

IFSW-Europe Project 2018-2019 - European Pillar of Social Rights.

Social workers for transformational and sustainable social protection in Europe

Update

John Brennan

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My thanks to Fran McDonnell and Ian Johnston for permission to use some slides from the project workshop in Copenhagen



Outline of Presentation

Project Team Members Phase 2

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John Brennan (also ESP Rep).

- Members of the IFSW-E Project group
- Background to Project
- What is the EU Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR)?
- Implementation of EPSR
- Social Work Voice: What next for IFSW Europe?

Background to Project

- Phase 1: 2017-2018
 - Phase 2: 2018-2019 included Workshop in Copenhagen
 - Social workers engage on a daily basis with those who are vulnerable
 - Social workers implement social policies
- = The wealth of knowledge, experience + expertise of social work puts it in a strong position to influence policies
- IFSW Europe welcomes the EPSR with its call to respect the dignity of people through its support and protection measures

What is the Pillar of Social Rights?

A framework of rights and principles

“Essential for a fair and well-functioning labour market and welfare systems in 21st Century Europe;

Key elements of the European Pillar of Social Rights include:

- 20 policy principles in different social policy areas
- Underpinned by a EU Social Scoreboard of 14 indicators, to monitor the implementation of the principles
- 3 Key legislative proposals - Work-life balance; Written statement on Transparent and Predictable working conditions; Working-time directive
- Non-legislative initiatives to deliver on principles, notably on access to social protection, access to information on employment rights

20 Policy Domains

I Equal Opportunities and access to the labour market

e.g., 1. Education, training and lifelong learning

II Fair Working Conditions

e.g., 9. Work-life balance

III Social Protection and Inclusion

e.g., 19. Housing and assistance for homeless

20. Access to essential services

EPSR link - ec.europa.eu


Implementation

- Stronger rhetoric in key EU documents, but lacks mainstreaming of all principles in Semester
- EU work life balance Directive 2019
- Stronger focus e.g. minimum income/social protection but weak on services e.g. housing, homeless, social services.
- Positive scoreboard focus on inequality/ inadequate funding for social protection, but insufficient impact.
- Stability and Growth remains dominant approach - undermining investment in social rights/ infrastructure
- Low profile for Civil Society, but new Employment Guidelines give new legal base.
- Social Fairness Package (13 March 2018)

Implementation

Delivered mainly through:

- EU Funds - Social Fairness Package : proposals for initiatives on access to social protection for all workers
- The European Semester Annual process - monitors progress and ensures the active involvement of Member States:
- Via EU Commission + mainly national governments



What next for IFSW
Europe + Voice of Social
Work?

IFSW –E Project Workshop, Copenhagen 2019

- IFSW-E supports all 20 EPSR principles
- Give priority to:-
 - Active support to employment (Principle 4)
 - Employment conditions (P7)
 - Work life balance (P9)
 - Child care and support to children (P11)
 - Social protection(P12)
 - Minimum income (P14)
 - Inclusion of people with disabilities (P17)
 - Long term care (P18)
 - Access to essential services and seeking to expand the definition to include social services (P20)

IFSW Policy Social Protection(2016)

- Social protection is a human right
- Social protection systems should be instruments for social transformation, democracy + creating social just societies
- IFSW calls on SWs to include social protection in all activity towards achievement of SDGs 2016-2030
- Guaranteeing universal access to health care, services + providing basic income security for all
- To include sustainable social development in curriculum + prepare students in theory + practice to work with social protection systems
- IFSW urges its member organisations...to forge alliances with civil society organisations, unions, + people who use services to promote sustainable social protection
- This policy is embodied in the concept of community capacity building.

IFSW-Europe Project + EPSR Implementation

- IFSW Europe calls for a clear focus on most vulnerable in societies in allocation of resources + for the priority on Prevention, Collective responsibility + Respect for diversity
- Principle 20, Access to essential services: expand to contain access to appropriate social services, **including professional social work services**.
‘This represents an effective element for and an essential element of cohesion and resilient societies’ (European Social Platform, 2014:5)
- In designing services, the people who use these services must be at centre + have their voices heard.

IFSW-Europe Project + EPSR Implementation

- Pillar's principles are appropriate to all countries in Europe
 - IFSW Europe will seek to support its non-EU member organisations in advocating for similar outcomes.
- **Specific Recommendations for Action:**
 - For our discussion Now
- **Next Steps**
 - IFSW Conference Vienna
 - Joint IFSW-E, EAPN, ESP 'public helaring with MEPs, Brussels, Oct 2019

Potential Specific Recommendations for Action... 1

National:

- Advocacy: e.g., lobbying, media campaign, community action, research
- Mediation: IFSW E member orgs engage in formulation + development of social policy at nat level to influence outcomes
- Explore ambiguity in 'care' versus 'control' aspects of social work role: SW supports vulnerable people + supports established order by contributing to integration + adaptation of service users into estb society = dilemma. SW must question where practice complying with HRs principles + whether actions necessary + proportionate
- IFSW E member orgs to review EU Country-Specific Recommendations in A) deciding priorities at nat level re. implementation of Pillar + B) what is being achieved in implementation
- IFSW E member orgs develop partnerships/ forge alliances with service users (Jim Ife - 'practice from below'), nat civil society orgs + unions to promote sustainable social protection systems

Potential Specific Recommendations for Action... 2

- IFSW E will work with member orgs not in EU to prepare IFSW Statement on need to implement type of recommendations in Pillar
- IFSW will develop info packs for member orgs on EU + other relevant European agencies
- IFSW member orgs will have access to relevant info to enable them to understand impact of poverty in their country + how to apply rights-based approach to their work
- IFSW E will develop template for member orgs to write to MEPs/ EU Commission, etc, about implementation of EPSR.
- IFSW member orgs will advocate for value of social investment + early prevention, addressed within national contexts, culturally + financially. Social investment projects can include municipalities, state +/or non-governmental representatives, bringing together different experiences in developing resource- + cultural-efficient solutions for early preventive approaches, documented to reduce public budgets + private funding for education, health, housing + labour market.
- **Develop the specific 'voice' of social work**

Potential Specific Recommendations for Action... 3

EU Level:

- Advocacy: e.g., lobbying, media campaign, community action, research
- Mediation: IFSW E will work with Eur orgs – ESP, EAPN, FRA, CoE INGO, Eurordis, UN, etc – to influence EU policy formulation + development that redresses current imbalance between econ + social dimensions
- IFSW E will monitor progress being made at EU level to implement Pillar - joint public hearing with other like-minded orgs to discuss implementation of Pillar
- IFSW E will work with IFSW Global about human rights, social justice + sustainable development
- IFSW will encourage EASSW to incorporate social policy engagement in social work education curricula.

Potential Specific Recommendations for Action... 3

- IFSW E will explore 'care' versus 'control' aspects of SW role. A very important issue which shall be put into a policy question whether social policy shall be built on a wish to include (to care for) vulnerable groups or to control vulnerable people, e.g., criminalization of homelessness.
- IFSW E will encourage sub-regional exchange of conditions + experiences on social policy and welfare models, mirroring *The European Pillar of Social Rights* and potential EU legislation linked to Pillar. Sub-regional exchange can be valuable within a group of countries where legislation as well as cultural + financial contexts are similar/comparable, + such exchange can include common reviews of EU Commission's annual country-specific recommendations for countries within a given sub-region.