

The European Social Worker



International Federation of Social Workers European Region

Presidents Address

Seasons Greetings to All Social Workers and their families across Europe.

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2012 has been a very complex year especially for people living in countries most affected by the financial crisis but also to others that somehow face a clear consequence of this difficult situation.

Social Workers are dealing with an increase amount and challenging work with their clients and in their daily professional jobs have to try to find new solutions for the problems service users are facing at the moment.

IFSW Europe is working to ensure that the voice of social workers is more prominent in local campaigns concerning the importance of maintaining the commitment within the EU to address poverty and inclusion, the cost in terms of avoidable suffering and greater expenditure in the long term of failing to do so.

The Secretary of IFSW Dr Rory Truell came recently to Portugal to meet me for discussion on the global work plan for the future but also as part of an important action of visiting countries imposing austerity measures. He wrote the following article for The Guardian reporting on his visit:

[How are Portugal's cuts affecting social workers? | Social care network | Guardian Professional](#)

General information and update on actions

Since September 2012 the executive committee has been very active working for the agreed actions according to the work plan approved by the Delegates Meeting in Armenia but have been mostly focused on some actions we defined as priorities for the moment.

The executive have approved an Executive Members Work Portfolio so each executive member has now a clear role leading a specific area of the work programme and each has developed action plans for the coming period to report on achievements and work in progress at the next delegates meeting.

You can get an update by reading the articles written by the executive members on this edition.

A new distribution of the countries has been agreed for the connecting members project and communication has started with the clear idea that the link person shall be a facilitator on the communication between the organisation and the executive.

The Call for Honorary Secretary was sent out and we have received 4 applications for the post. We are now in the process of evaluating the candidates so very soon we will be able to inform you about the new person who is expected to start working for IFSW Europe in the near future after Siobhan Maclean take off from her duties in April 2013.

We have already informed you about the new dates of the Ensact Conference in Istanbul in April 2013 but it was also decided recently a new venue for the Conference. Please visit the website for more information:

<http://www.ensactistanbul.org/en/>

We are hoping you'll be able to participate in this Conference.

The delegates meeting will take place from 14 to 16 April 2013 in Istanbul just before the Ensact Conference. Information on the venue, etc. will be sent to members as soon as possible.

The executive will meet again from 8 to 10 February 2013 and you will be hearing from us before that.

My wishes for 2013 is that the executive committee of IFSW Europe can answer the expectations from our members on the mission, aims and responsibilities we have by being the Voice for Social Workers in Europe, assuring more visibility for the Federation and Social Work Action and we are willing to provide more support to members organisations by strengthening the relations between all social work community and our partners.

Help us to help you through an active communication of your views and problems.

All best wishes for 2013

Cristina Martins

Regional President, IFSW Europe e.V.



ISTANBUL WELCOMES YOU...**We wish to see you in Istanbul to join 3rd ENSACT Conference****16-19 of April, 2013****Dear Colleagues,**

We have less than four months to 3rd ENSACT Conference. Once again I would like to inform you about the Conference.

3rd ENSACT conference will focus on "Social action in Europe: inclusive policies and practice. It addresses the question of how to foster inclusiveness and solidarity with vulnerable groups in times of economic and political uncertainty".

I believe that Conference will have an essential role to discuss contemporary social and professional issues and to share professional experiences mutually. Istanbul will be a bridge to create new cooperation and to strengthen existing connections. For social workers it is time to listen each other and create common strategies.

I am pleased to share with you, website of the Conference is taking more than one thousand visits per week from every corner of Europe and until now we received more than 390 abstract submissions. I believe the number of abstracts submitted will be around 500 at the end of abstract submission deadline. Join us and do not miss this great event.

The Conference will take place in Grand Cevahir Hotel & Convention Center which is located in the heart of the city of Istanbul. Participants will have chance to explore Istanbul, a city connects continents and cultures. In addition to its intensive scientific program, participants will find satisfactory opportunities for social-cultural activities. Please do not forget to visit the conference official web page, <http://www.ensactistanbul.org/en/>.

I wish to see you in Istanbul, one of the most beautiful cities in the world and Europe, on 16 to 19 April 2013.

With my kind regards

Hakan ACAR (PhD)

Executive member of IFSW Europe.

Executive member of Turkish Association of Social Worker

**3rd ENSACT****Joint European Conference**

Social Action in Europe: Towards Inclusive Policies and Practice

16-19 April 2013**Congress Venue: Grand Cevahir Hotel & Convention Center****REMINDER**

**Fundamental Rights Conference
6-7 Dec, 2012 in Brussels at the European Parliament**

Report on the highlights of the speeches and the main issues on the conference by Maria Moritz, representative of IFSW-Europe at the FR-Conference.

Opening speech Martin SCHULZ, EP President: "The biggest worry is that the EU is still not a member of the European Human Rights Conventions. Despite constant efforts we have not been able to modernise the management of the Schengen area as far as the minimum standards are concerned for defenders who are making progress on it very slowly. One of the problems that I have been dealing with as a long time member of the Committee for the Civil Liberties of this House, and keep me worried, is the greater and greater danger of fragmentation of the area of Liberty, Freedom and Justice. We had an ambition start, we wanted to implement an area of Freedom and Liberty and Justice, but what we see is a permanent opting in and opting out. More than a 100 measures under the third pillar has still not been implemented. Measures which without the full participation of the EP, that they were adopted without the full participation of the EP, are not subject to control by the European Commission and the European Court of Justice".

FRA Director Morten Kjaerum : It is indeed very fitting that we should hold a conference on access to justice here in the European Parliament, which has been, from the very beginning, such a driving force behind the development of fundamental rights safeguards throughout the EU. "Although access to justice is available in theory, the reality looks very different. In times of austerity more focus on access to justice is needed, not less. How can we use the current circumstances to deal constructively with the situation, which could perhaps even give rise to new, innovative ways forward?"

First of all, victims must be aware of the fact that their fundamental rights are being violated; in other words, everyone needs to know their rights.

Then, people must be aware that there are mechanisms - both judicial and non-judicial - to help them seek redress.

And thirdly, people must be enabled to pursue justice, whether by themselves, by means of expert advice or representation by a lawyer or an organisation acting on their behalf.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navanethem Pillay spoke of the importance of international standards in order to safeguard the rights of especially vulnerable groups: "Mounting social tension in several countries shows the dangers which can be associated with curtailing economic, social and cultural rights. Authorities should mitigate the social impacts of the austerity measures on the most vulnerable segments of the population." Paula Teixeira da Cruz, Minister of Justice, Portugal : "Member States face challenges to build a society that is equal and fair - the crisis cannot be an alibi nor an excuse".

Nils Muižnieks Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights: The traditional method of bridging the gap between the ordinary citizen and the judge has of course been legal aid. As the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe recognised in 1978, legal aid in non-criminal cases should not be seen "as charity to indigent persons but as an obligation of the community as a whole". The Strasbourg Court also developed an important body of case-law as to when legal costs interfere with the very essence of the right of access to a court. For example, denial of legal aid can be a human rights violation. However, statistics of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) show extreme variability in terms of court fees and legal aid. Legal aid budgets range from 1 euro cent per inhabitant in Albania or 3 euro cents in Hungary, up to 22 euros in the Netherlands or 46 euros per inhabitant in England and Wales. Even allowing for differences in legal systems, that is a ratio of thousands to one. In addition, some countries have problematic procedures and practices in granting legal aid. There is also a worrying trend in some to cut their legal aid budgets in the context of austerity measures (the cases of Latvia, Lithuania, UK and Bulgaria are particularly significant in CEPEJ statistics). Finally, we should bear in mind that many member states face huge difficulties relating to the functioning of their judiciary, such as excessively lengthy proceedings or failure to enforce final judgments. Many of the Strasbourg Court's judgments point to the failure of domestic courts to rectify violations. Even worse, the judiciary itself is the source of human rights violations in some cases. The figures are very telling: from its inception until 2011, the Court had delivered some 12,500 violation judgments, with over 10,000 counts of violation of the right to a fair trial within a reasonable time and the right to an effective remedy.

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Now a short overview what was going on in the working groups:

Raising legal awareness: new opportunities in the age of e-technologies? The use of information technology to raise legal awareness and hence improve access to justice is developing rapidly at both European Union (EU) and national levels. Electronic tools provide targeted e-services, online information on the existing justice system, e-complaint forms and databases, online handling of individual complaints and the use of video technology. They are often quicker and cheaper than the traditional paper-based systems and particularly well-placed to facilitate access to justice in cross-border scenarios. Yet, there are limits to the reach of such tools, especially since not all segments of society are sufficiently proficient in or willing to make use of e-technology. The lack of access to the Internet may also negatively affect some individuals, in particular the most vulnerable groups. At the same time, in the context of the often severely restrained budgets of national governments in the EU, investments in new e-technologies have been reduced.

Rights of victims of crime in times of economic austerity Persons who become victims of crime in a country other than their own often face additional problems when trying to access justice, such as dealing with language barriers, an unfamiliar criminal justice process and victim support mechanisms. The quality of information provided to victims of crime (in a language they understand) is a key factor in allowing them to access justice, as is assistance with handling expenses. This working group had the focus on highlighting promising practices and challenges in the area of victim support, with a view to identifying effective and cost-efficient ways of implementing the new EU Directive (Measure A of the Victims' Roadmap) establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime in all EU countries. The discussions will provide input to the FRA's for ongoing project on [Victim support services](#).

Ensuring access to a lawyer and access to legal aid The working group has discussed the challenges of ensuring access to a lawyer and effective legal aid in all areas, civil as well as criminal. Special consideration shall be given to cost effective practices and emerging innovative solutions in EU Member States. Further opportunities will be explored, such as the role of the non-governmental actors and private sector, including legal expenses insurance and pro-bono work.

Strengthening access to justice through bodies with human rights remit While access to justice typically means having a case heard in a court of law, it can more broadly be achieved or supported through mechanisms such as national human rights institutions, equality bodies, data protection authorities and ombudsman institutions. The work of these bodies with a human rights remit is typically closely tied to institutions not only at national level but also at regional and international level. These bodies thus link EU Member States to international organisations and monitoring mechanisms, supporting the more effective promotion and protection of human rights. To fulfill their role these bodies must be effective and independent, equipped with sufficient resources and the requisite competence to promote and protect – and monitor – the rights entrusted to them.

Towards effective mediation policy making The focus of the discussions held within this working group was to analyse practical costs and benefits of mediation for cases involving fundamental rights violations. The experiences gathered since the adoption/implementation of the Mediation Directive will serve as a basis for discussions on the desired balance between litigation and mediation in the EU judicial practices. Most specifically, the question of how the use of mediation impacts other fundamental rights as guaranteed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights will be looked at. Also, the practical experience gathered so far should be seen as an important source of information for decision-makers as regards future EU financial support for initiatives fostering mediation as an effective method of alternative dispute resolution.

Closing remarks by Maija Sakslin, Chairperson of the FRA Management Board:

1) The first message to take away: Despite the economic crisis and the austerity measures – or perhaps it would be better to say because of them, access to justice must be increased, not reduced. But this is not so much about the quantity, but about the quality of access to justice. Access to justice is a fundamental right in itself. But it is especially important, because it ensures the enforcement of other fundamental rights. Fundamental rights, access to justice and an independent and effective judiciary are cornerstones of our democratic societies. The other two being legislative and executive powers. The right to effective remedy, and the opportunity to seek redress for violations are basic rights – including in times of austerity. And when times get harder, more rights violations are likely to occur. The enforcement of human rights is the responsibility of the state. The role of the NGOs and of the private sector should supplement but not replace government measures. Therefore, promising models of governments supporting the non-governmental actors and private legal aid schemes should be further encouraged and promoted. For, as the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muiznieks, rightly recalled: Legal aid is not as charity but an obligation of the community as a whole.

- 2) The second message is: it is crucial to ensure that people, and especially vulnerable groups, are aware of their rights. There are many new tools for raising legal awareness, including of course e-justice tools. But any e-tool needs an initial investment. This can be even more challenging to achieve in times of austerity. Also, quite some education and training will be needed. As Commission Vice President Reding underlined yesterday: If we want to ensure an effective justice, we need to address obstacles people may face throughout the different parts of this 'justice chain'.
- 3) There are good instruments available - but they need to be used more. One such instrument is mediation. There is a lot of potential in accessing justice using this mechanism of alternative dispute resolution. A crucial element is the enforceability of mediation outcomes, to ensure that people feel confident to use this tool. Some countries have made very positive experiences with mandatory mediation. Overall evidence shows that mediation brings huge cost savings, as compared to going down the route of litigation. The Agency is currently working on a project on victim support services. We will be presenting an overview of the various models and features of victim support in existence across the EU next year. This will include promising practices of victim support services that can serve as models.

More information one can find on the event page:

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/event/2012/fundamental-rights-exhibition-european-parliament>

Jonas Grimheden: Access to justice in cases of discrimination in the EU

http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/a2j-frc-dec_2012.pdf

Press Release about Hate Crime 27/11/2012:

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/press-release/2012/hate-crime-reality-eu-two-new-fra-reports-show>

Photo Gallery of the conference:

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/photo-gallery/2012/fundamental-rights-conference-2012-justice-austerity>

Publications of FRA:

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications>

Maria Moritz, Member at Large for Europe, Executive IFSW-Europe, 11-12-2012

Photo at the publications stand:



Market Absorbs Social Services in the EU

An increasing imbalance between free market and social protection is undermining the European Union construction. The EU model is based on the conviction that economic progress and social progress are inseparable, yet we have to fight to secure basic welfare services in the context of a social Europe increasingly based on the premise that economic growth will secure high living standards and good working conditions.

Overshadowing of human rights

Descriptions of the European social model refer to welfare states which are typically nation-states. However, a division between such states and EU policies is emerging, opening the door to free market more and more widely. Thus, there is a wave of liberalisation and privatisation of social services driven by a profit motive rather than a desire to ensure that fundamental human rights are not infringed.

The problem is that fundamental rights must not be overshadowed by the freedoms of the internal market and the right to compete. On the contrary, they should be fully recognized as an essential element of the sustainable economic development of the EU. *The Treaty on European Union* states that "The Union shall respect fundamental rights, as guaranteed by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of the EU (Article 6, paragraph 1), which now has the same legal value as the treaties.

The question that has to be answered is how we can reduce tensions between economic freedoms and fundamental social rights. An economic domain is based on strong, direct competence of the Union, whereas social protection relies upon subsidiarity and responsibility of the state.

Prevailing of the economic domain

There is lack of understanding of differences between economic and social domains: the economic domain, having on its side more powerful instruments for lobbying, overcomes the social domain, which is weakened by the limited scope for democratic representation in the EU. The social domain is exposed to the risk of being absorbed into the economic domain and no longer being able to meet the expectations of society.

A good example of how the market absorbs social services is *the Directive on Services in the Internal Market*, commonly referred to as the Bolkestein Directive as it was drafted under the leadership of the former European Commissioner for the Internal Market Frits Bolkestein in 2004. The directive was controversial because it applied the same rules to social services as it did to private firms. The commission no longer saw social services as a special public good to be enjoyed by all citizens, but as a commodity to be traded across the EU like the services of estate agents or advertising companies.

Consequently the Bolkestein Directive provoked intense debate and mass protests in various EU countries over the two years before it was substantially amended and finally approved in 2006 as *the Service Directive*, which covered only services which were performed for an economic consideration.

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Despite the fact that social and health services have been largely excluded from the scope of the Service Directive the tensions between the integration of markets at the European level and social protection at the national level have remained.

So far there is no binding text which defines social services in European law. Social services are defined as Social Services of General Interest (SSGI) in the EU vocabulary and are subdivisions of Services of General Interest (SGI) which are known as "public services" in everyday language.

The latter are defined by the Commission as "services, both economic and non-economic that the public authorities consider as being of general interest". The definitions are given in the Commission communication *A Quality Framework for Services of General Interest in Europe*.

The current debate on social services raises the question of the legal status of social services in the internal market and competition rules. *The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)* gives Member States freedom to define the mission of general interest and to establish the principles of service organization. However, in the exercise of this freedom, the Member States are bound to comply with EU rules concerning the internal market and competition when they organize provision of social services of general interest.

In these circumstances, it is important to have a clear understanding of what the rules are for the provision of state aid and directly provided social services and those that must comply with public procurement requirements. It is necessary to accurately measure how all such arrangements affect the quality of services and in the case of private sector providers whether their ethos and values are consistent with those of social services.

Lobbying for the Social Europe

The European Social Platform, an alliance of representative European federations and networks of non-governmental organisations active in the social sector, including IFSW, has been carefully considering how the above mentioned rules are going to be applied in the social domain. During 2012 the Social Platform submitted detailed responses and recommendations to the following proposed EU policies.

- The Social Business Initiative,
- The Green Paper on Public Procurement,
- Directive on Public Procurement,
- The new Package on State aid Rules applicable to Services of General Economic Interest,
- Bank Accounts and Financial Inclusion,

Personal and Household Services.

IFSW Europe contributed a social work perspective to these responses and a presentation of the main characteristics of social service provision in the UK and the impact of EU rules was made by Bridget Robb of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) to the Social Platform's Working Group on Services of General Interest. .

The above mentioned activities largely concern the defence of the social domain, but recently the Social Platform has proactively proposed a Social Pact which will promote an alternative development model that responds to the needs of the population as a whole and spearheads the sustainable and inclusive development of our societies in the medium and long term. IFSW Europe will continue to contribute to this important initiative.

Dalē Kabšinskaitē, the IFSW Brussels representative



Report about the First International Forum of Social Workers of Volga Region (August 2012, Ulyanovsk)**"Social Cohesion, open society, equal opportunities"**

As member of the German Social Worker Association and member of the Board of IFSW Europe it was a great pleasure for me to take part in this first International Forum of Social Workers in the Volga Region. The initiative of the forum belongs to the Governor - Chairman of the Government of Ulyanowsk Region - Sergey Morozov and the Union of Social Workers and Social Pedagogues of Russia. The main objective of this forum was to improve social services and the quality of life for people with disabilities. Over 600 participants came to Ulyanovsk to share their experiences, to learn about new forms of work with disabled people, technologies and best practice working with groups of people and the law that protects people with disabilities. I was very impressed about varieties of possibilities to work and live with disabilities. I was quite impressed by the fashion presentation of clothes for kids with disabilities. This is a new view on life, disabled children are not poor - they are creative and vivid as other children.

In many workshops, master classes of presentations and discussion rounds the objective of social inclusion was discussed and new ideas were created to work in a better way for rehabilitation, to include all members of the society. The prevention and early childhood intervention are important parts of the work; this could be done by governmental and non-governmental organizations.

At the end of the forum the plenary meeting took place with speeches about the protocol of intention on the implementation of the Social Cohesion Plan between the Government of Ulyanovsk region represented by Governor Sergey Morozov, the public chamber of Ulyanovsk region and the Council of Europe (Social Cohesion - Research & Early Warning Division), represented by Gilda Farell. Antonia Dashkina as President of the Russian Union of Social Workers and Social Pedagogues prepared this important protocol for this Russian region with her colleagues of social workers in this region. This work shows very well the importance of presenting IFSW in the work of the COE.

I am thankful for this experience and wish good luck and success to all people engaged in that work in this region of Russia.

Gabriele Stark-Angermeier

IFSW Europe Executive Member.

Council of Europe Representative.





Heidelberg Declaration

Occupational Policy of the DBSH

Gabriele Stark-Angermeier sent us news of a new policy document by the German Association - DBSH. Here she introduces the policy which can be found on the DBSH website at www.dbsh.de



Social Workers are facing staff reductions higher and denser workloads and a loss of income.



Society and social work have altered in recent years. Societies around the world are faced with state budget deficits as a consequence of a neoliberal economic and political culture that is taking hold of all social spheres. The mounting debts of public authorities meanwhile restrict their political options available for social welfare, public education and training, and for fighting social ills.

On the one hand this leads to reductions or cuts in state transfer payments, and on the other to aspirations on the part of public authorities to regard social services as a mere commodity and buy them in as cheaply as possible.

For social workers this not only means staff reductions, higher and denser workloads, and a loss of income, but also a change in their work's concerns: where helping others to help themselves took pride of place before, control tasks and restrictive/bureaucratic specifications now proliferate. Policies meanwhile try to push for a deskilling in their deployment by way of an increasing specialization, segregation and "manualization" of tasks. Universities of applied science, in particular, tend to adapt to the market orientation brought about by this trend towards economization. Since the start of the Bologna process, at the latest, social work curricula have become ever more differentiated. Shortened and specialized courses are on the one hand aimed at ensuring the commissioning of reference sciences and their competences in the teaching process, and on the other designed to offer tailor-made courses for areas of social action that have been politically defined from outside the subject area. This means that an appreciation of the overall context and structural factors of social problems is being lost, along with an independent professional understanding of social work and its practices.

Given this background, the DBSH (German Professional Association for Social Work) wishes to engender a discussion that is aimed at two objectives.

1. Social work deals with social issues from a holistic perspective. It is hence essential to search for its common traits irrespective of specializations. This perspective also needs to be reflected in a generalistic training.

2. It must be made clear that no undermining of professionalism will be accepted in social work. We are the experts for all things social! What our professionalism consists of, and the resulting demands for the profession, society, policies, universities and responsible institutions, makes up the contents of this paper.

The DBSH is therewith contributing to the broad discussion with respect to ensuring professionalism in social work and its adequate funding. As a professional organization it is meanwhile taking a stand that is not informed by political or higher education policy considerations and/or the interests of responsible bodies, but sets its sights on the development of the profession as a whole instead.

Gabriele Stark- Angermeier

IFSW Europe Executive Member.



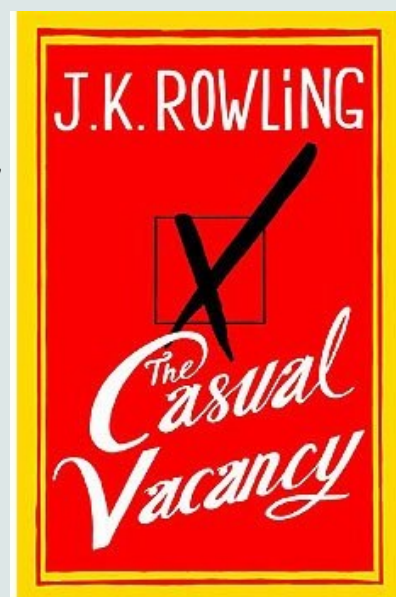
The Casual Vacancy

A novel by JK Rowling

JK Rowling, famous for the Harry Potter novels published her first adult novel earlier this year. The Casual vacancy features a social worker as a central character. Reviews of the book have been very wide ranging, with one UK newspaper reporting:

"It quickly becomes clear that this is not the book we might have been expecting. Recently arrived social worker Kay's first visit to a drug-addict mother of two at her home in the Fields brings us into the very heart of the world that the hawks on the parish council would like to simply wish away. It is a heart-in-the-mouth passage, taut with dread, invoking in the reader a vivid mirror of Kay's own fear, revulsion, anger, compassion and sorrow. ... There is villainy, from domestic violence to sexual abuse, including a rape scene that is most shocking in its banality for both parties."

Since JK Rowling is so well known it would certainly be worth a read for any social worker interested in how we are portrayed in popular fiction.



Social Work and Inclusive Democracy - Social Worker Perspective from Georgia

On October 7th, 2012 Civil Society Debate on "Inclusive Democracy" was organized by the Conference of INGO of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. The event was part of the week of the World Forum for Democracy - "Bridging the gap democracy between old models and now realities", 5-11 October, 2012" Strasbourg, France. The INGO Conference brought together NGO representatives from different continents for a debate on the principle of inclusive democracy which assumes the respect of human rights and a great involvement of women one hand and of the media on the other hand in the process of participatory Democracy. The civil society debate formed the basis for the contributions of the civil society representatives in the discussion of the World Forum for Democracy.

At the debate social workers from Georgia, including myself and Russia were presented.

Being Georgian social worker, where social work as a new profession is emerging, and where in general democracy is shaping, it was a motivating experience for me to get a chance to think through social workers role in building the democracy, which indeed is of an outmost importance.

What is inclusive democracy? What roles can social workers have in this process? These were the central questions for me while participating at the debate. Inclusive democracy is inclusion of vulnerable persons to democracy. This is indeed inclusion of young people, women, elderly, people with disabilities, etc in democratic processes. It is vital to hear people whose voices are not heard. It's vital to bring people without voices into democracy. These are important messages for social workers in their day to day practice. In my work I've realized that the word tolerate is not good enough, what is important is to recognize people who are vulnerable. If one can argue that democracy is a human need than it is for sure that social workers, we have an important task to help people to meet this need. It is not only important to let people, who are poor, to eat or people who are vulnerable let to survive, but to give an opportunity to vote and to equal all in this sense.

One of the most inspiring experiences of the forum was to have an opportunity to hear the speech of Tawakkol Karman, the woman who broke all the stereotypes. 32 years old Arab woman, the mother of three, and the international public face of the 2011 the Arab Spring uprisings, the youngest Nobel Peace Prize winner to date! I enjoyed her speech and several minutes in her company like many others did at the reception of the World Forum of Democracy. She is one of the amazingly powerful women I've ever met. She made it all real! She inspired me to be more active as a young women social worker in a traditional society to use my chance, to speak up and to be heard in support of others who are in need.

Salome Namicheishvili, MSW

Executive member of IFSW Europe

Chairperson of Georgian Association of Social Workers

Assistant Professor of Social Work at Tbilisi

Ivane Javakhishvili State University



Dancing in the rain!

Siobhan Maclean Honorary Secretary reflects on her time in post

As I am putting together this edition of the ESW the executive are interviewing candidates for the Honorary Secretary position. I will work to support the person appointed to ensure a smooth transition period and will be at the Delegates Meeting in Istanbul in 2013 as the last formal part of my role.

I have very much enjoyed being in this role since I was appointed at the end of 2007. I have learnt a great deal from those social workers I have met across Europe and I have very fond memories of the times that I have spent with members at meetings and workshops.

I have learnt so many things that I have been able to use in my work supporting social workers, students and field educators in the UK. Perhaps the most significant learning for me has been around the fact that social workers are part of a Global profession. What we do and why we do it are very similar across the diversity of Europe and the Globe, although exactly how we do social work may differ.

As social workers we know that in times of crisis people benefit from having support systems, having a strong and healthy identity and feeling part of a group. Yet in times of crisis many social workers become more inward looking, with a sense of "if I just keep my head down and get on with the job everything will be OK". As a result social workers become more isolated, losing faith in their professional identity and lacking a feeling of group belonging. Now is the time more than ever for social workers across Europe and around the world to come together and recognise the similarities we face and the way that solidarity can assist us in our aims.

As I sit here in the UK formatting the ESW it is raining (badly!) as it so often does in my country. It often reminds me of the saying that I was introduced to by Gary Bailey at the IFSW General Meeting in Hong Kong *"Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass. It is about learning how to dance in the rain"*. The members of IFSW that I have met have helped me to learn how to dance in the rain and for that I will be forever grateful. I look forward to seeing as many members as possible in Istanbul and formally handing over my role to whoever is appointed to the position. To them I say you are in for a treat. The current executive has developed an excellent vision for the region and I hope that all members join together to work with the executive to strengthen the voice of social work in Europe.

I hope to remain involved in the work of IFSW in some way in the future and I will always be happy to offer any support that I can.



Fighting for fairness and social justice: Solidarity breeds success

Ian Johnston, Executive Member of the IFSW European Region highlights the importance of forging new alliances with campaigning organisations who share our values and over-riding concern for others.

Whether we're working discreetly with individuals or groups behind the scenes or visibly campaigning against the growing poverty, injustice and inequality that are the root causes of so many of the problems confronting those requiring our services, we will not survive or succeed as social workers if we stand alone.

Never before has there been a greater need for the collective strength and solidarity that arises from social work professional networks and the strategic alliances we are actively forming with other groups within society who share our determination to secure inclusive policies and the re-distribution of wealth and resources that is so urgently required to ensure the future health and well-being of all citizens.

Member organisations will have noted from our circulars and reports on the European section of the IFSW website, our Facebook pages and our dedicated blog that we have continued to contribute very actively to the European Social Platform's lobbying activities to ensure that their campaigns against insensitive and damaging austerity measures reflect the concerns of frontline social workers.

Our capacity to undertake such work has improved immeasurably with the appointment of Dalė Kabašinskaitė as IFSW (Europe) Brussels based representative. The tension that currently exists between economic freedoms and fundamental rights is highlighted by Dalė elsewhere in this edition of ESW. We do not have paid staff in IFSW Europe and greatly value members' willingness to undertake work of this nature in a voluntary capacity.

The Social Platform's representations to the European Parliament, newly published position papers on Bias Violence and Financial Inclusion and recommendations on 'Care' (in English, French and German) are all very relevant to social work services and can be accessed from:

http://cms.horus.be/files/99907/MediaArchive/Policies/Social_Inclusion/121213_Social_Platform_letter_to_the_December_Council.pdf full letter

[our position paper with recommendations on EU actions against all forms of bias violence](#)

[position paper on financial inclusion](#)

[Our recommendations on Care are now available in 3 languages](#)

In October I attended Eurochild's Annual Conference in Sofia to present research findings on the Elimination of Corporal Punishment of Children in Alternative Care Settings on behalf of the Global Alliance of organisations and individuals pursuing this objective for all children. I was supported by Diana Petrova and Ivailo Milan of the Bulgarian Association of Social Workers.

This was a very worthwhile and stimulating experience as Eurochild, who are also active members of the Social Platform, had assembled an impressive array of young people, carers, professionals and politicians to persuasively present the case for increased investment in services that prevent family breakdown, respect children's rights and of course progress de-institutionalisation. I hope that we can work more closely with Eurochild in the future.

In the last edition of ESW I advised members that IFSW Europe had become an organisational member of the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), yet another active member of the Social Platform. This new partnership is enabling us to more effectively articulate the concerns of social workers about poverty at a European and National level. IFSW Europe was a co-signatory of letter to the EU President and Heads of Member States, that accompanied EAPN's petition urging them to maintain their commitment to address poverty and social exclusion.

I'm grateful to those of you who supported the Petition and would again appeal to all IFSW European member organisations to establish links with local EAPN networks in their own countries where these don't already exist and to support EAPN's campaigns. Full details of these can be found at the following website address: <http://www.eapn.eu>

I would take this opportunity to express festive greetings and best wishes for 2013 to all social workers and other activists striving for a more inclusive and caring society.



Ian Johnston
IFSW Europe
Executive Member

The Orange Tide, a new movement against the cuts in social services: News from Spain

April 2012 - The Orange Tide is followed by social workers, citizens and other social professionals and has emerged because of cuts in social services. Its slogan is "**Cuts No. Don't shut up!**". This campaign looks after the maintenance and quality of social services and the defense of human rights of citizens and professionals. The initiative has gained an important media attention and is being carried out many activities throughout the country.



2012 – Year of the Global Agenda

There have been years of preparations and intensive work on the **Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development**. 2010 the discussion on the contents of the Global Agenda was launched in Hong Kong and in January 2012 the agenda was published and presented at the UN-Development Programme in New York on March 30, the climax of the „Week of Social Work“ celebrating World Social Work Day (WSWD).

It is a pleasure to add that the Global Agenda is the result of excellent cooperation between IFSW, IASSW and ICSW, also it is a pleasure to mention the great efforts Dr David N Jones has taken as special representative for the Global Agenda to finalize the work.

Global Agenda – what does it mean?

The Global Agenda is a programme for the years to come (2012-2016) on one hand but also contains the commitments and values of social workers, teachers of social work and the representatives of social services.

Special is the commitment to take action on all levels, in all parts of the world, to thrive for more equality, more chances for development, more access to resources: „We believe that now is our time to work together, at all levels, for change, for social justice, and for the universal implementation of human rights, building on the wealth of social initiatives and social movements. We, the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), and the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), recognise that the past and present political, economic, cultural and social orders, shaped in specific contexts, have unequal consequences for global, national and local communities and have negative impacts on people.“ (Global Agenda, page 1) „Therefore: We commit ourselves to supporting, influencing and enabling structures and systems that positively address the root causes of oppression and inequality. We commit ourselves wholeheartedly and urgently to work together, with people who use services and with others who share our objectives and aspirations, to create a more socially-just and fair world that we will be proud to leave to future generations.“

The main issues are:

- OUR ROLE IN PROMOTING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUALITIES
 - OUR ROLE IN ENSURING THE DIGNITY AND WORTH OF THE PERSON
 - OUR ROLE IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT
 - OUR ROLE IN PROMOTING WELLBEING THROUGH SUSTAINABLE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS
- ENSURING AN APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENT FOR PRACTICE AND EDUCATION

All these issues should be taken into action on three main levels:

the United Nations and other international bodies and agencies

communities and other partners

our own organisations

Read more: [Global Agenda](http://cdn.ifsw.org/assets/globalagenda2012.pdf) (Link: <http://cdn.ifsw.org/assets/globalagenda2012.pdf>)

This Global Agenda is a message to all members of IFSW and to all social workers worldwide to be conscious in their daily work about the aims of the program, to rethink, check and align all action to the main issues.

Working on and with the Global Agenda does not necessarily mean there have to be developed special programs. Important seems to me that all members and all social workers should be informed about the Agenda and made conscious what the Agenda is aiming for. All efforts to work for better conditions for service users and for social workers are valuable and appreciated. Talk about your efforts and challenges and give us in IFSW feedback about discussions, conferences and projects.

IFSW Global will establish an implementation plan with arrangements for monitoring and review. We will provide regular reports on the implementation to the global community of social workers, social work educators and social development practitioners - and beyond.

To work on the program of Global Agenda IFSW-Europe has made plans to launch a project: Economic Crisis in Europe - Challenge and Response of Social Work Profession. The main aims of the project are: To present information about "the response of social workers/social work organizations to the ongoing economic crisis at the national levels, to discuss and decide on actions for social work organisations in an international level, to exercise advocacy, empowerment and lobby at European level; to Support and engage with member organisations and social workers in countries most affected; to express at high levels (governments, EU, etc.) the responsibility of social work profession for human rights and ethics by presenting alternative ways of dealing with the crisis and austerity.

Nevertheless we know the situation is continuing to deteriorate in many countries and there is a danger that further cuts in funding will halt the progress that has been made towards de-institutionalisation in Eastern European countries and de-rail the European 2020 commitment to reduce poverty and social exclusion.

The proposed project will be action orientated and build on the progress that has already been made at European level to raise awareness of the important contribution that social workers make to the protection of children and vulnerable adults and the implications for society of not investing in such services.

It will also increase the capacity of our member organisations to effectively lobby their national governments for the support that is so urgently required for the social work profession and those citizens who require our services. We count on your interest and solidarity!



Maria Moritz,
IFSW-EUROPE Executive
and Member at Large for the European region.

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Fundamental principles on the Swiss Codex for Social Work of AvenirSocial

Stéphane Beuchat of AvenirSocial reports on the Swiss Codex for Social Work

How is it that we opt for or against a certain alternative action? For instance, in the context of working with parents, we might give higher priority at a meeting to the parents' right to exercise their parental authority than to the adolescent's right to self determination. Or the other way around. Why do we decide for or against one or the other? On which criteria do we base our decision? Let us assume that there are no factual or technical reasons for deciding - logically - in favor of one or the other, that there are simply different interests: Which values and norms influence us when we have to (e)valuate such different interests?

If we proceed from the assumption that each single act of decision making always also presupposes a decision about values - no single human action is 'value free' - then our harmless opening question all of a sudden gains an immense dimension. Without doubt, we resolve almost all of our ethical dilemmas and decisions about values with great routine, practically unconsciously. As a rule, we make up our mind about alternatives without even being aware of the necessary criteria, values and norms. Therein lies precisely one of the great advantages of having professional, experience based knowledge. But, more than ever before, we are also forced to meet decisions without being able to clearly predict what the correct decision may be. We live in times where one needs to decide under uncertainties and under insecure conditions.

In such - rather rare, but all the more tricky - situations, we need competences and tools outside the scope of normal routine that guide decision making processes; but they never relieve us from the decision making process because evaluative decisions for actions cannot be delegated; the responsibility for them eventually always lies with the actor. So we have to create our own ethical and moral bases for decision making, we need to be able to create them. We have to be able to orient ourselves towards something.

In a professional context, a specific competence is therefore needed, namely the competence to reason rationally about value-decisions in action situations. Cognitive as well as non cognitive resources are important! This requires, for example, ethical, profession related moral knowledge on the one hand, but also, for example, emotional sensitivity and mindfulness on the other, inner readiness, as well as reflective practical experience. Against this backdrop, forms of knowledge that have not been greatly appreciated to date, such as practical knowledge or implicit knowledge, gain in significance. Yet, even when we have to eventually make personal decisions on value questions, this does not mean that it is random or unimportant how we decide. Every single decision must be justified based on criteria. Assuming that we want to be taken seriously as a profession, and as professionally qualified individuals, this justification rests upon a package of basic principles - shared within the profession.

What are the principles that are commonly shared by the social work community? What profession related ethical knowledge can help us in uncertain decision making situations? Upon what fundamentals is this knowledge based? In structurally conditioned uncertainties - which, for example, arise against the backdrop of unreflected and unconditional costsaving measures - how should we reach more or less well founded decisions and value-decisions? And to what extent, is 'the Swiss Codex for Social Work' of any assistance in acquiring this value decision competence?

The complete document (29 pages) can be order at the author:

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News from Macedonia

"Case management- an important method of Social Work in the Field of Mental Health"

On 29 August until 02 September 2012, in Bar, Montenegro, through DAAD program was organized the summer school with title

"Case management- an important method of Social Work in the Field of Mental Health". The aim of this summer school was to exchange scientific and practical experiences between academics and social workers from Germany and the Balkan countries involved in the project.

This summer school participants through its scientific and practical presentations shared their theoretical and practical considerations regarding the implementation of case management in social work with beneficiaries from psychiatric institutions, foster families and family therapy. The main objective is to allow psychiatric institutions beneficiaries help in using the resources available in the community for their faster recovery and community integration.

Therefore this model it is necessary to implement and improve in countries that have not developed a community psychiatry.

As a practical act of inclusion a person with a lot of own experience as a patient in an psychiatric institution gave an art-workshop for the participants of the summer school.



Vladimir Ilievski, MA, Institute of Social Work and Social Policy, Faculty of Philosophy, Skopje

Co author Prof. Dr. Gertraud Müller, Evangelische Hochschule Nürnberg.

The General Council of Social Work receives the Gold Cross of the Civil Order of Social Solidarity 2011.

June 2012 - The Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality granted the Golden Cross of the Civil Order of Social Solidarity 2011 to the General Council of Social Work. This award recognizes individuals and institutions that have distinguished themselves in the promotion and development of activities and services related to solidarity and social action. Ana I. Lima, President of GCSW, received the prize from the Queen Sofia herself. Also Patrocinio de las Heras, Spanish social worker, was awarded with this Gold Cross for her commitment to human and social rights.



Ana I. Lima received the Gold Cross from the Queen Sofia herself

Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development: Action and Impact
8-12 July 2012, Stockholm, Sweden.

Siobhan Maclean asked a social worker she met at the Joint World Conference to reflect on her experiences as a practitioner attending the conference. What Molly reports is interesting for everyone involved in social work.

Who am I?

Molly Fitzgerald

Mental Health Social Worker/Approved Mental Health Professional

London Borough of Merton

seconded to

South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust

Current position: Inpatient Discharge Coordinator, Adult Mental Health

Based at

Springfield Hospital, 61 Glenburnie Road, London, SW17 7DJ

How did attending the conference impact on me?

Until my Social work Lead circulated an e mail inviting Social Workers to make application to the Trust Director of Social Work I didn't even know there were International social work conferences. I didn't really think too much about applying to attend, at the last minute I just thought I would give it a go. When I received the e mail informing me that I had a place to attend I began to worry that I had made a mistake - only one other social worker was attending from the Trust and the othe delegates were all Managers..... would I fit in? Was I out of my depth?

I was excited about the prospect of spending time with 2500 social workers from around the world but found that I was initially overwhelmed as everyone seemed to be an academic attending the conference to present their research. How was this relevant to me? Believe it or not it hadn't occurred to me that it was an academic event! These initial concerns quickly evaporated as I began to introduce myself as a frontline social worker and discovered that people seemed genuinely interested in me and what I did. They also wanted to engage in conversation linking my work with theirs. I met many people from around the world and even received an invitation to talk about Mental Health Social Work in the UK at the University of Social work in Nepal.

I went to all the plenary sessions and attended workshops and a field visit, selected with relevance to my practice. I discovered a world of Social Work I never knew existed and soon realised that globally the central thread was protecting and promoting human rights and striving towards developing social equality - of course it was!

What did I come away with? It was like a light going on! With a much broader view of social work attending the conference had actually helped to consolidate my understanding of how academic research linked to my practice. I knew that I could, and should become involved in developing the service I work in and at the same time develop my own practice. I could make a difference and broaden my own experience rather than 'just doing my day job'

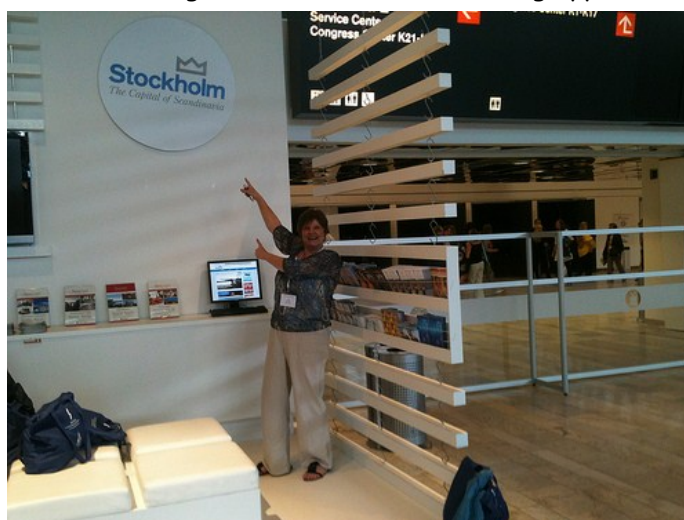
Previously I had been too fearful of public speaking and not willing to be involved in delivering training events. I came back from the conference with a new resolve and confidence. I have since been working on overcoming my fears and have started to deliver training events both within my organisation and with partner agencies. I think I am getting more confident with each event and even realise that I am actually starting to enjoy it.

I am also surprised to find that I have become very engaged with social media. The flame was already flickering but coming back from Stockholm I have been constantly extending my network of bloggers and people that I follow on Twitter. I am quite literally discovering a whole world of knowledge and experience I can tap into. This has had a direct impact on my practice as I now have research, social policy, discussion groups, online conferences and so much at my finger tips. All of which I can access instantly. This has led to an ever growing interest in many area's of practice, in particular AMHP work and our relationship with the police. On the other side of the coin I find myself constantly logging on and spending hours flitting from blog to blog, tweet to tweet.....

Apart from all of the above, the whole experience was such fun! Being in Stockholm and meeting so many people was fantastic. Apart from networking globally I enjoyed meeting and getting to know people from within my own organisation and sharing practice ideas and experiences. We are now planning to share our experiences with our colleagues within the Trust at our Annual Social Work Conference in the hope that it will inspire other social work staff to want to attend other events and conferences in the future.

One of my colleagues I was telling about the conference said to me 'I'm too busy with my daily work to be able to think about going to conferences - what would all that academic research have to do with what I do?'

Thinking about it, if I had given it too much thought before I applied to attend the conference, maybe this is what I would have said too. And I might have missed this amazing opportunity.



Social Workers continue to help the profession: A two-day conference on “**Social Work theory, education and practice in the context of current social reforms**” was launched on November 5-6 of 2012 at the “Moscow House” in Yerevan by the Armenian Association of Social Workers (AASW) jointly with the Yerevan State University, Faculty of Sociology, Department of Social Work and Social Technologies in close cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues. The conference was devoted to the Social Worker’s Day in Armenia.

The conference was attended by over 200 participants, aiming to discuss the crucial issues related to the social work: bringing the educational and practical fields in conformity with the new requirements for professionals required by modern reforms, social workers status, mandate, ranking, rating, ethical code, regulating the field, as well as a number of other problems.

The participants had opportunity to have presentations and stir up discussions on importance of social



workers participation in social planning and the formulation of social policies, the recognition of social work and the enhancement the values and professional standards of social work, practice, education, etc.

“At present, Social Work profession and social services are underdeveloped in Armenia and therefore we need to consolidate our efforts and resources, because the effectiveness of support directly depends on the quality of services

provided to children, families and the society in general” said the chair of the conference Dr. Mira Antonyan.

Welcoming speeches were presented by the Minister of Labor and Social Issues, UNICEF-Armenia Representative, Head of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs of the National Assembly and the Vice-Rector of Yerevan State University.

Simultaneously to the conference an exhibition of social services was organized which aimed to to encourage co-operation & networking between social services, launch a professional discussion and have an exchange of advanced practices from each other.

The conference was supported by UNICEF-Armenia and World Vision-Armenia.

Cristina's Porto

Rory Truell, Secretary-General IFSW was asked to write on his thoughts and experience of visiting Porto

As social workers we know the mantra - 'Get the process right and the outcome will be right' - or words to that effect. I don't know when in our professional evolution we adopted this mantra. For some it may have been the humanistic psychology movement of the 1950s and 60s headed by people like Carl Rodgers. For others, it may have always been a part of their practice as it was always a part of their culture.

I went to Porto to get to know Cristina Martins as the new IFSW Regional President for Europe, to learn of her priorities for the region and how I could assist. What I learnt firstly was that Cristina's Porto is not the individualistic capitalist driven society - more it is an accepting place where it is important to eat well, inexpensively but well, and to pace the conversation to ensure that the connection is well established before dealing with anything too complex. Most often when I travel for work I spend more time on the plane than in the city, more time in meetings than noticing the balance of flavours in dinner. But with this visit it felt slow, but the outcomes, think and fast.

Cristina being a practitioner was able to bring me to her work so that I could report on [Social Work Under Austerity](#) in the Guardian. She also set up a meeting with Fernanda Rodrigues, President of the Portuguese Association of Professional Social Workers and we were able to start planning a joint statement that would be sent to their Government. Time again for another meeting with Graça André who traveled all the way from Lisbon. And then an unexpected treasure: Cristina and I started drafting a statement on behalf of all countries effected by austerity - not just asking for the EU and its member states to have a better social conscience, but to put the beginnings of social work perspective on how the EU should proceed as an alternative to austerity.

Not bad for less than two days together. But none of this creativity would have flowed if it wasn't for Cristina's hospitality, her delight in taking visitors to those special places that only locals know about, and her ability to draw her networks and knowledge together. This was a fine example of getting the process right and good things will happen - thanks Cristina for showing me your Porto and I think IFSW Europe is in very good hands.



The International federation of Social workers (IFSW) is a global federation of national organisations (unions or associations) of social workers. The federation is divided into regions - Europe being one of the regions.

IFSW Europe e.V. is a registered legal body. It is a member of the Social Platform, the Fundamental Rights Agency and the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It is also an organisational member of the European anti-poverty network.

IFSW Europe e.V. has a long tradition of working closely with the European Association of Schools of Social Work and the European Region of the International Council of Social Welfare.

We strive for social justice, social inclusion, human rights and social development



IMPORTANT REMINDER

WE NEED INFORMATION FROM OUR MEMBERS

In order to carry out our work and so that we can apply for any funding which may become available we need to have some core information from our members. We have sent out a core information questionnaire which we need all members to complete. To date we have had less than ten countries return this important information. Please check that your member organisation has returned the completed questionnaire to us. This information will also enable us to put information on our website so that we can develop the website in the way that members have requested.

DON'T DELAY – DO IT TODAY!

Siobhan Maclean
Honorary Secretary

