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Sommario/riassunto	Annotation We are at a point in history where economic inequalities are more widespread each day. The situation of extreme poverty experienced by the majority of the populations in developing countries ("Third World" countries) often coincides with an absence of democracy and the violation of the most fundamental rights. But in so-called "First World" countries a non-negligible proportion of inhabitants also live in impoverished conditions (albeit mainly "relative" poverty) and are denied their rights. The European situation, which this publication aims to analyse, is painful: the entire continent is afflicted by increasing poverty and consequently by the erosion of living conditions and social conflicts. The economic and financial crisis has resulted in the loss of millions of jobs, and created job insecurity for many still working. Economic insecurity raises social tensions, aggravating xenophobia, for instance. Yet the economic and financial crisis could present a good opportunity to rethink the economic and social system as a whole. Indeed, poverty in modern societies has never been purely a question of lack of wealth. It is therefore urgent today to devise a new discourse

on poverty. In pursuit of this goal, the Council of Europe is following up this publication in the framework of the project "Human rights of people experiencing poverty", co-financed by the European Commission.
