

First steps towards the creation of the European Social Minimum

(First draft)

Harmonization of our technical terms in Social Work (theory and) practice
(based on IFSW Social Work definitions + S.W. Code of Ethics)

Neoliberalism, political reorganization, managerialism in Western **Europe**, and authoritarian governments in Eastern Europe fundamentally shape the social care system, thereby influencing the practice of Social Work and the state of our profession.

In the **Hungarian Association of Social Workers**, we experience every day how the air is running away from around the professional interest representatives, how a profession bound to a widely accepted university degree becomes an executor of local or national politics without solidarity or empathy.

We know that professionals both in Eastern and Western Europe feel the radical increase of the controlling function of our helping and empowering profession.

Today, in Hungary, not only university and professional education are downsizing, but even **Social Work/Social Policy is also being renamed** by the Hungarian government. The new buzz-word is '*care policy*', that has nothing to do with the universal Social Work tradition and its new developments and focuses e.g. 'Ubuntu' or 'Eco-social work', and goes back to the charity based approaches. As a contrary majors and professional trainings, as well as those who adhere to and use the global definition of our profession, are at a disadvantage, as educators, field workers and students. Social Work in Hungary can probably be considered the most endangered profession in Europe, because the Hungarian government is trying to eliminate it.

The best way to cope with this phenomenon is to create an EU social standard that is common in all EU countries, and as a consequence of this, Hungary has to accept it as the member of the EU.

Our common position is that the **European Social Minimum** can be established.

We believe that the harmonization of our technical terms in Social Work (theory and) practice might be the first step towards a common understanding.

Our **proposal** is to create an international, unified conceptual system by working groups (a bit like the global definition), which encompasses the basic values of social work and defines the most important concepts of social work in general, regardless of political party affiliation.

IFSW has three important 'products':

- a.) International Definition of Social Work,
- b.) International Code of Ethics for Social Workers,
- c.) World Social Work Day.

- d.) The (planned) EU-dictionary might be the fourth significant, common understanding of the European Social Workers' family.

It can be used:

- a.) in teaching,
- b.) in European legislation processes,
- c.) in the process of mutual acceptance of EU countries' trainings
- d.) and many more.
- e.) Last but not least it would be an important milestone in protecting the profession as an international one.

Steps ahead:

It should be included in the joint IFSW-E tasks that in the year 2025:

- = we shall prepare a grant application about the 'EU Social Work Dictionary',
- = we shall submit a grant application,
- = we must also leave enough time to the EU for assessment.

Therefore, it is hardly possible to start the Dictionary project before January 1, 2026, because

- = at least two online inter-organizational meetings will be necessary, where it will be decided:
 - = who will look for applications that can be applied for, and if they come across the call for tender, then
 - = who will write the application (possibly: Hungary!), but
 - = we will have to ask for a professional language check as well.

In Lisbon, a decision should be made about:

- = Which IFSW-E member-organizations the application should be shared with (which also means that we will start harmonizing the vocabularies of the given countries with these partner organizations).

When we introduced our idea in Prague, the following IFSW-E member countries responded immediately to participate:

1. Armenia (Non-EU country)
2. Denmark (EU country)
3. Hungary (EU country = Project Co-ordinator)
4. Israel (Non-EU country)
5. Poland (EU country)
6. Scotland (Non-EU country)
7. UK (Non-EU country)

Planned projekt work packages (WP)

WP1 - Open discussion about the reality of the European Social Minimum (SWOT?)

- a.) Desk research about the published opinions so far
- b.) One day online conference
- c.) Results of the running project of IFSW on Social Services
 - i. A Social Europe is Possible! The Young Generation of Social Workers are the Spearhead of Change! (Date of implementation: 2020 – on going)
 - ii. Social Workers for Transformational and Sustainable Social Protection in Europe. Date: 2017-on going)
 - iii. Social Work Promoting Social Cohesion in Europe

WP2 - Corpus (set of words to start with)

- a. Terms used by national legislations in the 7 countries
 - b. Overview of the national S.W. Dictionaries
 - c. Updating the national S.W. Dictionaries (new terms)
2. Grouping our technical terms (country by country)
- a.) No harmonization is necessary (they still have a single meaning today)
 - b.) Can be harmonized during the project period
 - c.) Can be harmonized in the longer term
 - d.) No harmonization is possible
 - e.) Basic terms used by national legislations

WP3 - Dissemination

- a.) Creating sub-pages on the home-pages of the participating countries
- b.) News on the home-pages of the IFSW-E + IFSW-International members
- c.) Community media (paid)
- d.) IFSW-E conference on the European Social Minimum in Hungary 15.09.2027.
- e.) Clients involvement / decisionmakers involvement run by the national associations

Main questions:

1.) Based on which actor's point of view, should we choose the words to be harmonize?

- a.) Client (!)
- b.) Social Worker (as service provider)
- c.) Decision maker (EU strategies, EU Social Pillars)

2.) How to finance the project?

- a.) EU funding
- b.) Norwegian Fund
- c.) Participants' countries governmental/for-profit/non-profit resources