**Report of IFSW Europe Regional Representative/Commissioner**

**For Delegates Meeting in Oslo, 2025**

**Please complete and send this report to** **europe@ifsw.org**

**by 24th September 2025**

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| **Your name** | John Brennan |
| **Your association** | Irish Association of Social Workers  |
| **Commission, institution or network where you represent IFSW Europe** | European Social Platform (SP) |
| **Date of report** | 24.09.2025 |
| **When did you start being the representative?** | 2018 |
| **Do you have a support person/group?** | Yes, Birthe Povlsen – joined the SP’s Working Group on Minimum Income |
| **Do you wish to continue for the year 2025/26?** | Yes, but, **if there is another candidate, I will withdraw** and become a support member  |
| **If you wish to continue, do you need a new support person/group?** | It would be very good to have a number of support members given the labyrinthine agenda of the Platform. |
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| **Please list the main events and meetings you attended between October 2024 and September 2025** | Attended the following meetings on-line:Steering Group Meetings X 5Social Pillar Working Group Meeting X 1 of 2General Assembly Session X 1Emergency Steering Meeting X 1The SP’s agenda items include- the proposed EU Anti-Poverty Strategy (APS); the European Pillar of Social Rights’ implementation Action Plan; participation in Horizon projects; Just Transition implementation; the EU post-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF); ; the proposed ‘Well-being Economy’; development of social services; Minimum Income; European Care Strategy. Defending civil society organisations from far-right political attacks has become an issue for the SP and its member organisations. |
| **Please describe other work you undertook in your role (e.g. policy work, writing, contributing to webinars etc)**  | Attended one webinar as part of the development of the SP’s new strategic framework 2026-2030. |
| **What have been your main achievements in this role in the last year?**Supporting the development of the Platform’s new Strategy document.Involved in the preliminary response to the proposed EU Anti-Poverty Strategy and in this regard, currently working with Birthe Povlsen and Ana Radulescu on developing a social work perspective on social work and poverty. This will form the basis for our input the SP’s formal response. |
| **What themes and opportunities should the IFSW Europe representative to this institution, commission or network focus on during the next year?**Because I am not based in Brussels and we don’t have any other member there either, we cannot be involved in the daily or weekly routine face-to-face work with the EU institutions that other SP member organisations undertake.The IFSW Europe's focus should be on the proposed EU Anti-Poverty Strategy (APS) via the current EU ‘Public Consultation’ process.The engagement with the Platform and the EAPN has been most fruitful, and I hope it has elevated the voice of social work and the Federation. Collaborating with other organisations (who have a paid secretariat, including policy analysts) is a challenge given our limited resources and reliance on the voluntary contributions of individual social workers. However, it is worth the effort. |
| **If you wish to continue in your role, please list your personal objectives/aims for the next year.**The current work of the SP will continue into 2026, so I will remain involved in that. One important objective for me will be to have a distinctive social work perspective on poverty to feed into the SP’s proposals for the new EU APS.With extra SP Support Members, there could be some work done on the European Care Strategy implementation phase (at the national level); the monitoring the implementation of the European pillar of social rights and/or the preparation of SP's forthcoming Just Transition policy paper. |
| **Any other information you wish to share**The SP is unfortunately at a crossroad in terms of its financial viability in the medium term because it did not get the EU’s CERV operating grant for the next 3-year period. The grant is worth 70% of the Platform’s annual income. This situation is unprecedented in the SP’s history, and the decision appears to have been based on a misreading by the EU’s external assessors of the SP’s role. The Platform will be in a severe financial situation by the end of 2026. At the time of writing, the SP is endeavouring to overturn the EU’s decision, plus seeking alternative funding streams. SP member organisations are supporting these efforts however they can. Finally, my thanks to Birthe Povlsen and Ana Radulescu for their continued support during the year. |