



Tell me, what is  
the **EUROPEAN**  
**SOCIAL CHARTER?**



European  
Social  
Charter

Charte  
sociale  
européenne





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.

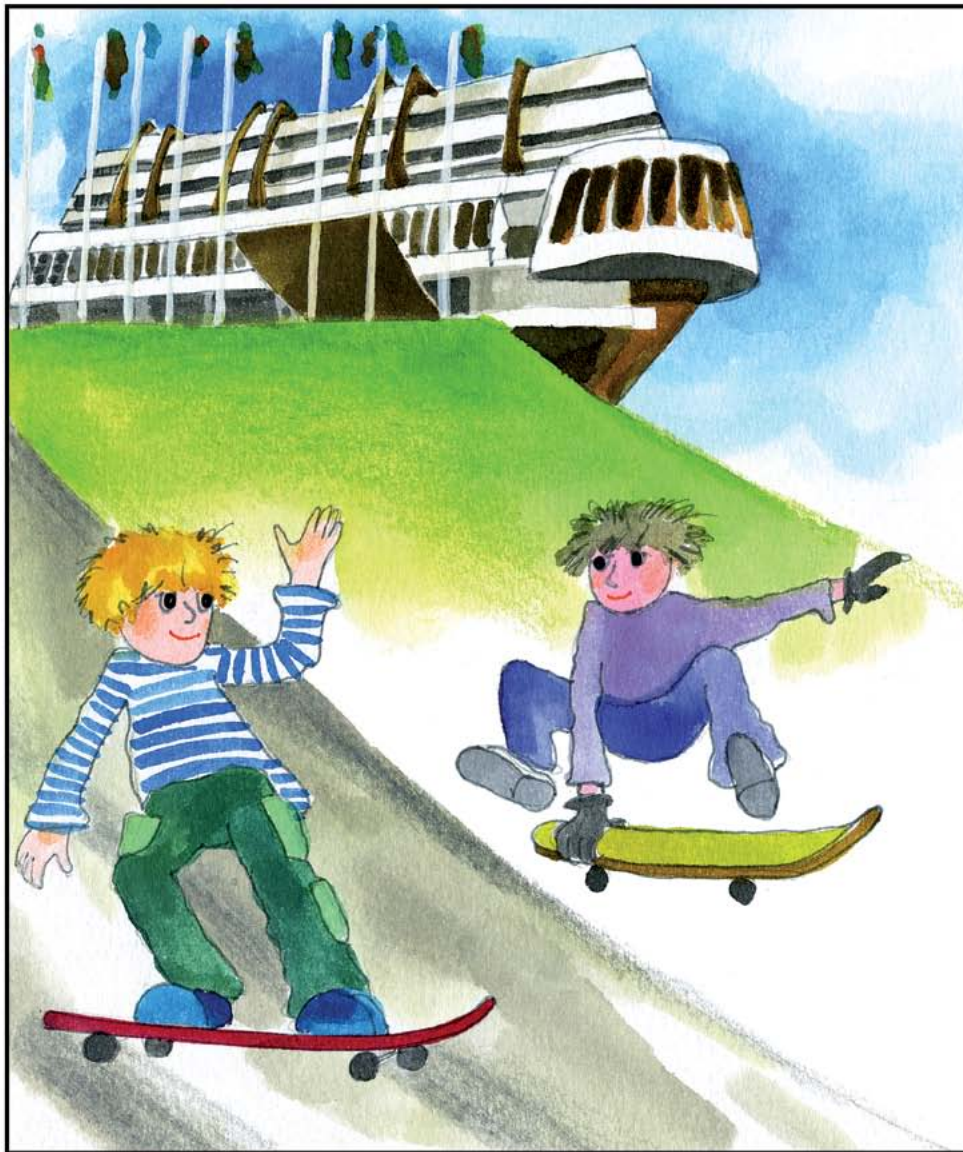
The European Committee of Social Rights in Strasbourg ensures that the countries which have accepted the Charter also respect the rights it contains.

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

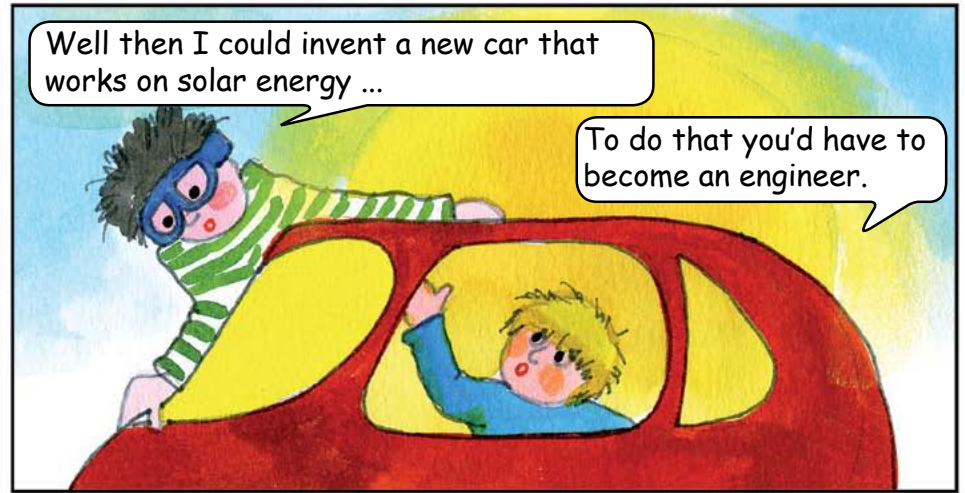
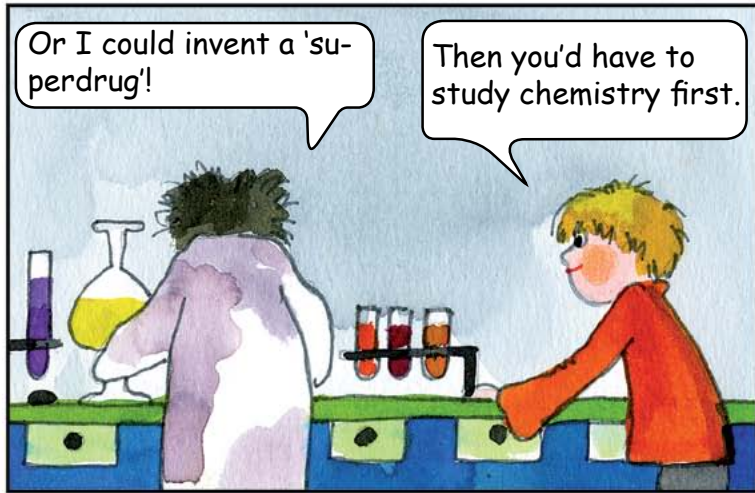




Hi, my name is Adam and I'm ten years old. I live in Europe like you. My father has worked in several countries including France, Turkey and Ukraine. My little sister doesn't like moving all the time but I do because it allows me to make new friends. I'll soon have a second little sister and perhaps 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...







**Do you know that to get a job you have to go to school first?**





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?



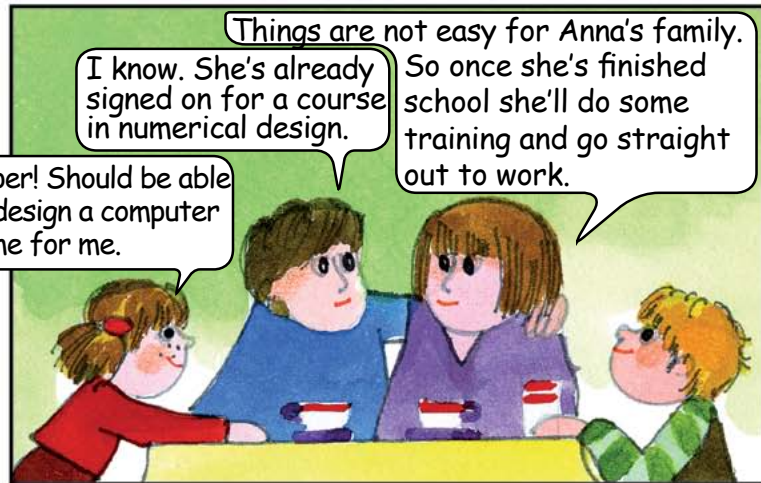


Anna lives in our block of flats too.

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

Hi Adam!

I'm glad that she can get help.



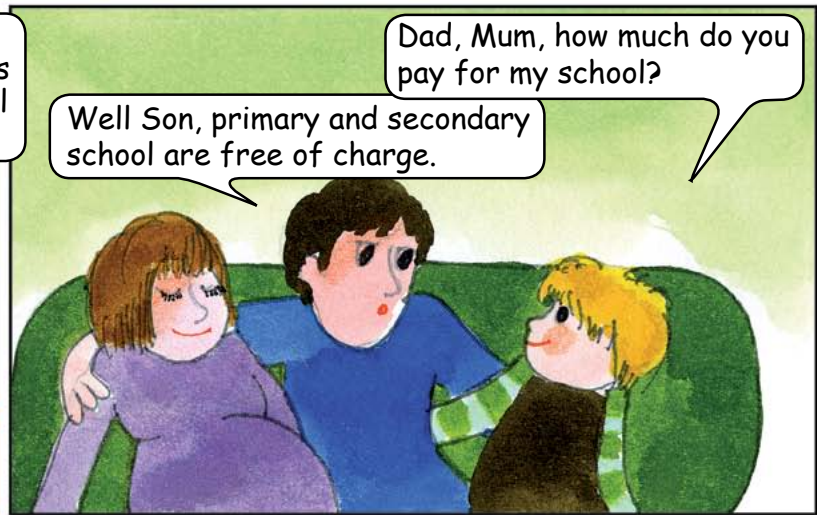
Super! Should be able to design a computer game for me.

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

Things are not easy for Anna's family. So once she's finished school she'll do some training and go straight out to work.



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



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

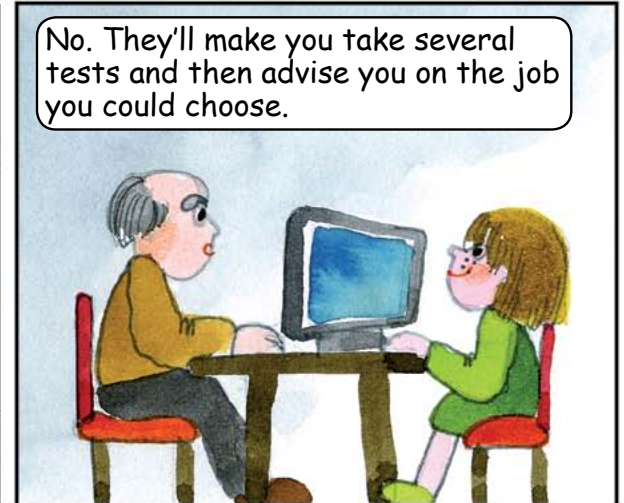
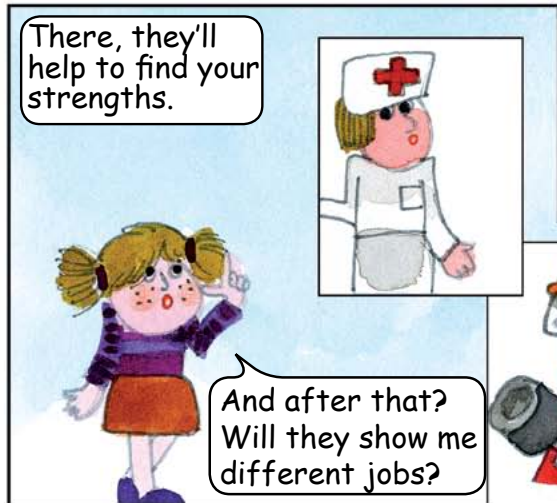
Dad, Mum, how much do you pay for my school?



The government will help her to pay the costs.

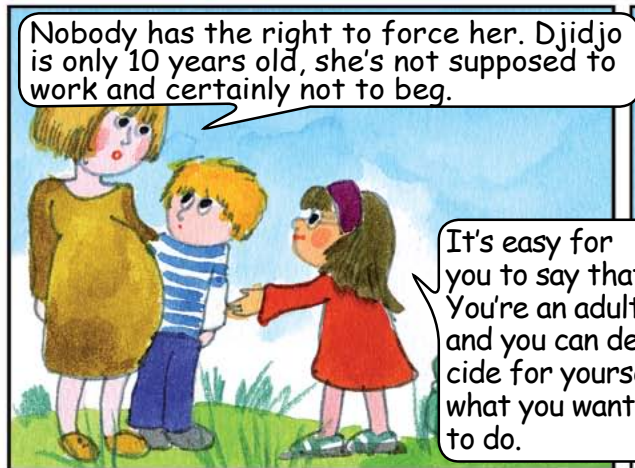
Where's she going to find the money to pay for the course?

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



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





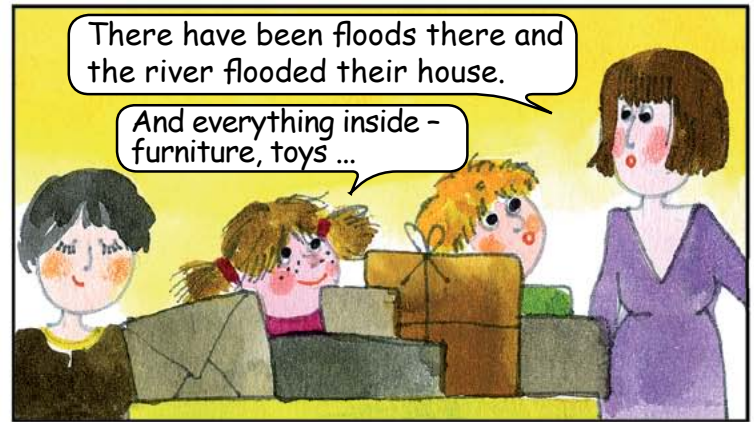
**Do you know that nobody can force you either to work or to beg?**





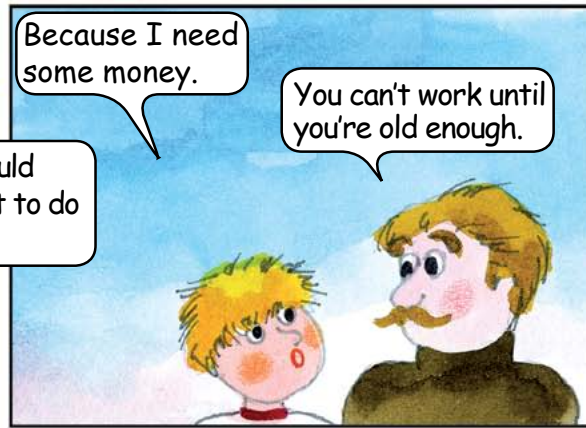
**Do you know that if you don't have a family, you have the right to assistance?  
You can't be left to live on the streets.**





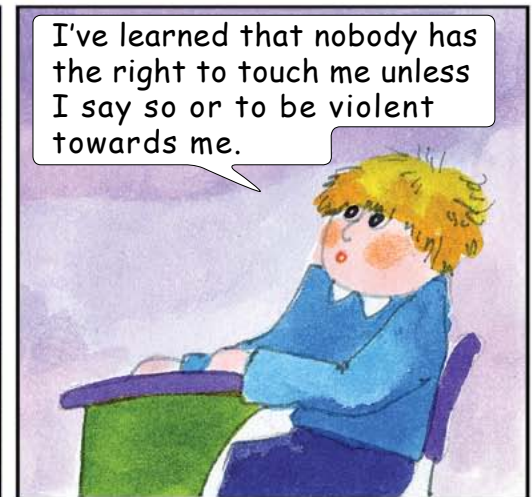
**Do you know that everyone has the right to housing and that those who don't have anywhere to live can ask the State to help them?**





**Do you know that you don't have the right to work as long as you are a child?**





**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.**





It's that injection they gave you. Show it to Dad.

Ow! My arm hurts.



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

If Dad said so it's true.



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



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

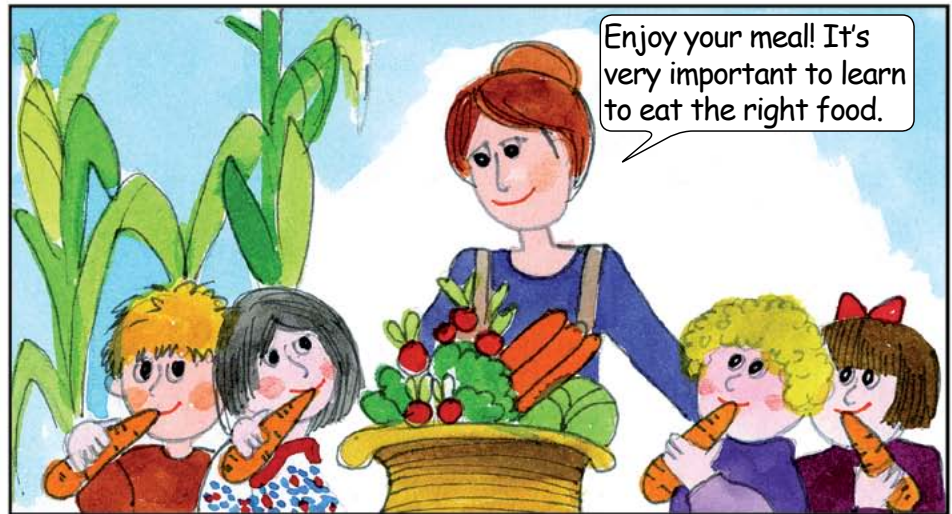
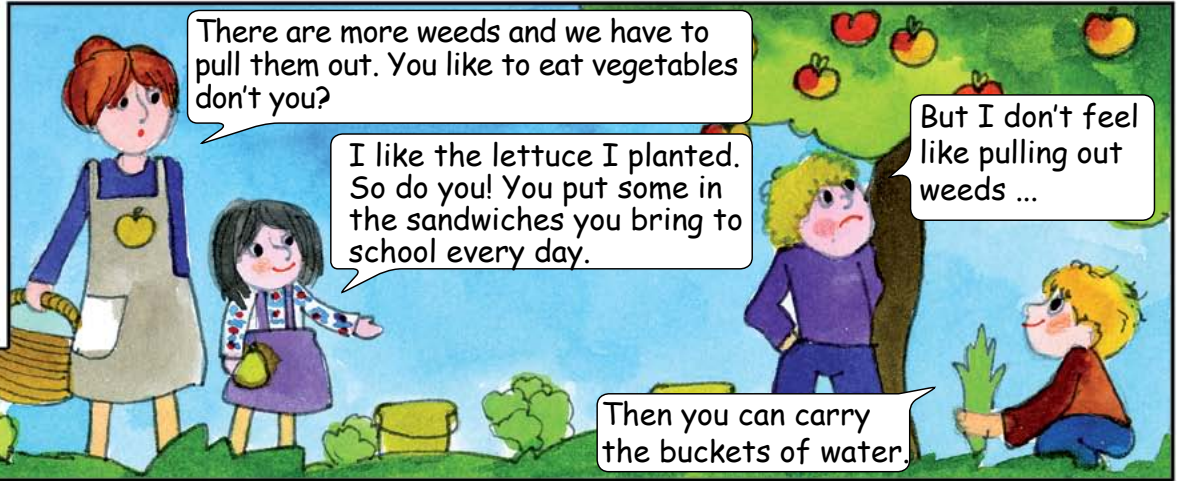
Are all the children in the world vaccinated?



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!

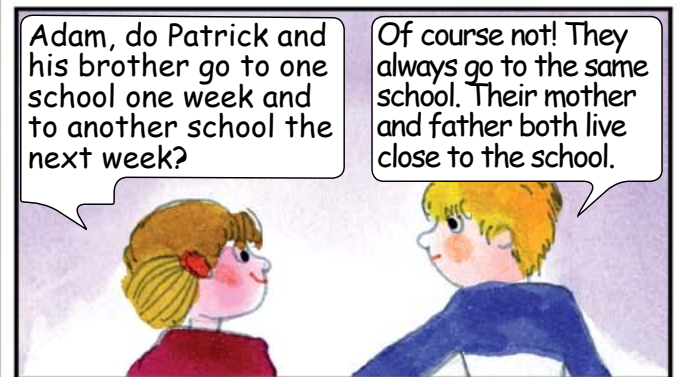
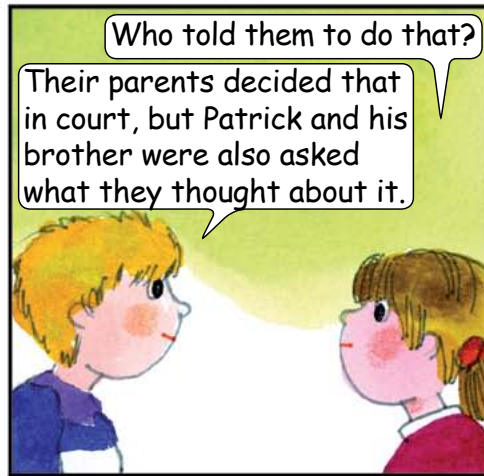
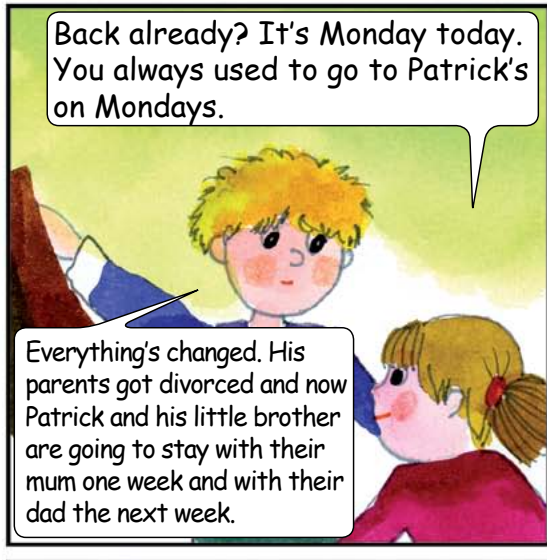
**Do you know that the State has a duty to protect your health?**





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





**Do you know that your family has the right to protection?**



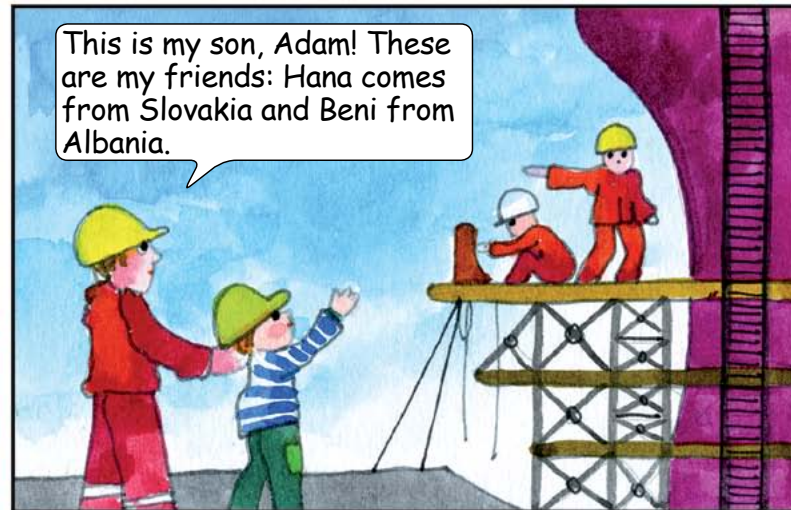


My father works in a shipyard, I'd like to see how ships are built.

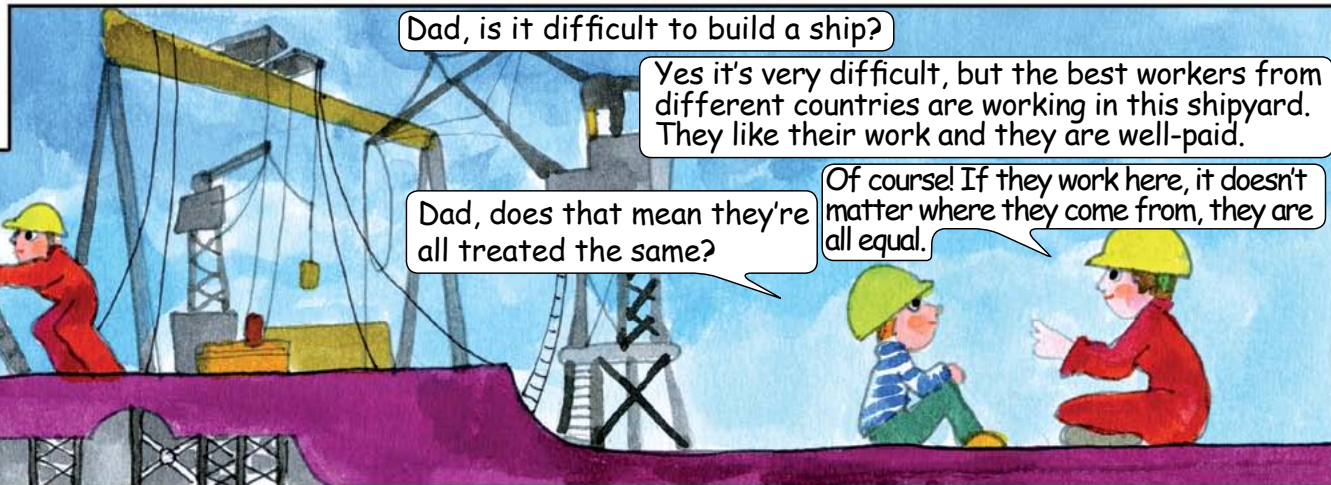


Put your helmet on, Son. You have to be protected!

Can we go?



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?

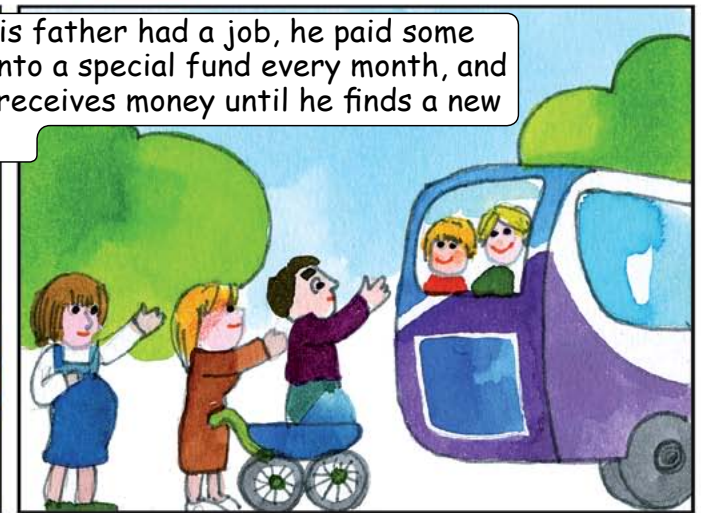
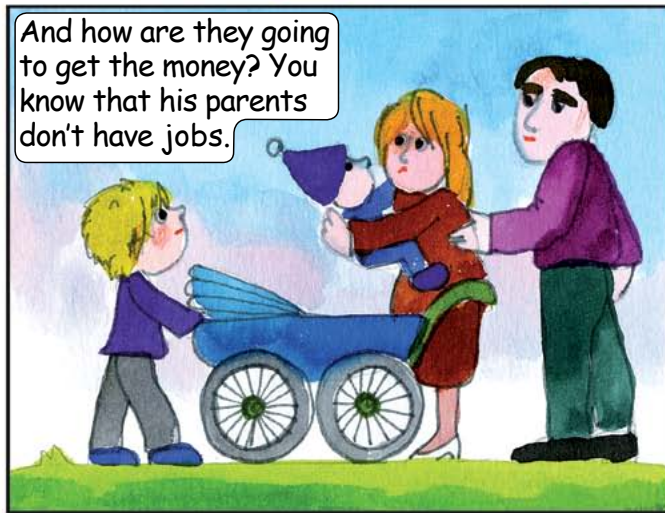
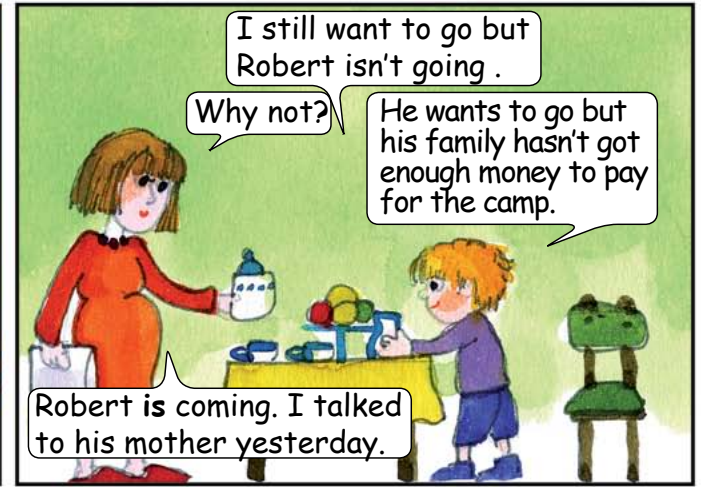
Yes it's very difficult, but the best workers from different countries are working in this shipyard. They like their work and they are well-paid.

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.

**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?**





**Do you know that anyone who loses his employment has the right to protection?**





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

Did they put a plaster cast on it?



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's she going to manage?



She'll receive help from Social Security.

That's super!

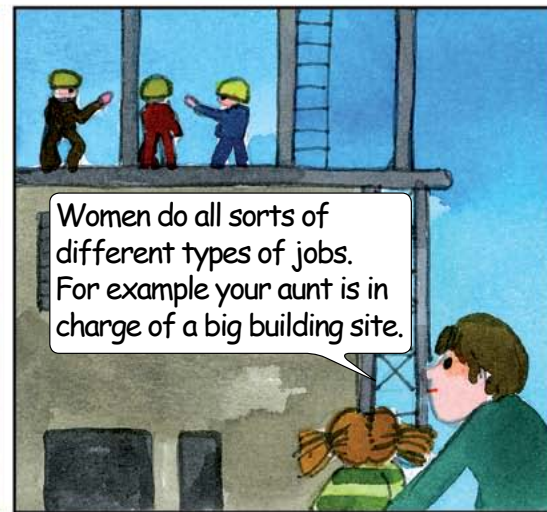


Hi Hana, how are you feeling?

Hello Hana! What a beautiful plaster cast!

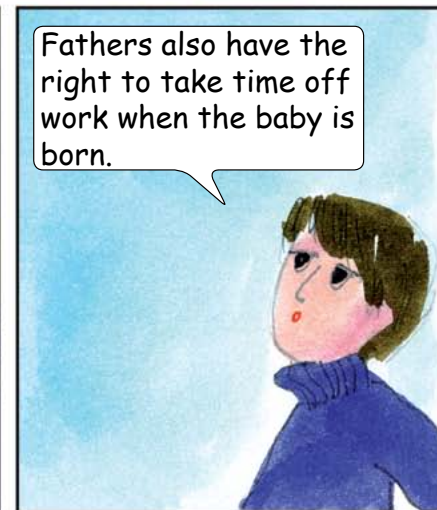
**Do you know that people who have an accident or are ill are helped by Social Security?**





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





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





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.

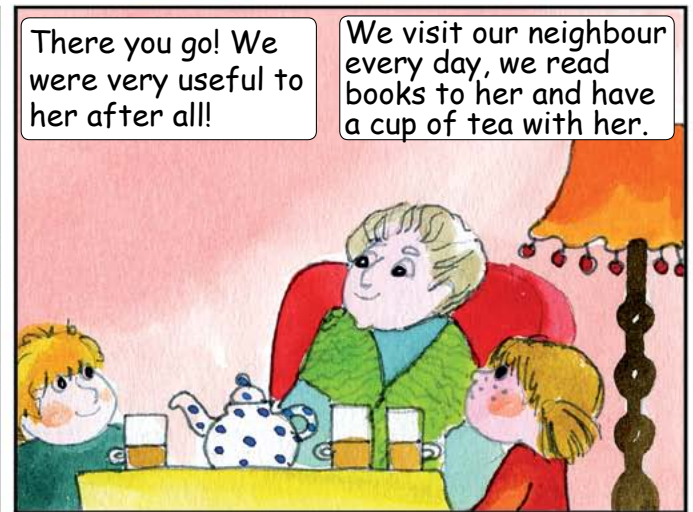


Don't worry. Somebody from social services will come to see her every day. They'll cook for her and do her shopping.

Perhaps we could help her too?



Then offer your help!



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.

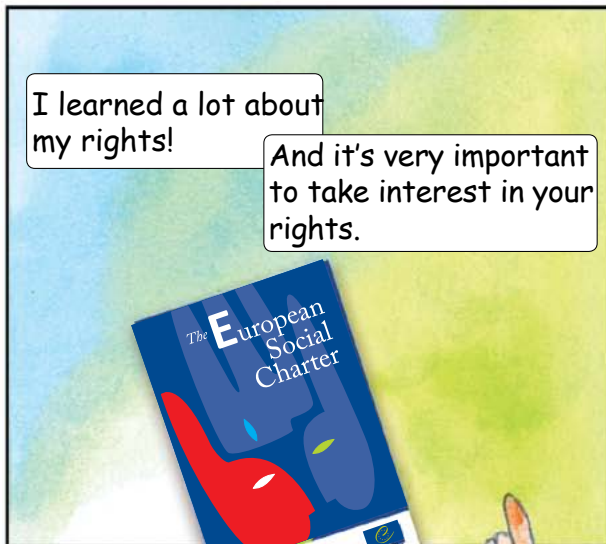
**Do you know that elderly people have the right to protection?**





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.



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

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



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!



**The rights presented in this book refer to certain Articles of the European Social Charter**

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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A colorful illustration featuring a white stork with a long red beak flying across a blue and yellow sky. A thin line extends from the stork's beak, looping around the text and ending at a group of five diverse children on a green hill. The children are holding onto the line. In the background, a rainbow arches over a line of tall, thin poles topped with various colorful flags. The overall scene is bright and cheerful, symbolizing global unity and diversity.

**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](http://www.coe.int) and [www.coe.int/socialcharter](http://www.coe.int/socialcharter)