Hana! What a beautiful plaster cast!

Yes and she’s going to have to stay in hospital. For a long time?

No, but after that she’ll have to stay at home. So she won’t be able to work. How is she going to manage?

She’ll receive help from Social Security. That’s super!

Hi Hana, how are you feeling?

Hello Hana! What a beautiful plaster cast!
Do you know that anyone who loses his employment has the right to protection?

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But yesterday you couldn't wait to go. Why have you changed your mind?

Robert is coming. I talked to his mother yesterday.

When his father had a job, he paid some money into a special fund every month, and now he receives money until he finds a new job.

We know that people who have an accident or are ill are helped by Social Security.

There was an accident at the shipyard yesterday. Hana fell and broke her leg.

Did they put a plaster cast on it?

No, but after that she'll have to stay at home. She'll receive help from Social Security.

And how are they going to get the money? You know that his parents don't have jobs.

She'll receive help from Social Security.

Yes and she's going to have to stay in hospital. For a long time?

Hello Hana! What a beautiful plaster cast!

How are they going to manage?

Hello Hana! How are you feeling?
Do you know that there should be no discrimination against women, in other words they should not be treated differently from men?

Look what Mum has bought me! I bet it’s a new doll!

A fireman’s helmet? For a girl?

Look what Mum has bought me! I bet it’s a new doll!

Why not! I want to work at a fire station!

But girls can’t become firemen!

Well that’s where you’re wrong. Girls can also train to be firefighters.

You see? I want to be a firewoman and I will be a firewoman!

Women do all sorts of different types of jobs. For example your aunt is in charge of a big building site.

There should be no discrimination against women at work just because they are women. Unfortunately they often earn less money than men even when they do the same work.

Do you know that there should be no discrimination against women, in other words they should not be treated differently from men?

I’m going to tidy up the bathroom. You go and lie down darling.

I’m pleased. When the baby is born, you’ll stay at home with us.

You have to take lots of rest to make sure that the baby is born healthy.

I have to take lots of rest to make sure that the baby is born healthy.

Are you pleased that you’ll soon have a little sister?

I’m going to give her nearly all my toys.

I’m going to give her nearly all my toys.

Don’t worry. My work is less tiring now.

I’m pleased.

I’m happy too. I will be able to spend a few months with you.

After that I’ll go back to work.

Mum, you are going on maternity leave.

Fathers also have the right to take time off work when the baby is born.

Do you know that the law protects women who are going to have a baby?

I’ll do the dishes.

I’ll do the dishes.

You have to do the dishes. Don’t worry. My work is less tiring now.

Thank you!

I’ll do the dishes.

You go and lie down darling.

You have to take lots of rest to make sure that the baby is born healthy.

Mum, you are going on maternity leave.

Fathers also have the right to take time off work when the baby is born.

Stop going to work! You shouldn’t be making so much effort!

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Do you know that elderly people have the right to protection?

Today the old lady next door came home from hospital. I saw she was in a wheelchair. How is she going to manage? She lives on her own.

Don’t worry. Somebody from social services will come to see her every day. They’ll cook for her and do her shopping.

Perhaps we could help her too?

There you go! We were very useful to her after all!

We visit our neighbour every day, we read books to her and have a cup of tea with her.

Then offer your help!

Of course! And what’s more, it can be useful to me every day!

When you’re older, you should read it all.

Mum! What’s that?

It’s the European Social Charter. One of your friends told you about it.

I learned a lot about my rights! And it’s very important to take interest in your rights.

Then offer your help! The European Social Charter is a set of rights which concerns both adults and children. It is important that we know our rights. I really think you should read this book! Bye for now!
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Then offer your help!
The rights presented in this book refer to certain Articles of the European Social Charter

Do you know that to get a job you have to go to school first? (Articles 9 and 10) ................................................................. 4-5

Do you know that people with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else and that if they are to take advantage of those rights special measures sometimes have to be taken? (Article 15) ................................................................. 6

Do you know that if you want to go to school but you don't have enough money you can get help? (Articles 10 et 17) ....................... 7

If you don't know what you want to do when you grow up, there are people who can help you decide. (Articles 9 et 10) ......................... 8

Do you know that nobody can force you either to work or to beg? (Articles 7 and 17) .......................................................................................................................... 9

Do you know that if you don't have a family, you have the right to assistance? You can't be left to live on the streets. (Articles 13, 31, 7 and 17) .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 10

Do you know that everyone has the right to housing and that those who don't have anywhere to live can ask the State to help them? (Article 31) ................................................................. 11

Do you know that you don't have the right to work as long as you are a child? (Articles 7 and 17) ................................................................. 12

Do you know that if someone hurts you, even in your family or at school, you don't need to be ashamed? You should talk about it. (Articles 7 and 17) ...... 13

Do you know that the State has a duty to protect your health? (Article 11) ........................................................................................................ 14

Do you know that you have to learn how to stay healthy your whole life long? (Article 11) ........................................................................................................ 15

Do you know that your family has the right to protection? (Article 16) ........................................................................................................ 16

Do you know that every adult has the right to a job where they feel safe and are well treated, and where they earn enough to feed their family? (Articles 1, 2, 3, 4 and 19) ........................................................................................................ 17

Do you know that anyone who loses his employment has the right to protection? (Articles 12 and 24) ................................................................. 18

Do you know that people who have an accident or are ill are helped by Social Security? (Articles 12 et 13) ................................................................. 19

Do you know that there should be no discrimination against women, in other words they should not be treated differently from men? (Articles 1 and 20) .... 20

Do you know that the law protects women who are going to have a baby? (Articles 8 and 27) ........................................................................................................ 21

Do you know that elderly people have the right to protection? (Articles 12, 13 and 23) ........................................................................................................ 22
You are part of a big family of 800 million people!

Do you know that as a young European today you are part of a big family of 800 million people? You live in a world where you’re free to get to know other children and to learn about other languages, other ways of life, other countries and other ideas. But as a European, you also have to learn to love and respect other people and to accept differences.

We hope that with this book you will be able to discover and explore what we do within the Council of Europe in order to help you to protect your rights now and when you grow up!

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