



(Draft) IFSW Europe workplan progress report (May 23 – October 24)

For presentation to the IFSW Europe Delegate's Meeting 25-27 October 2027

Introduction

This is the draft progress report for the 18-month period between the Prague IFSW Europe (IFSW E) Delegate's meeting in May 2023 and the next meeting held in Lisbon in October 2024. The report provides a summary update against the workplan items agreed in 2023. It will be finalised during the Delegate's Meeting and formally adopted. It will inform the discussion in the Lisbon meeting about workplan priorities for 2024-25 (up to the next Delegate's Meeting in Oslo in October 2025).

This report is complemented by the 'Annual Report on Activities and Impact 2023 -2024' which will form the basis of our publicly available report, subject to any amendments after the Delegates' Meeting.

Change during 2023/24

During 2024, the Presidency and Vice Presidency of IFSW Europe changed through elections at the Global IFSW Delegates' Meeting in Panama in April. Ana Radulescu (Romania) completed her term of office as President and Ruth Allen (UK) was elected to serve as President from 2024-2028. John Brennan (Ireland) finished his term as Vice President and Andreas Kikvik (Norway) was elected to serve as Vice President from 2024-2026 (first term).

On behalf of the Executive Committee and all members of IFSW Europe, great thanks are extended to Ana for all her work and dedication in developing IFSW into a much more effective and better resourced body compared to at the start of her tenure six years ago. She led IFSW Europe during two periods of upheaval in Europe; the period of Covid 19 and the need to respond to the invasion of Ukraine, supporting social work and civil society in the country and supporting the impact on social workers across our region.

Ana has provided support and ensured an effective handover to the new President and Executive committee members. Continuity of administration and of all our activities is essential for the delivery of our current work plans. We must not lose momentum while at the same time, taking stock and deciding on new or enhanced directions for IFSW E.

Great thanks are also extended to John Brennan for his diligent and supportive work for IFSW and in European institutions, such as Social Platform, over many years. He has generously continued to act as convener of our regular representatives' meetings even after finishing as Vice President.

Our Honorary Officer for the past six years, Teodora Dobre (from Romania), is also now standing down at the end of October and the role is transitioning to our new Honorary Secretary, Jill Childs (from UK). Huge thanks are also due to Teodora who has been an



excellent Honorary Secretary. She has improved vital aspects of our administration. She has had to create many processes from scratch and has also been an excellent project manager and coordinator on many aspects of new and projects for IFSW E. We wish her all the very best and welcome Jill into this role from October 2024.

Report against the 2023 workplan

1. COMMUNICATION

OBJECTIVES

1.1. Increase Online Visibility

■■■ Knowledge sharing – organise webinars, learning events and regularly publish about IFSW E and the activities of our member organisations

- **Webinars:** In addition to other inline member meetings and events, IFSW E offered four online webinars in 2023/24 on the topics of
- **Online training:** In collaboration with the Association to Social Workers in Turkey
- This has not been a major area of activity for IFSW E in 2023/24 but training has been provided with the Turkish association and in support of colleagues in Ukraine. The opportunity for IFSW E to collaborate across our membership and provide more online training (beyond standalone webinars) is an area for further consideration in 2024/25.
 - Example: CFCECAS (Romanian training organisation) and IFSW E collaborated to provide training entitled *“Empowering Social Worker Preparedness for Disaster Emergency and Long-Term Response,”* achieving over 300 registrations and 103 participants receiving certification. The program focused on equipping social workers with essential skills for effective disaster response, highlighting their crucial role in community resilience and recovery, especially in light of Turkey’s recent earthquakes.
- **Publishing:** We have published updates on our website pages throughout 23/24 and these can be accessed here <https://www.ifsw.org/regions/europe/>
- A list of summaries and direct links to reports of significant events and activities to which IFSW contributed or provided support to our members is available at the end of this report.
- **Social Media presence:** Facebook has been our main outlet and has been well used. X (twitter) has been less well used and is now subject to ethical considerations since being take over by Elon Musk. Continued use of different social medial platforms including ethical considerations will be discussed at the Delegates’ Meeting in Lisbon.

1.2. Increase Internal Communications

■■■ Increase the contributions and involvement of member organizations within the activities of IFSW Europe Representatives, networks and projects

- We have maintained communications through email, social media and use of the IFSW website as above. Articles, reports and announcements have been regularly



disseminated/uploaded and these include contributions from many member organisations as well as content generated by the Executive.

- We have held consistent quarterly representatives, regional commission and project/network meetings to improve communication between these work strands, encouraged cross-theme engagement and supported those taking these roles. See section 5 for further information about the Representatives group.
- At the end of this report, you will find links to reports that have disseminated information about solidarity and support actions by IFSW E with our members on matters of national policy, practice and political issues affecting social workers.

2. FINANCES

OBJECTIVES

2.1. Prepare applications for external funds and access external resources for specific activities;

In this period, we have been successful in gaining external project funding as partners in two research projects:

- **RESPONSIVE project** – <https://responsive-europe.eu/> A ‘research into practice’ project led by the University of Innsbruck with multiple university and other partners including IFSW E. Commenced in 2023, running to 2026.
Aims: The RESPONSIVE project aims to enhance the responsiveness of Europe’s social services to input from diverse citizens.

This is a Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Action “The future of democracy and civic participation”. Start date: 1 March 2023, 36-month project.

IFSW Europe was a lead partner in organising The International Research, Policy and Practice Conference on “*Responsive Social Services: Strengthening the Impact of User Participation*” in Bucharest on April 22-23, 2024.

This event served as a crucial platform for exploring how social services can better integrate user input to enhance participation, co-creation, and co-production. In the context of rising social inequalities, financial challenges, and the growing digitalization of the social sector, the conference aims to foster a collective understanding of how to strengthen user participation. Featured keynote speakers from European institutions, the EU, local politicians, academics, experts by experience, social workers in practice, and included roundtables, workshops, and parallel panels, enabling dynamic discussions and networking opportunities.

- **Cocoso project** - new project gained in 24/23. Estimated start time is November 2024



Call: HORIZON-MSCA-2023-DN-01-01

COCOSO aims to make co-construction a meaningful reality for all stakeholders in the field of social welfare. COCOSO brings together key experts from 6 universities and 16 non-academic partners across 11 European countries. Doctoral research and training are designed to address the pressing demand for meaningful and democratic collaboration with all citizens involved in social services and policies: services users, practitioners, community, decision- and policymakers, by addressing four main objectives:

1. Develop a Common Understanding of Co-Construction (WP1).
2. Embed Co-Construction in Policies and Services (WP2).
3. Include Diversity in Co-Construction (WP3).
4. Enhance the Potential of Digital Tools for Participation (WP4).

- ASSERT – We have submitted (September 2024) to be a partner within another EU funded project, led by Volonteurope (an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) representing volunteer organisations across Europe, and Paris Nanterre University. This project would focus on the training of social workers and civil society actors in effective human and social rights advocacy. We will hear the outcome of this in Spring 2025 – it is a competitive funding round.

2.2. Ensure efficient management of IFSW Europe finances;

- See the Financial Report to the Lisbon Delegates' meeting. This is a pre-audit report. With that caveat, the report which demonstrates accountability and prudent financial management, good collection of member fees, and surplus income from projects which can be used towards other priorities in IFSW.
- We are awaiting completion of the audit of our accounts for the financial year 2023 and this will be reported to members and an online vote for adoption will happen after the Delegates' Meeting
- We currently still need to change the signatories of the IFSW E bank account to the new President and Vice President. The account is managed with the support of the German Association. This will be a priority for 2025.

2.3. To finalise the process to bring the IFSW Europe as a legal body in compliance with the German authorities.

- Outstanding issues remain with finalizing the information required in German court. This will be a priority for the President in 2025. This part of this report may be updated further to a discussion in the Delegates' Meeting on 27 October 2024.

3. MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. Support member organizations to develop more active arrangements for mutual support and development, such as webinars for our members to facilitate sharing and learning.



- (See also updates about online events in communications section)
- This is an area for further development in 24/25 through potentially providing more platforms for members to come together online throughout the year. This will be explored during the Delegates' Meeting

4. IFSW EUROPEAN CONFERENCE

OBJECTIVES

- 4.1. Provide the necessary support to members for organizing IFSW conferences;
 - 4.1. Ensure the visibility of the IFSW European conferences.
- See the separate '*Annual Report of Activity and Impact*' in the Delegates' online pack for report on the successful conference 2023
 - A progress report on conference 2025 will be presented in the Delegates' Meeting.
 - The call for conference 2027 will be opened in the Delegates' Meeting

5. IFSW Representatives

OBJECTIVES

- 5.1. Engage social workers in the work of IFSW Europe and to represent us in contact with our partners;
- 5.2. Ensure coordination between the IFSW Europe agenda and the activities of IFSW Europe representatives. To help achieve this aim, set up a facility via the Executive Committee for all Representatives to meet regularly to coordinate activities and plans.

The work of the IFSW E representatives has strengthened throughout 23/24, not least thanks to the coordination work of John Brennan hosting quarterly representatives' meetings online, facilitating cross-them learning and support, and encouraging representatives, who are often working alone, to continue and share their work.

Some representatives also work with a support team who can meet with the main representative for support and to share ideas and sometimes deputise. This arrangement has moved forward since the last Delegates' Meeting in 2023 but may be further developed.

Our European institution representatives May 2023 to October 2024 are:

- CINGO – Ruth Allen
- Fundamental Rights Agency – Enric Torras
- European Anti-Poverty Network – Birthe Povlsen
- (Social Platform – John Brennan)



- International Gerontological Society (Gerry Nosowska)
- IFSW Europe Human Rights Network (Kristina, Marcin, Enric and Ruth)
- New Social Workers Project (Omar Mohamed and colleagues)
- Eurochild (Anna Deneher – online)
- Eco-social project (Josien Hof)

IFSW global commissions – European regional representatives 23-24

- Indigenous (Margaretha Karlberg Uttjek)
- Education (Nicolai Paulsen)
- Ethics (Gabriele Stark-Angermeier)
- UN (Herbert Paulschin)

1.3. Increase communication with IFSW Europe partners

- Ensure continuity between IFSW Representatives and our partners;

In addition to the institutions where we have regular representation as described above, we have continued to develop and sustain wider links with partner organisations and political institutions throughout 2023/24. Below is a list of bodies where we have ongoing links and partnerships. Developing these is an important part of our external relations strategy.

These links and partnerships are helping us advance social work, support our members better, increase our influence on policies at European level, strengthen recognition of IFSW across Europe and enable us to undertake commissioned work which sustains us financially. The new commissioned projects started (i.e., Responsive – see 2.1) and won (i.e., Cocoso – see 2.1) evidence this widening recognition across Europe.

Key institutions where we are increasing connections include:

- European Social Network
- EU Commission
- European Social Work Research Association
- Volonteuropa
- University partners (particularly through the new commissioned projects)

6. NETWORKING AND LOBBYING

OBJECTIVES

6.1. Engage with EU network and institutions (including the EU Commission and Parliament), UN, Council of Europe and the other network in Europe to further the voice of social work.

- Reports from representatives will provide updates on this

7. THE SOCIAL WORK DAY 2023

OBJECTIVES

7.1. Create and promote all over Europe common key messages within the Global Agenda theme of 2023.



- While all members were encouraged to participate in World Social Work Day and the global agenda themes in 2024, and social media posts carried the IFSW E messages, this is an area for possible further consideration and development in 2025 to further develop the potential to unite our members around this day and to ensure we reach out to global colleagues on our common agenda.

8. RELATIONS WITH IFSW GLOBAL

OBJECTIVES

8.1. Ensure IFSW Europe representation to the IFSW Global Commissions;

- Regional commission representatives have been in place for each of the current commissions: Ethics, Education, UN, Indigenous
- IFSW E members and the IFSW E Executive provided extensive feed into the drafting of the new Global Commissions Policy (which is currently out for member voting)
- Work has been undertaken by the current President and Vice President to clarify the role of Regional Commissions and their appointment in light of the possible policy changes at global level.

8.2. Contribute to the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development process.

- IFSW E has continued to support and reflect these global themes in a variety of ways. This includes the focus of our projects (e.g., Eco-social work project) and in our conferences (e.g., inclusion of themes in the Prague conference and upcoming focus on eco-social work as the major theme in Oslo). The eco-social, social development and empowering community focus also influences the work of the European institution representatives (e.g., in supporting the social and eco-social rights perspectives in Council of Europe and in the focus on anti-poverty work across several of our representative activities).
- The extent and means by which IFSW E reflects the global agenda and the Eco-social People's Charter is a subject for discussion in the Lisbon Delegates Meeting.

9. POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL ACTIONS

OBJECTIVES

9.1. Develop policy statements that reflect the priorities of IFSW Europe member organisations;

- For discussion for 24/25 workplan

9.2. Develop IFSW Europe documentation/information packs on the implementation of the European projects to support member organisations in any advocacy work at EU level;

- For discussion for 24/25 workplan

9.3. Set up a consultation mechanism to define 'social services' from an IFSW Europe perspective. Definition to be brought to the next Delegates meeting for ratification;

- For discussion in the Lisbon Delegate's Meeting with help of Hungarian Association



- 9.4. Participate in the 2023 Poverty Watch Survey coordinated by EAPN.
- completed and presented at the Lisbon Delegate's Meeting

10. ENSURE AN EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECTS

- 10.1. ~~IFSW European Project (2018) – Social workers for transformational and sustainable social protection in Europe; Project ended~~
10.2. IFSW European Project (2020) – A Social Europe is possible! The new generation of social workers – Proposal from the New Social Workers Group coming to Lisbon Delegate's Meeting
10.3. IFSW European Project (2022)– Developing eco-wisdom – leave no one behind! – Ongoing project update at Lisbon Delegate's Meeting
10.4 Increasing responsiveness to citizen voice in the social services across Europe.
- Report on Responsive project progress at Lisbon Delegates' Meeting

11. NEW PRIORITIES TO TAKE FURTHER

- 10.1. Eco Social Work & Climate Change;
10.2. International Collaborative Social Work Learning.