



International Federation of Social Workers EUROPE

ACTIVITY AND IMPACT REPORT MAY 2023 – OCTOBER 2024





About IFSW Europe



Introduction from Ruth Allen, IFSW Europe President (from April 2024)

I am delighted to present my first summary report on the activities of IFSW Europe (IFSW E) since becoming President in April 2024. IFSW E represents European social work within the International Federation of Social Workers and we are also a legally constituted organisation in Europe . You can find out more about our member countries here <https://www.ifsw.org/regions/europe/members/> .This report gives an overview of some key activities and their impact between our May 2023 Delegates' Meeting in Prague and our October 2024 Meeting in Lisbon. You can read much more about us on the European section of the IFSW website <https://www.ifsw.org/regions/europe/>.

Our work has continued to show our commitment to continuous social work professional development, solidarity and influence.

Our growing representation in key European and international institutions is key to this. Having this macro influence keeps us at the forefront of social innovation and social care in Europe, enabling us to address emerging challenges and seize opportunities for growth in our profession. We aim to inspire hope, drive progress, and make a lasting social work impact on the lives of people across Europe. This is rooted in our global code of ethics and our international commitment to co-creating eco-social solutions, promoting human rights and advancing social justice.

In May 2023 we held a successful European member delegates meeting in person and online, followed by our first major European Social Work Conference since Covid 19, in Prague, Czech Republic, with the support of the Czech Association. These essential events brought together representatives from across the region, facilitated important discussions, strengthened relationships and set a clear direction for our work plan in 2023/24.

IFSW Europe also stepped up to support social workers facing duress in 2023. We continued ongoing direct support for colleagues and communities enduring the war in Ukraine, supported colleagues in Turkey responding to the devastating earthquake of February 2023 (whom I visited in August 2024 – see <https://www.ifsw.org/regions/europe/>) and reached out to colleagues supporting the mass migration from Nagorno Karabakh into Armenia.

The transition of the Presidency from Ana Radulescu (Romania) to Ruth Allen (UK) in April has been aided by excellent cooperation. The support of the outgoing Honorary Secretary, Teodora Dobra (Romain) and the incoming, Jill Childs (UK) has been vital and thanks are due also to outgoing Vice President (VP) John Brennan (Ireland), incoming VP Andreas Kikvik (Norway) and members of the whole Executive Committee who have provided support,, stability and wise counsel in this time of change. <https://www.ifsw.org/regions/europe/>



ANNUAL DELEGATES MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES 2023

The **IFSW Europe Annual Delegates Meeting May 2023 in Prague** was a vibrant gathering of social work leaders from across Europe, united by a shared mission to strengthen the profession. Representatives collaborated to enhance the visibility of social work, exchanging knowledge and innovative practices. Key decisions were made, including the approval of the annual budget and work plan, setting the course for the year ahead. The meeting underscored the power of cooperation, ensuring that social workers continue to play a vital role in addressing Europe's most pressing social challenges.





EUROPEAN SOCIAL WORK CONFERENCE 2023



The European Social Work Conference 2023 in Prague was a significant event for IFSW Europe, bringing together over 500 social workers, people with lived experience of using social services, and other organisational and individual allies and partners. The conference was the first in-person major European social work gathering since the Covid pandemic. The event highlighted IFSW Europe's leading role and fostered important discussions on the future of social work and the future of social rights across our nations. The insights gained and connections made during the conference contribute to the ongoing advancement of social work practices and policies across Europe and shape IFSW Europe's future workplans.





PROJECTS AND COLLABORATION HIGHLIGHTS 2023/24

Project: Eco-wisdom for social workers, leaving no one behind

IFSWEurope initiated this project to promote and develop the role of social workers in supporting and advocating for the rights of people most affected by climate change and environmental crises. Globally, these are often the most marginalised and impoverished citizens and displaced people. Our project links with the development and publication in 2022 of the IFSW and global partners' *People's Charter for an Eco-Social World* <https://newecosocialworld.com/the-peoples-charter-for-an-eco-social-world/> Social workers need skills, knowledge and motivation to address environmental injustices as a regular part of their practices and to be part of the wider challenge of developing sustainable ways of living and working..

In 2023, the IFSW Europe eco-social project engaged members through in our delegates meeting and laid out a programme of activities. In June 2024 our 'working conference' in Rotterdam explored the principles and practices needed for eco-social progress. This will shape our outputs and activities in 2024/25 leading to our eco-social European conference in Oslo in October 2025.



Project: RESPONSIVE Increasing responsiveness to citizen voice in social services across Europe

IFSWEurope is a consortium partner in this 36 month Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Action project on the theme of 'The future of democracy and civic participation'.

RESPONSIVE project aims to enhance the responsiveness of Europe's social services to input from diverse citizens.

Led by colleagues at the University of Innsbruck, the project includes six universities in different countries and other leading organisations in social services, social work and civic engagement,

Between 2023 and 2026, the project will explore the **challenge** of ensuring citizen participation has an impact on social services;. It aims to provide evidence of how social services can be more responsive to diverse citizen input and participation, and model both better co-production and better, more responsive social services.



<https://www.ifsw.org/regions/europe/>



PROJECTS AND COLLABORATION HIGHLIGHTS 2023/24

Project: Social Workers Influencing Transformational and Sustainable Social Protection and Social Rights in Europe

IFSW Europe continues to play an active role in promoting and monitoring the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) and ensuring that the perspectives of social workers from the front line and social work professional knowledge are brought to the attention of policy makers at the decision level. IFSW E represents wider Europe beyond the EU and promotes social rights particularly through our representation within the Council of Europe's Conference of International NGOs (CINGO) and promotion of the Social Charter and the European Rights Convention System.

In 2023, IFSW Europe continued and extended its influencing activities and representation in key bodies including:

- The European Social Platform,
- The European Commission,
- The European Parliament
- The Council of Europe through its Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations and support for the Social Charter
- Other statutory and non-statutory networks, including the European Anti-Poverty Network, Fundamental Rights Agency and the European Social Network.

Project: A Social Europe is Possible! The Young and New Generation of Social Workers are the Spearhead of Change!

Given the complex and rapidly changing conditions in which we work, IFSW Europe has a major responsibility to facilitate Europe-wide exchange of knowledge and good practices. A particular focus in the last 4 years has been intergenerational learning across and particularly supporting and empowering our next generation of social workers.

Our Young and New Social Worker Project produced its final survey report in 2022. In 2023 we supported the group to continue meeting, to disseminate its findings in conferences, papers and through IFSW events, formal meetings and communications. The project group has continued to develop and in 2024 will bring forward plans for the next phase of action.

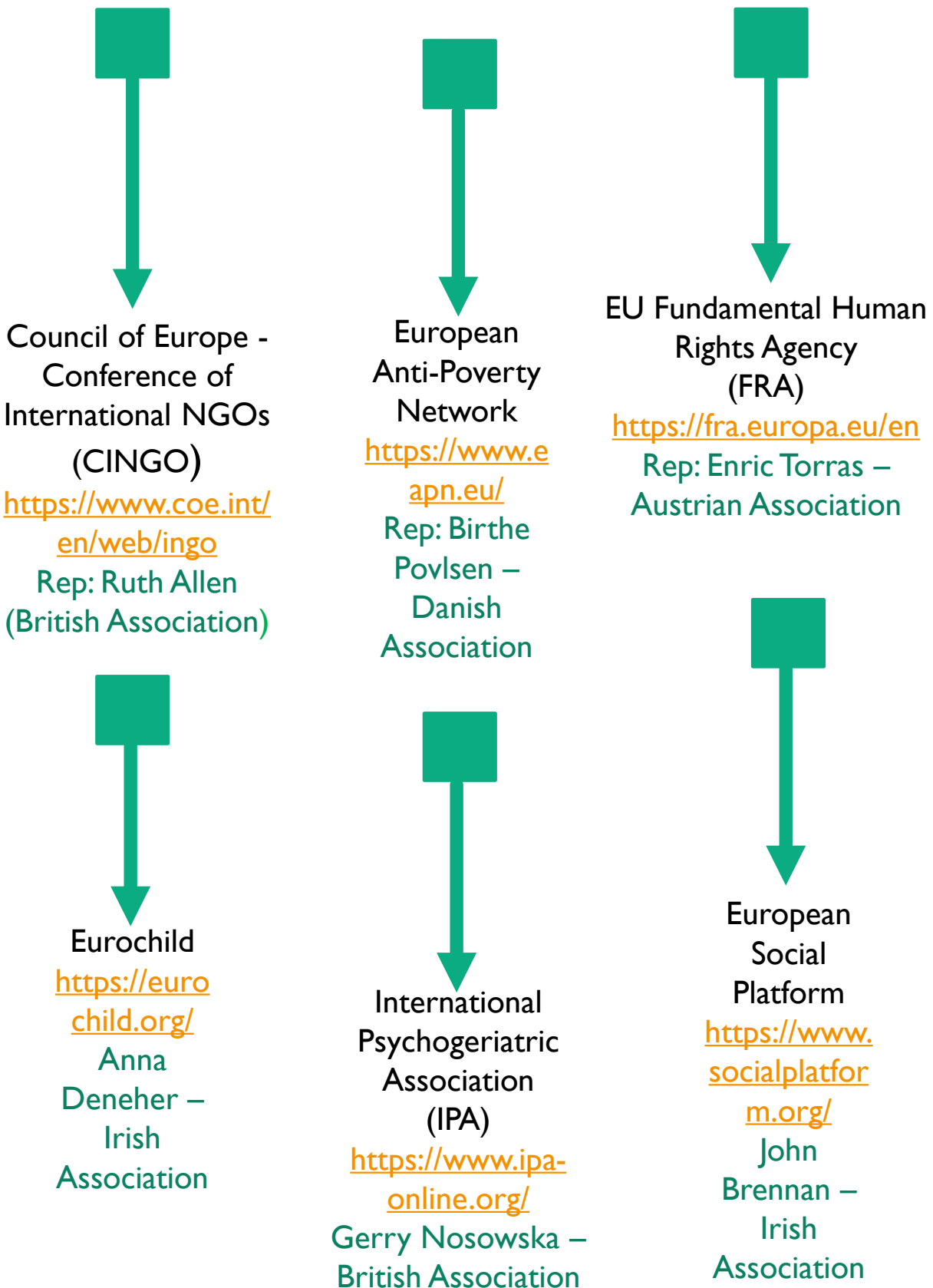
We have supported new and young social workers to take on roles within IFSW's representative group including representing IFSW in the Council of Europe World Forum for Democracy and Conference of International NGOs.





SOCIAL WORK REPRESENTATION IN EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

Our representatives in 2023/24 continued to strengthen our cooperation within relevant institutions across Europe. Reports are provided in the papers for the Delegates' Meeting 2024





EUROPEAN REPRESENTATION WITHIN GLOBAL COMMISSIONS 2023/24

IFSW Global currently has four overarching commissions that develop social work approaches, policy and evidence at global level. There are appointed global commissioners who work with the regional commissioners that help to make the commission relevant and visible in each of region. Below are the regional and global commissioners up to October 2024. More information on the global commissions is available here <https://www.ifsw.org/ifsw-commissions/>

Global Commission	European Commissioner 23/24	Global Commissioner 23/24
Ethics	Gabriele Stark-Angermeier – German Association	Jane Shears – British Association
Indigenous	Margaretha Karlberg-Uttjek – Swedish Association	Hilary Weaver – Canadian Association
Education	Nicolai Paulsen – Danish Association	Vasilios Ioakimidis – Greek Association
United Nations	Herbert Paulschin – Austrian Association	Priska Fleischlin – Swiss Association



PROJECTS

BUILDING SOCIAL SUPPORT IN UKRAINE 2023

IFSW Europe continued to undertake co-creative development work with Ukrainian colleagues in Kamenets Podilsk District of the country. In 2022 and 2023 IFSW members and supporters donated to enable this work to happen and this has led to further project funding from other sources. IFSW E will be winding down directly funded initiatives in 2024 while continuing to support our colleagues across the country with professional development and conflict zone support initiatives.

Further information about all IFSW Europe's work in Ukraine is available here

[Social Work in Ukraine – International Federation of Social Workers \(ifsw.org\)](https://www.ifsw.org)

Project: Development of Community Social Center



Project:

Improvement of shelter conditions for internally displaced people in the district of Kamjanez-Podilskyj, Khmelntytskyj region, Western Ukraine



Project: Development of Social Shop





TRAINING SOCIAL WORKERS AND SOCIAL SERVICES PROFESSIONALS



Training:
"Social work with youth
at risk"

Training:
"Integrated approach in
Community Social Centers"



Training:
"Social workers to
respond to emergencies
and long-term response"





WEBINARS

IFSW Europe Human Rights Network Webinar to mark Human Rights Day 2023 – Social Work Practice and the Protection of Human Rights in Europe: freedom, equality and human rights for all

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) Europe Human Rights Network hosted a free webinar to commemorate Human Rights Day 2023 and highlight the crucial role of social workers in defending human and social rights.

The webinar also marked the 75th anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights, which is central to social work values and ethics. Amid rising anti-human rights rhetoric in Europe, the event showcased how social workers advocate for rights through direct practice, activism, policy, lobbying, and education.

Innovation in Social Services in Ukraine, March 7, 2024

The presentation highlighted three key initiatives aimed at enhancing social assistance in Ukraine, focusing on the unique needs of various vulnerable groups.

First, the Rehabilitation and Recovery Center for Service Members and Their Families addresses the critical gap in support for military personnel and their families, who face physical and psychological challenges due to ongoing conflict.

Second, the Home Services for the Elderly initiative focuses on delivering technical rehabilitation, household management, and psychological support to immobile elderly individuals within their homes. Lastly, the Social Rehabilitation Center for Children with Musculoskeletal Disorders is a pioneering effort to offer comprehensive rehabilitation aligned with EU standards.



WEBINARS

Social work and ageing: The vital role of social workers in later life

1st October 2024 – to mark UN
International Day of Older
Persons

Every day social workers change the lives of people of all ages. However, social work with older people is often invisible. This webinar shone a light on how social workers are responding to issues that affect older people across Europe, including poverty, migration and conflict. With speakers from different countries, and types of work, participants found out more about this vital area of social work and the amazing difference social workers make for older people.

<https://swopresearch.wordpress.com/>

Side Event – 67th United Nations Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) Injectable Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT) with Hydromorphone in Austria – a new perspective? Wednesday, 20th March 2024

A feasibility study conducted at Vienna's "Jedmayer" care center explored the use of supervised self-administered intravenous hydromorphone as an alternative to oral opioid agonist therapy (OAT) for clients who do not respond well to oral treatments due to side effects or sustained cravings. The study found that intravenous OAT with hydromorphone effectively reduces non-medical drug use and is safe, with high retention rates enabling social workers to better address clients' social and psychological issues



We invite all social workers, member organizations and partners to stay connected, continue to share knowledge and collaborate on future Social Europe initiatives.

Together, we can have an even greater impact across Europe, ensuring that social workers and social care professionals remain at the forefront of positive change.

YOU CAN CONTACT US AT
europe@ifsw.org

IFSW Europe President April
2024 to present – **Ruth Allen**

IFSW Europe President 2023 to
end March 2024 – **Ana
Radulescu**