

**Report of IFSW European Representatives**

**2021- 2022**

**The Agency / Network:**

[**IFSW GLOBAL EDUCATION COMMISSION**](https://www.ifsw.org/regions/europe/team/#single-collapse-5)

The aim of the IFSW Education Commission is to create a structure for the transfer of knowledge between social work education and practice where both are informed and learning from one another. The Commission supports social work programmes and educators who experience pressures to make “concessions” on the quality of education to be able to meet the professions international standards.

The specific objectives of the IFSW Education Commission has been to:

* Provide, within the structures of IFSW, a platform for all parties to work together at the national and global level, in accordance with the global principles, values and ethics as articulated in the Global Definition of Social Work.
* Agree on global minimum standards of social work curriculum and an internationally recognized policy framework.
* Extend support to social work programmes and educators when experiencing political or technocratic pressures to make “concessions” to the quality of education.
* Promote genuine participation of the people who use services.

The IFSW Education Commission is chaired by the IFSW Global Education Commissioner, Vassilis Iakomidis, in collaboration with representatives from IFSW’s five regions.

**Representative for IFSW Europe to IFSW Global Education Commission**:

Nicolai Paulsen (Danish Association of Social Workers, Denmark)

Support team:  Karin Landsbergen (BPSW, the Netherlands)

**ACHIEVEMENTS FOR IFSW EUROPE**

While the primary task for the Commission until 2020 has been to facilitate the co-ordination of the consultation process of updating the Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training, finally approved by the membership of IFSW and IASSW through the General Meetings of the two respective organisations in the period July-August 2020.

The focus is now on the implementation and roll-out of the updated Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training. To frame and support this the IFSW Education Commission commenced in 2021 several ideas to support the implementation and roll-out of the updated Global Standards, gathered in a proposed Implementation and Mobilisation Strategy including the following stages:

* **Roll-out** of the new documentation through a targeted dissemination strategy coordinated by IFSW and IASSW regional organisations. All members of both organisations have received the document in early 2021. Relevant and dedicated sections in the websites of IFSW was also developed as per agreed mobilisation strategy.

https://www.ifsw.org/global-standards-for-social-work-education-and-training/

* **Translation** of the document into a wide range of languages covering the membership of the two organisations. IFSW already took steps to translate the document into the official languages of IFSW. In addition, National and Regional Associations were invited to co-ordinate the translation process in their respective constituencies. This can be achieved through the mobilisation and recruitment of volunteers and/or professional translators, while the final and official translations shall be approved by the National Associations and sent to the Global Education Commission for archiving and monitoring. So far, we have registered that the Global Standards have been officially translated in the following languages: Spanish, Japanese, Greek, Lithuanian and French. More translations are in the process of ensuring that they meet the required standards.

You can find the updated version here <https://www.ifsw.org/global-standards-for-social-work-education-and-training/>

**ACTIVITIES / EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE**

A pilot peer review – a peer assessment – was conducted by the IFSW Education Commission and chaired by the IFSW Global Education Commissioner in February 2022. It took place at the HAN University in the Netherlands, and the outcome was that their Bachelor of International Social Work has been endorsed by IFSW.

The peer assessment utilised the Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training, demonstrating that the Bachelor of International Social Work offered by HAN University meets the Global Standards. The Dutch National Association of Social Workers (BPSW) was part of the assessment process together with the IFSW Global Education Commissioner, Vassilis Iakomidis, and the European representative to the Commission, Nicolai Paulsen, as well as HAN social work staff, students, and representatives of HAN international practice networks.

The HAN Bachelor of International Social Work was the first programme globally to be endorsed by IFSW. Other programmes outside Europe are currently going through a peer assessment process. Based on these experiences new initiatives to roll-out and utilise the Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training will be tabled in the coming years, likely to demonstrate IFSW endorsement of more social work schools’ programmes.

**CHALLENGES**

The main challenge our commission – together with other IFSW representatives – faces is related to capacity balanced with the wish always to improve the involvement and engagement of IFSW member organisations. We meet highly competent and enthusiastic colleagues curious to find ways to contribute, while in practice we as IFSW representatives have limited resources for this very open agenda and broad mission of the commission.

**PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**(activities, events ...)

For the next year:

As an IFSW commission we are still in a learning process in identifying our priorities, the needs presented by national member organisations, and the possible overlap to other activities, policy areas and commissions within IFSW.

The broad mission of the commission will also for the coming period be to provide an inclusive platform for practitioners and educators to work together to monitor, explore and intervene in discussions about the nature and development of social work education at a global level.

The most urgent aspect of this process will be to monitor the rollout of the updated Global Standards – recognising that developing a new set of global standards is only part of this journey. Rolling out the new standards and incorporating the documents’ principles into curricula will be a far more demanding process. Our commission want to work closely with regional and national member organisations to support the process of implementation.

An implementation strategy includes the following stages: 1) roll-out/communication, 2) translation, 3) knowledge transfer/consultation and data-collection, and 4) Updating of local/national Social Work Curricula.

The intension is to initiate a more direct communication to mobilise the possible involvement among all relevant actors in this process.

In addition, the Education Commission will also engage with the following activities:

* Transfer of knowledge and good practice about social work education. This can happen through the facilitation of workshops and webinars in liaison with regional activities, conferences, and other relevant partners.
* Sustain the dialogue and enhance the consultation on educational matters with IASSW and other global/ regional organisations.
* Represent IFSW in fora discussing issues about social work and professional education and training.
* Intervene in support of social work education when there are political or technocratic pressures to make “concessions” to the quality of education.