



## **Report for the General Meeting 2012 from the European Region of IFSW**

This report reflects **the main achievements, lessons learnt and significant issues**, as they were reported to the European Delegates Meeting in April 2012, and also **the future regional plans** as agreed at the same European meeting in April 2012.

The report is divided in four thematic areas, including policy and organisational issues of IFSW Europe e.V.

1. Human rights
2. Social policy
3. Professional development
4. Organisational development.

### **Human Rights**

IFSW Europe has in 2011/2012 promoted Social Work and Human Rights by

- launching an “IFSW Europe DVD”
- including Human Rights issues in the present IFSW Europe project “The Social Consequences of the Financial Crisis”
- further promoting the outcome of the IFSW Europe project “Standards in Social Work Practice, Meeting Human Rights” towards European institutions and partners, including members of Social Platform
- promoting human rights and social work at national and regional conferences
- attending meetings of the INGO Group at the Council of Europe, the Social Platform FRAND working group and the European Fundamental Rights Agency
- supporting the Norbert Ferencz case in Hungary, and addressing the general situation for social workers and service users in Hungary
- nominating Antonina Dashkina as an IFSW Europe representative as vice-president of the Conference of INGOs at Council of Europe – and seeing she was elected as such
- supporting Graca André as the IFSW Europe focal point towards IFSW Global, as she has prepared a Network session on Social Workers realizing human rights for the World Conference in Stockholm in July 2012.



### **Social Policy**

IFSW Europe has in 2011/2012 addressed the consequences of the financial crisis for service users and for social workers. Specifically by

- commenting and having influence on several statements and letters coming through Social Platform to EU Institutions.
- taking part in Social Platform meetings, where the issue was high on the agenda.
- highlighting the diverse affects of the crisis for service users in general and specific groups of service users, e.g. children, migrants and Roma people, through statements/press releases.

IFSW Europe has in 2011/2012 focused on

- promoting social workers' role towards cross border mobility, confidentiality and information sharing by communicating IFSW positions
- the ongoing development at EU level on the Social Services of General Interest through representation in the SSGI working group within Social Platform
- attending the Social Platform Annual Conference "We CARE, how do EU CARE?", addressing the future of Care.
- the importance of social workers' international competences through representation at Council of Europe seminars.

IFSW Europe has in 2011/2012 promoted social policy issues by

- working within the INGO at Council of Europe
- attending the Social Platform working groups on SSGI and on Social Policy, e.g. contributing to Social Platform priorities and statements
- networking with other partners like EAPN, EPSU, ESN, EASSW and ICSW
- developing and facilitating the present IFSW Europe project "The Social Consequences of the Financial Crisis"
- involving national representatives in the different social policy activities at European level

### **Professional Development**

IFSW Europe has in 2011/2012 focused on

- further promoting the outcome of the IFSW Europe project "Standards in Social Work Practice, Meeting Human Rights" towards European institutions and partners, including members of Social Platform
- linking the European "Standards" to global as well as national discussions on ethics

IFSW Europe has in 2011/2012 focused on

- working conditions at risk as a result of the financial crisis, explicitly addressed in the present IFSW Europe project "The Social Consequences of the Financial Crisis"



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- addressing the working conditions as an important issue also in our work within the Social Platform and the INGO at Council of Europe

IFSW Europe has in 2011/2012

- practically supported The Role and Identity Project, run by a number of member organisations
- responded to the consultation on the proposed modernization of the European Professional Qualifications Directive and monitored the actual outcome of the modernization process
- been in dialogue with Kings College, who earlier this year presented a report on “Social work qualifications and regulation in the EEA” <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/sshm/scwru/res/capacity/swcea.aspx>
- promoted the Charter of Rights for Social Workers
- followed the preparation of the draft Global policy paper on employers' responsibilities

### **Organisational Development**

IFSW Europe has in 2011/2012 focused on

- the implementation of *The Connecting Members Project*, continually having challenges with the lack of replies from non active member countries, not knowing if we have the correct contact person or address
- showing special effort towards re-involvement of the member organisations in Hungary, Poland and Cyprus, and re-establishing links with the Netherlands who presently are not member
- identifying the challenges from the regional fee structure, and how it can be closer linked to the global fee structure and payment.
- developed a membership certificate to be presented to members annually

IFSW Europe has in 2011/2012 focused on

- identifying programmes and actual possibilities for application for Funding for European activities, including discussing within the Social Platform the future of the PROGRESS programme (where many SP members obtain funding)
- discussed the possibility to have a volunteer as fundraiser
- collecting membership fees.

In one case we have joined our Spanish member organisation in an EU project application.

IFSW Europe has in 2011/2012 focused on

- monitoring and developing the links with Social Platform, by participating in the Social platform steering group and regular contacts with the Secretariat



- discussing the need for a strategy for networking with other NGOs, and how to develop partnership agreements with relevant NGOs such as EAPN, EPSU, ESN, EASSW and ICSW
- evaluating the role of the IFSW Europe Permanent Committee on EU issues, and developing the future organisational capacity building towards EU Institutions and Social Platform
- calling for a volunteer based close to Brussels, improving our representation at various meetings and events in Brussels
- starting an evaluation of the cooperation within ENSACT, which today only is seen as a Conference partnership, and still focusing on the benefits from being together as well as making space for the IFSW Europe's independent profile and objectives
- improving the regional website [www.ifsw.org/europe](http://www.ifsw.org/europe) - and adjusting/updating our web presentations to the new IFSW website, which were launched earlier than we had expected.

## **Future regional plans (Work Programme 2012-2013 for IFSW Europe e.V.)**

### **Human Rights**

“Principles of Human Rights and social justice are fundamental to social work” (quoting the Definition of Social Work).

IFSW Europe shall

- continue to raise awareness in the Fundamental Rights and Social Platforms and Council of Europe of the contribution that the social work profession makes to the promotion of human rights and to challenging their abuse and the issues that concern us
- disseminate research and other material produced by these bodies to our member organisations
- investigate the idea of having national contact persons on Human Rights – as a tool to involve member organisations further in the European work on Human Rights and social justice
- Promote participation in UPR (Universal Periodic Review) shadow rapport at HR Council.

IFSW Europe shall do this through

- our membership of the European Fundamental Rights Platform



- our membership of Social Platform and the working group Fundamental Rights and Non-Discrimination
- our representation at the INGO at Council of Europe
- our regional focal point and national contact persons on Human Rights
- member organisations

## **Social Policy**

Social workers interact with given democratic positions expressed through social policy, at regional, national and local level.

IFSW Europe shall develop further and promote a European social worker approach to social policy through:

1. the IFSW Europe project “The Social Consequences of the Financial Crisis”
2. a clearer strategy on social policy initiatives and priorities

To conclude the IFSW Europe project “The Social Consequences of the Financial Crisis” and further disseminate the outcomes of the project by

- voicing the concerns of our profession about the impact of the financial crisis on social work services at European level and support member organisations to raise awareness of the impact of austerity measures on such services in their own countries, e.g. youth unemployment
- constructively engagement with this difficult situation and endorse the measures taken to alert policy makers to the impact of their decisions on those citizens who are already most disadvantaged and those providing them with essential social services in times of need..

To develop and improve our actual priorities towards EU Institutions and Social Platform. To be able to act proactive as well as react fast to social policy issues relevant for social workers.

IFSW Europe shall do this through

- representatives, including Executive Committee and representatives to COE and EU
- representatives of national member organisations
- more active involvement in our membership of Social Platform and the working groups on Social Policy and



on Social Service of General Interest

- development of our methods to have feedback from member organisations during the year
- development of our strategy for networking with other NGOs
- a clearer press strategy focusing on urgent and/or prioritised social policy issues
- project work – internally and joint.

Potential tools for IFSW Europe to promote social policy positions:

- leaflets
- statements
- website, blog and facebook
- links to networks (voice)
- lobbying
- disseminate existing documentation / evidence
- support production of new documentation / evidence
- seminars and conferences

## **Professional Development**

Social work in the 21st century is dynamic and evolving – and an ongoing focus on the professional development is a demand.

IFSW Europe shall further develop and promote the professional development for social workers on the following three prioritised areas:

1. Standards in social work
2. Working conditions for social workers
3. Recognition of social work

### *Standards in social work*

- further dissemination and follow up on the recent dissemination of the IFSW Europe project “Standards in Social Work Practice, Meeting Human Rights” – how is it received
- "opening" the Standards booklet and presenting the different elements separately



### *Working conditions for social workers*

- prepare a draft revision of the existing papers about Supervision and case loads

### *Recognition of social work*

- continue to monitor the modernization of the European Professional Qualifications Directive and the actual outcome of the modernization process (e.g. to develop a “readers digest” for social workers)
- disseminate and monitor the European overview of the recognition of social work done by Kings College
- develop our links with Institutions doing research within the field of the social work profession, aiming at bringing together Research and Practice. The contacts to Kings College is an example to follow
- develop our links with regulatory bodies looking at the social work profession
- follow up on the preparation of the draft Global policy paper on employers' responsibilities
- to develop an EU-project on mobility-scheme as a development of the role and identity project

### IFSW Europe shall do this through

- member organisations
- representatives, including Executive Committee
- Honorary Secretary
- volunteers
- cooperation with relevant partners

### Potential tools for IFSW Europe to promote professional development:

- leaflets
- website, blog and facebook
- lobbying
- disseminate existing documentation / evidence
- support production of new documentation / evidence
- seminars and conferences



## **Organisational Development**

IFSW Europe is a well established, regulated and registered organisation, while still development is needed in relation to capacity building – we need to improve communication with members (inward) and we also need develop lobbying/communication with partner organisations (outward).

IFSW Europe shall further develop the organisation on the following three prioritised areas:

1. the Connecting Members Project
2. obtain funding
3. capacity building / networking / linking with other organisations

*The Connecting Members Project* may include issues such as

- new members, e.g. conclude the process with Serbia
- re-establish contact to members/former members, e.g. Hungary, Cyprus, Poland, Latvia, Netherlands
- dialogue with and involvement of members
- value of membership – mission, aims, objectives and vision
- exchange between members, e.g. to involve neighbouring countries and/or partner-countries in the contact to non active member
- develop the IFSW Europe information platforms further, e.g. implement the European site in the IFSW website format, more frequent updates on our website, blog and facebook

*Obtain funding* may include issues such as

- establish a working group to look into this issue
- develop a volunteer fundraiser position
- improve the identification of external funding possibilities
- apply for funding, e.g. project funding
- IFSW global funding
- membership fees



*Capacity building / Networking / linking with other organisations* may include issues such as

- capacity building – develop new schemes, with reference to the Executive Committee (based on “memorandum of understanding”), e.g. internships, volunteers (fundraising, ESW editor, translation), representation (Brussels)
- representatives cooperate
- network-meetings, internal seminars, etc.
- develop partnerships based on a strategy, with EAPN and others
- joint representation / statements, e.g. closer cooperation within Social Platform towards the EU institutions
- joint activities, e.g. conferences

IFSW Europe shall do this through

- member organisations
- representatives, including Executive Committee
- Honorary Secretary
- volunteers

Potential tools for organisational development of IFSW Europe:

- translation services
- European Social Worker
- Leaflets
- DVD
- website, blog and facebook
- e-mail and Skype communication
- income / funds