



THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL WORKER



international federation of social workers european region

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President's Summer Address

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Summer greetings to all European social work colleagues and their representatives, all joined within IFSW, bringing social work in Europe together and forward.

Summer is holiday season – meant for taking a break from daily social work challenges. Everybody must have working-time and working-conditions where it is possible to leave your duties and case stories behind you. Working hours and quality standards for practice are discussed at different levels in Europe – also social workers are part of this discussion. To deliver high quality demands we need time to look away, to focus elsewhere – for instance to enjoy summer holidays, while colleagues will take over.

One IFSW Europe approach to these issues is the newly circulated questionnaire on an EU Social Reality Stocktaking project. Further on, IFSW Europe discusses these issues with European partners, including ICSW (International Council for Social Welfare)

and EPSU (European Federation of Public Services Unions), and we are communicating with the Social Platform about how we can cooperate.



IFSWE committee. From left: Antonina Dashkina, Tatjana Katnic Stanic, Anthea Agius, Nicolai Paulsen, Siobhan Maclean, Ingre-Hanne Braenne, Barbara Molderings

2007 for IFSW Europe started early with preparations for the annual IFSW Europe Delegate Meeting, which were held in March in Parma, Italy.

The days before the Delegate Meeting IFSW Europe was co-hosting **the European Conference** "Social change and social professions" addressing three sub-themes: Family and individuality – Diversity and integration – Managerialism: From state to market. The National Association of Social Workers in Italy – the Italian member of IFSW

– was one of two local organizers of the Conference, and we owe them great thanks for their engaged work organising this successful event, bringing social work on the European map once again. Gathering more than 700 social workers and people related to the social work profession. After three days of intensive conference-exchange of stories, experiences and knowledge, I felt empowered and proud to be a social worker and to promote the social work profession. We learnt about good, solid and professional practice – and what is challenging good practice. We learnt about research identifying good and bad practice – and how the conditions and context influences the practice, politically and practically. At the closing session I took the chance to invite participants to reflect on: How to bring home good experiences? How to share these with colleagues back home? How to turn these stories into ACTION ... to speak out, to be involved, to develop new ideas?

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Some actions will be organized by the individual, together with next door colleagues – and some actions we will do together within IFSW.

Having closed the 2007 European Conference, representatives from 23 European IFSW member countries gathered for 2½ days in Parma for the annual **IFSW Europe Delegate Meeting** – focusing on possible actions and IFSW organizational issues.

The Delegate Meeting is referred to in details in the minutes from the meeting, which is to be found on the IFSW web-site. The same place you will find the agreed IFSW Europe Policy Platform and the Work Programme 2007-2008. However I would like to take the possibility here to highlight a few issues.

the meeting received the final report on the IFSW Europe Regional Project 2005-2007, emphasising how social workers promote social cohesion all over Europe. The project finishes by distributing a hard core folder gathering the messages on social cohesion as they were brought together by member

countries. The folder is on its way to member organisations as this message is published, as it is attached this issue of ESW as a Special Insert.

The meeting agreed for a new regional development project – and agreed on the theme “Standards for Social Work meeting Human Rights”. The IFSW European Executive Committee is now to map out the project; this includes seeking global IFSW support for the project, including global funding. One method is clear: The upcoming project will include regional seminars as in the Social Cohesion project. Having regional seminars has brought member countries together in a new way, empowered by developing policy and actions.

The next IFSW Europe Delegate Meeting in 2008 will be held in Porto, Portugal from 16th May-18th May 2008. Thanks to all four countries who offered to host this important 2008 meeting. The 2009 meeting will be in Dubrovnik, Croatia, in relation to the European Conference.

Nicolai Paulsen

IFSW Regional President for Europe

From Siobhan Maclean; the Position of Honorary Secretary for IFSW Europe

Since being appointed to the position of Honorary Secretary for IFSW Europe in February there have been two main highlights.

The first highlight was attending the Delegates Meeting in Parma in March. I was made to feel very welcome and really enjoyed meeting social workers from all over Europe. I learnt a great deal about the ways in which social workers around the region seek to promote best practice given the range of different challenges we face.

The second highlight (and personal challenge) has been learning a range of new skills in updating the IFSW website. Since attending training in June I have been actively working on the European section of the website, bringing it up to date and adding some new sections on project work. I still have some work to do on updating the pages relating to Delegates Meetings, but there is a great deal new to see on the site already. I would be pleased to receive feedback about the site - particularly the European section - from member organisations. If there is anything you would like to see on the site please let me know.

It is always a great pleasure to hear from members. If you have any enquiries or would like to discuss anything with me please do get in touch with me at either Siobhan.maclean@btopenworld.com or Europe@ifsw.org

“I learnt a great deal about the ways in which social workers around the region seek to promote best practice given the range of different challenges we face”

EDITOR'S NOTE

It's a pleasure to be sending another edition of the European Social Worker together with a **special insert on IFSW-E's statement on Social Workers Promoting Social Cohesion in Europe** which you are encouraged to share with members, partners, authorities, services, schools etc. in your country.

Last time I had the pleasure to meet many international colleagues was at the European Social Work Conference in Parma in March. The striking message emerging from the various keynotes and contributions in Parma challenged the frequent struggle faced by social work to strike a balance between cultures of managerialism and professionalism. One particular presentation even made an interesting reference to the core values in philanthropic social work in world regions of extreme poverty ... could such reflection appeal to our so called root values? Or could this be as worded in Munich, part of a search for a new equilibrium?

Debates in social work ethics and collective codes of ethics accompanying the growing regulation of the profession in different countries seems to be throwing our attention onto the macro socio-political dimension (concepts of social justice, human rights and socio political action, service user participation and empowerment). Is this an unconventional concept that the social work reflection is bringing to the sphere of helping professions? Others have their attention focused on Standards and Regulation. Is there one good standard? To what extent should standards be rules? And to what extent should rules be related to values? In view of the recently announced title for our next project; "Standards for Social Work meeting Human Rights" I envisage that lots of very challenging and soul searching debates will be taking place in our forthcoming meetings! In the meantime ...

DO send the ESW to all your members and contacts!

DO send your reactions and comments positive and negative alike!

DO submit an article for the next edition of the European Social Worker!

finally ...

DON'T forget that YOU are the European Social Worker!

A big thanks to all of you who contributed to this edition of the European Social Worker.
Wishing you a pleasant reading over the summer months,

Anthea Agius

IFSWE Executive member

You are invited to send:

- ▶ **Articles**
- ▶ **Information**
- ▶ **Notices**
- ▶ **Comments**
- ▶ **Suggestions**

that you would like to share with other colleagues all over Europe through the European Social Worker. Following various suggestions received in our last meeting in Parma, you are encouraged to send your articles in English as well as in your own language.

Kindly send all information to Siobhan on europa@ifsw.org

WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY 2007

The IFSW has decided to raise the awareness of the importance of social workers all over the World by means of celebrating the **Social Work Action Day 2007** globally. The SWAD is an annual event which we started celebrating in Europe in 1996. All members of the IFSW are invited to *celebrate the importance and the development of social work globally through local, regional and national activities highlighting social work – in 2007 in relation to fighting poverty.*

The purpose of the SWAD is to have social workers all over the world to prepare and participate in different kinds of events which will put social work on the agenda at all levels and, thereby, to promote the importance of the social worker profession and to raise the sense of community among social workers. In this way, the SWAD has a two-sided aim:

higher awareness in societies and communities about the importance of the role of social workers in combating poverty and social exclusion and in assisting citizens to create a social and economic sustainable development in societies.

higher sense of worth and professionalism within the individual social worker and raised sense of community among social workers.

By making the SWAD a global event, this will facilitate both of these aspects. And likely making the SWAD in each country stronger with regard to discussing with the media and other stakeholders in society, i.e. the Government, the industry, other organisations and NGOs.

SOCIAL WORKERS – BROKERS IN ALLEVIATING POVERTY

Poverty has many faces, changing from place to place and across time, and has been described in many ways. Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom.

To know what helps to reduce poverty, what works and what does not, what changes over time, poverty has to be defined, measured, and studied -- and even experienced. As poverty has many dimensions, it has to be looked at through a variety of indicators -- levels of income and consumption, social indicators, and indicators of vulnerability to risks and of socio/political access. Much work has been done using consumption or income-based measures of poverty, but also on non-income dimensions of poverty.

Social workers deal with poverty in all kinds, shapes and forms in their daily work. The SWAD 2007 in Europe was about all these different ways social workers are active in alleviating poverty. The following pages are just some examples of how Social Work Associations celebrated the day throughout Europe.

Antonina Dashkina, IFSW-E executive member

ARMENIA

On the 29th and 30th March 2007 with the initiation of “Harmonic Society” Armenian Association of Social Workers and Yerevan State University Department of Sociology and supported by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of RA the first ever conference on the issues of social work took place. USAID and AED provided the financial support for the event.

The theme of the conference was “Social Work in Armenia: situation and perspective”. 280 social workers participated. They all took part in the plenary session which highlighted the issues of the establishment of a social work institute in Armenia, the educational system and common practice problems.

Later in the proceedings the following sessions took place: health system, child protection, elders and disabled people, work with prisoners, as well as other issues in terms of existing situations and service provision. The standards of service provision and, compliance with professional social work requirements led to heated debates and there were discussions related to the establishing of a social work institute.

A decision was made to create an editing group and develop a Social work in Armenia magazine.

It was also decided to set up an expert's group who will support changes of laws in social support (specifically relating to social services) as there were clear anxieties about this law raised during the discussions. The conference recorded that there are significant numbers of professionals working within the realm of social work but they are doing so without appropriate education and specialization in social work, whilst many social work graduates cannot secure social work positions as they have little or no experience beyond their qualification.

In conclusion, the organizers of the conference prepared a letter to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs requesting that changes be made when job announcements were advertised to enable graduates access to vacancies, while the university expressed its readiness to create special classes for the specialists without education in social work. The social workers gained a lot from the attendance at the conference and plan to maintain this level of discussion and meetings on a more regular basis.

PORTUGAL

APSS organized a **National Conference** to celebrate the Day in Matosinhos, a city on the north of Portugal near Porto. It was a joint conference with AIDSS (Association of Investigation and Debate on Social Work). The Conference theme was: “**Citizenship as Action towards Poverty**”. For the Opening Ceremony we had the presence of a Representative of the Minister of Work and Social Solidarity, the Vice-President of the City Hall of Matosinhos and Representatives of almost every political parties of the Portuguese Parliament.

The Journey began with a Key-note speaker PHD Lucia Barroco from Brazil, who did a conference on **Ethics in Social Work**, presented by the PHD Fernanda Rodrigues, President of APSS and Coordinator of National Action Plan on Inclusion. Some Social Workers were invited to report on their practical experiences in Social Work, regarding actions that reinforce the **fight against poverty**, on elderly, drug addicts, etc. There were also several presentations about general issues that concerns Social Workers, such as the **Order** (registration), **Professional Statutes, Ethics, Training, Research, International Relations, Qualifications Standards, etc.** On a Regional level the **Madeira's Delegation of APSS** organized a Conference about “Social Work: Intervention in Post-Modernity” by Dr Adelino Antunes, followed by a reception in the City Hall of Funchal, Madeira, sponsored by the Regional Secretary of Social Affairs. The **Azores Delegation of APSS** organized a Conference on “Poverty: Facts, Causes and Intervention Measures” by the PHD José Cabral Vieira. The Day was publicised on the local media (television, radio and newspapers).

A Portuguese Social Worker, Sónia Guadalupe, had the initiative to put up a **petition on line** for Social Workers, in order to be addressed to the Portuguese Parliament, to fight for the approval of the **Statutes** for the **Social Worker's Order**. The petition got 3.718 signatures and was sent to the Parliament to have an urgent response on this matter. We had a very successful celebration of the Day in Portugal.

See more in www.grinapss.blogspot.com/



MALTA

To celebrate this annual event the Maltese Association of Social Workers (MASW) held a Forum on Poverty - a perspective on the Families in our Society. This initiative was taken in view of the current work of the National Family Commission in Malta in drafting recommendations to the Minister for Family and Social Solidarity regarding a National Policy for the Family. Personalities involved in establishing a stable national community of families in all their forms were invited. These were, Mr Sandro Spiteri, Chairperson of the National Family Commission, currently working on the development of a draft national family policy; Marija Zahra, head of social work unit which deals with complex family situations in the community; and Dr Anna Vella, President of Cana Movement, a church organization involved with situations of families who need support whilst Ms Marika Borg Wirth, Chairperson of MASW, chaired the forum.

Some interesting points which emerged from the discussion were:

- ▶ The important role that a Family Research Institute has towards policy development, the development of multidisciplinary training, research and service development;
- ▶ The crucial role that an interdisciplinary approach plays in assisting and empowering families in their communities;
- ▶ Should a family oriented interdisciplinary approach be developed within or outside the current framework of social services which may sometimes be perceived by families seeking help as being controlling rather than empowering?
- ▶ The right of Families to live in dignity
- ▶ The development of legislative measures and flexible policies to prevent over bureaucratization and promote prompt availability of the necessary resources
- ▶ Are certain services at risk of being increasingly perceived as a form of micro-institutionalization in the community?
- ▶ Will a National Family Policy focused solely on strengthening values be relevant to today's reality?
- ▶ Will such a policy be able to secure the necessary inbuilt feedback mechanisms to ensure that it is constantly adapting to changing needs and realities of families?
- ▶ One of the major challenges faced by social workers who help families seems to be overcoming the bureaucracy and the differences that exist between the services and different professions;
- ▶ Using informal networks that exist between people in the community and strengthening their role seems to be one of the key ingredients for bringing about more initiative, outreach and development;
- ▶ The social work forum generally felt weary of rigid definitions of the family;
- ▶ Social work research and field experience has shown that classification and definition of people tends to stigmatize and disempower people and families. The exercise carried out by the International Federation of Social Workers on Social Cohesion was quoted;
- ▶ People facing hardship don't understand the poverty line, definitions, policies etc ...;
- ▶ A number of families in child protection would benefit more from generic support service in the community;
- ▶ Research shows that intensive therapeutic work with families DOES work!

Maltese Association of Social Workers, 2007

FRANCE

For WSWD in FRANCE, we sent out a message through our website, in English and in French and carried out a series of activities through our various networks.

Marie-Geneviève Mounier
ANAS

BULGARIA

On April 13-14, 2007, BASW and the Social Assistance Agency with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) held the **First National Conference on Social Work**. In the conference participated representatives of the two organizations, and representatives of MLSP, Universities (offering training in the sphere of social work and social activities), NGOs and syndicates (a total of 110 participants).

In a constructive spirit, the participants drew the following declaration, which summarizes their work within the two-day conference. The Declaration will be sent to MLSP, BASW, the Social Assistance Agency, the Committee on Social Policy at the National Assembly, Universities offering training in the sphere of social work and social activities, NGOs providing social services.



Official opening of the conference : Mr. Valio Hristov - Chairman of Bulgarian Association of Social Workers; Mr. Sergei Stanishev - Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria ; Mrs. Emilia Maslarova - Minister of Labour and Social Policy; Mrs. Gergana Drianska – Executive director of Social Assistance Agency;

The main points of this **Declaration** are the following:
The optimal medium for professional exchange and cooperation are conferences of the kind of the one just held

Such conferences contribute to professional development, setting the following priorities:

Outlining the framework of the profession of social worker

Providing opportunities to discuss the standards for practicing the profession of social worker

Providing opportunities to discuss the trends and requirements to social work training (including continued training)

Emphasizing the importance of the case-work method

Contribution to the evolvement of a positive image of the social worker

Creation of adequate environment for practicing the profession

Enhancing the role of professional organizations - BASW

Uniting social workers in more efficient networks

Participation of social workers in law-making, horizontally and vertically

Sofia, April 14, 2007

GERMANY**Global Social Work Day
Report of the German Association DBSH**

The Global Social Work Day was the foundation of the poverty conference in Hamburg. In cooperation with the University of Applied Science and with the Centre of Praxis Development the group of Hamburg of the German Association organized the Social Work Day on the 27th of March 2007.

Poverty is an increasing problem in Germany. The splitting of the society in rich and poor is constantly increasing. The connection between Poverty and unemployment, disadvantage in education, family problems, migration, health problems and social exclusion are well known.

After the report of Mr. Dr. Auer who spoke about the political consequences of poverty, the participants discussed in workshops, how social work can contribute to overcoming of poverty. It was asked which role social work can have in struggling against poverty and which concepts have to be offered by the profession.

There were other reports with the following issues:

- Education and Poverty
- Children and Families Poverty
- Work and Poverty
- Illness and Poverty
- Community Development and Poverty

Because of the very good resonance the group decided to take part in the social work day again next year

ITALY

In ITALY, WSWD 2007 was promoted through a poster that was published on the website and on a periodical journal of the Italian Association of Social Workers.

We also translated the useful text received by IFSW for local dissemination through our local networks including the regional secretariats.

Thanks for everything,
Angela Verrillo



EUROPEAN UNION AND THE CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL WORK IN THE BALKANS



June 29th—July 1st 2007
Boyana Residence
Sofia, BULGARIA



FIRST BALKAN CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORKERS

Organized by:



Supported by:



MINISTRY OF LABOR
AND SOCIAL POLICY



The Balkan countries are at different stages of introduction of the international criteria and standards of social work, where some

have passed the stage of establishment of a social policy, adequate to the European standards, while others experience serious difficulties. The opening of a space, where the Balkan countries will be able to discuss general and specific problems, would allow transfer of information, knowledge and skills, building up of a network of partner organizations which share common ethical principles and values aimed at the formation of social policies that reflect both the common regional tendencies and the specificities of the individual countries.

The Balkan countries represent a variegated ethno-social picture. The state borders are still a historical fact, on the one hand, but the membership of some of the Balkan countries in EU, as well as the mixing of different ethnic groups somewhat blurs these borders. The identical ethno-social reference models, regardless of the country a given ethnic group lives in, globalization and the trends towards opening of borders, the migration and movement of people even more direct social work in the Balkans from purely national to the identification of common reference models taking into account these trends, as well as closer partnership in sharing good practices and in the development of common policies in social work and social services in the region, in line with the European requirements.

To the present moment many of the Balkan countries have endeavoured to establish and maintain contacts so as to form a network, yet there is no efficient professional network. Up to this stage, nearly every Balkan country has participated in individual events, carried out outside the Balkan region, and has maintained bilateral contacts with the other Balkan countries. Therefore, with the implementation of this initiative, BASW will try to connect the professionals from the different countries by providing an opportunity for contacts and exchange of professional experience.

The social work profession is defined in various ways in the different Balkan countries, both with respect to the professional field and the legal framework for the profession. These differences reflect on the social work training and practice. The EU membership of a number of Balkan countries requires purposeful work for the introduction of standards of training and practice, including continued training, which puts the existing national models to the test. The sharing of the experience of each Balkan country and its comparison with that of other EU member states would help the professionals in the region identify common trends and prospects for coopera-

tion.

GOALS:

- Provide an opportunity to discuss and unite around the idea of the role of social workers – professional field and legal framework.
- Open up a space for sharing the specific problems in the work of social workers in the societies in the Balkans.
- Define particular approaches, in line with the basic international requirements for quality social work and suitable to the specific ethno-social models in the Balkans.
- Pursue the established professional contacts with related organizations in the Balkan countries in concrete dimensions and lines of interaction.
- Create new opportunities for partnership on the basis of shared common principles and values concerning the role of social workers in the social processes.
- Create prerequisites for involving a broader circle of civil organizations, representatives of the central and local authorities in the country, which have a bearing on social work and social services.

TASKS:

We believe this forum will contribute to the credibility of the social work profession since it will enable:

- The building up of a professional network of social workers in the region, and making the conference an annual forum for exchange of ideas and good practices.
- The publication of an electronic journal of social work of the Balkan countries, which would be a virtual forum for exchange of information, knowledge and good practices.
- Participation in joint projects for social services development, introduction of standards, exchange of professional knowledge and skills by social work practical training in other Balkan countries.
- Setting up of a Balkan Social Work Centre for the generation of ideas, research and training of social work specialists from the region.

The realization of the Balkan Conference would extend the network of contacts with other professional organizations in the region, which in turn would contribute to the establishment of long-term partner relations. The sharing of good practices and models of work on concrete universal issues in different countries will inevitably reflect on the quality of the social services. It will promote the activity of the social workers' professional organizations and contribute to the adaptation and introduction of international standards in social work training and practice.

Valio Hristov, BASW President

Conclusions of the International Conference "Social Change and Social Work 2007"



The International Conference "Social Change and Social Work 2007" was concluded successfully. The conference held in Parma from the 15th to 17th march, saw an attendance of about 800 social worker and 36 nations. We have registered the attendance of almost all nations of EU and of other nations that have exceeded the european borders (Perù, Brasile, Canada, Guinea, USA, Sud Africa, Giappone, India.

To close this conference , that we think can be defined as the most important event related to the Social Service in Italy, is complex and difficult. Complex for its variety of the arguments; difficult, because it is not easy to bring closure to the emotion and the riches of stimuli that this event has given to us with the contribution of all. The three days have reached the objectives that we can synthesise in the following grouping for functions/ results/macro-categories;

1. Function of information and classic function that not always is reached in all the seminaries;
2. Function of mutual acknowledgement of professional specificities with reflections also in the field of the management;
3. Function of strengthening of the forma-

tive path with one more conscious acknowledgement of the 5-year cycle for the social worker;

4. Function of collection of the projections, but also of "desired" of the social professions;
5. Function of strengthening of the motivations towards the social professions in a moment of difficulty and disorientation;
6. Function of strengthening of the network between the various national and international present actors;
7. Function of investment on the social service and the social professions that surmount the national borders and go towards european and international dimension creating areas of nearness, reciprocity and contamination.

In conclusion the hypothesis of the constitution of an international Council of the social professions can constitute the place of realization of the investments done.

Good Bye until the next Conference that will take place in Croatia in May 2009.

Franca Dente



Partnership and cooperation across Europe

Several of the member-organisations within IFSW-Europe have gained very positive experiences from cooperating with each other. The ties between social workers all over Europe are being strengthened and the Social Work professions develop through interaction and contact across national borders. The executive wanted to collect some of these experiences into a "bank of ideas", to inspire further cooperation in the future.

In advantage of the DM-meeting in Parma March 2007, there was distributed a form where member-organisations could report their experiences, and this was also an issue in one of the group-works at the DM. We're still missing response from many member-organisations, but the ones we have received can be summarised along the following lines:

1. Cooperation on conferences

Several countries report that they have cooperated on arranging conferences. The cooperation has varied in form: some have been sharing full responsibility of the conference, some have taken part in the program-committee, some have given financial support, some have participated at each others conferences etc. Some of the countries that have cooperated on arranging conferences are: Balkan countries, Austria, Russia, the Nordic countries, France, Malta etc.

2. Regional networks

The Nordic countries have a long tradition of working within regional networks: one for social educators and one for social workers. The Nordic organisations meet twice a year and cooperate on common conferences, a Social Work Journal etc. Another example of regional cooperation can be found in the Mediterranean countries. This is still in the making, and it is therefore difficult to say how it will turn out, but contact has

been made and the members try to meet in connection to DM etc. There have also been different kinds of contact between Balkan countries, and the Bulgarian Association of Social Workers (BASW) has now initiated the establishing of a Balkan forum for social work.

3. Financial support

Several member organisations report that they support other IFSW-members financially. These kinds of cooperation take place both within Europe, and on a global level. It is as an example quite common that some rich countries pay the member-fees for poor countries.

4. Journals

Some countries also cooperate on publishing social work journals or magazines. The form and content of these vary. Some publish scientific articles and other publish more general information on social work. Some also aim to publish electronic journals.

5. Arranging study trips

A way of developing social work is to gain experiences and ideas from social work in other countries. Study trips enable social workers to see how social work is being practiced and organised in other countries. Sweden and Russia are two of the countries who have cooperated on arranging such study trips.

Do you have other good examples of cooperation, or ideas on how to cooperate, please send an e-mail to Antonina Dashkina social2000@mail.ru and Ingri-Hanne Braenne branne@diakonhjemmet.no, and we will make sure that this will be distributed in the next ESW.

SOUTH EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN COLLABORATION IN IFSW EUROPE

Gradually but enthusiastically starting from Sofia 2006, a group of member associations in the IFSW-Europe have identified a positive opportunity for collaboration together. Portugal, Malta, France, Spain, Italy and Cyprus spontaneously found common ground during various activities of IFSW-Europe such as linguistic support during delegates meetings, gathering of country information and participation in the workshop in Paris, February 2006, for the Social Cohesion Project.

The group held a meeting for the first time in Munich, in July of 2006 and had another chance to meet again in Parma, March 2007.

Based on the cultural, social and other common ground, the group agreed to exchange information on the associations, the education, practice, methods, etc. and to support each other's active participation and involvement within the IFSW-Europe framework

Some activities that have come out of this collaboration have been to identify the name and email of the contact person for the group from each country, send information/article/photos for the Euro Social Worker, send information in the form of an article from National organizations to share with the rest of the group and to put into each others' newsletters and information such as web-site addresses and others.

The Portuguese Association (APSS) held a blog in which members of this group participated in by sending their information

www.grinapss.blogspot.com/



While the French Association (ANAS) supported Brigitte Penven to attend the first National Social Work Conference in Malta

There has been much exchange of ideas with regards to possible activities in the future these include participating in projects, research, networking and organizing field visits.

Meanwhile there has been an increase of sharing of information between members of the group.

In picture: Delegates from Italy, France, Malta, Portugal and Spain.

Cristina Martins - North Delegation of the Association of Trained Social Workers (APSS) from Portugal

TALENTIA - Union of Professional Social Workers

campaigns to improve the image of social sector in Finland

The trade union Talentia promotes and protects the professional and wage interests of nearly 20 000 social welfare professionals in Finland. Talentia has launched a two-year publicity campaign to raise awareness about social services and improve the image of the social sector in Finland.

According to a survey conducted on 600 Finns the social sector has a negative image. The majority of the population associates only problems and marginal groups with social services. Common associations are for example social welfare abusers and escalating children's custody conflicts.

Social services are seen as "something for them, not us", says communication planner Heidi Schrooten from Talentia.

According to the survey, it is appreciated that the social welfare system exists and also professional workers in the social sector are looked up to. However the system is found bureaucratic, distant and complicated. The research showed that understanding of what social services is about, and who are the professionals doing the actual work, is practically nonexistent. Attitudes towards the sector are negative, but no-one was really able to explain why that is.

According to a survey conducted on 600 Finns the social sector has a negative image.

One of the reasons for the poor image of the social sector is the type of publicity it gets. Most of the topics that make it to the news are problems, not so much of the success stories or the benefits that have been gained through the social welfare system.

According to the survey, the Finnish media would be interested in writing more news about the social sector, but finds it quite hard to work with professionals to get a story. It seems that in the social sector there is an ever persistent culture of silence. This is partially due to the legislation on protecting the customer's privacy and identity, but also modesty about one's achievements, which is perhaps typical for the Finnish culture. Social workers simply don't talk enough about their work to the media, but customers do and often the ones that are not satisfied are the most eager to go public about it.

Talentia launched a campaign that aims to expand the public's understanding on what social services are available, and explain that everyone benefits from the system and in order to maintain the high quality system in place more resources and effort is needed. Professionals in the social sector do a very demanding work that requires a university or polytechnic level degree and yet are way underpaid compared to the average income level in Finland.

The campaign aims to raise discussion by showing social work from a completely different angle than the news does and from how we're used to seeing it. The work that is done in the social sector is made visible to the public through strong emotions, humour and controversy.

The Campaign will be seen as advertisements in one of the largest tabloids in Finland, heard on the radio, seen in the internet and experienced on the streets and large public events around Finland as the members of the union walk around in campaign T-shirts that say "Social welfare case" in Finnish, giving out flowers or chocolate and collecting names to a petition for better pay and working conditions for social sector staff. The campaign has its own interactive website www.sosiaalitapaus.fi which has the petition and a test, which anyone can do to see whether he or she is also a social welfare case.

- We claim that every single Finn is – and should be proud of it since it's a sign of us living in a welfare state!

For more information, contact Talentia's head of communications Kristiina Koskiluoma +358 20 111 2713, kristiina.koskiluoma@talentia.fi or communication planner Heidi Schrooten +358 20 111 2714, heidi.schrooten@talentia.fi

EU UPDATE - Europe and Social Policy 1.1.07 – 30.3.07

Social Cohesion

There is some very good material available at the Council of Europe, especially for those who are teaching students of social work

“Concerted Development of Social Cohesion Indicators” a methodological guide”. It comes together with a CD.

“Reconciling labour flexibility with social cohesion- Ideas for political action”

“Achieving social cohesion in a multicultural Europe” read more at: http://www.coe.int/TE/social_Cohesion

Health

Nearly 41% of Brussels-based opinion leaders believe that member states may share a common healthcare system in long-term.

An alliance was founded, called Health First Europe (HFE). Members are the health care industries and workers, academics and patient organisations.

Some of 87% of Brussels’ opinion leaders believe that individuals must increasingly be proactive in looking after their own health and treatment through a healthy lifestyle, diet, exercise and medication. In addition 81% believe that health education should be part of the school curriculum so that individuals can be empowered to manage their own health from an early age. read more at www.euractiv.com/en/health

Palliative care

There is a big debate about palliative care and euthanasia. Both camps polarising for and against are looking to the Netherlands, which introduced early legislation for assisted dying. Supporters of euthanasia argue that it shows how well it works, while opponents highlight the cases of life being ended without full and informed consent of patients.

The whole debate about assisted dying emphasises the importance of psycho-social issues – such as relationship difficulties, profound physical changes and concerns about how children will manage – at the end of life. One branch of palliative care that has a particular focus on psycho-social support is specialist palliative care social work.

In the UK the debate about palliative care and euthanasia is going on. In the latest British Social Attitudes Survey, 80% of the public were said to favour euthanasia legislation. Peter Beresford a professor of social policy at the Brunel University is the co-writer of a study “Palliative care , Social Work and Service Users” You will find more about this item at: [http:// www.society.guardian.co.uk](http://www.society.guardian.co.uk)

Social security systems

Social security systems in the EU have traditionally provided a partial insurance against loss of income due to unemployment. In recent years the focus has shifted from protecting the unemployed to activating unemployed people into re-entering the labour market. The recent comparative overview by Erufund’s European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO) looks at similarities between unemployment benefit systems in Europe and examines the degree of social partner involvement in the different countries. Read more at: www.eurofund.europa.eu/eiro

Aging Europe

Jorma Karppinen the Director of Eurofund, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, speaks of a ‘silver economy’.

The intense debates taking place across the EU on how to tackle the demographic challenges of the future focus primarily on employment rates, labour supply, the cost of health and long-term care and the sustainability of pensions. But there are also positive aspects of the demographic seesaw. The majority of older people possess sufficient money, time and good health to be able to enjoy leisure goods and services. In Germany for example, the over 50s own half of the country’s wealth. So Manufacturers and retailers are quick to appreciate the potential of this new market. And policy-makers must follow.

Another question is, where the affluent, healthy and time-rich older Europeans wish to spend their retirement. A recent Eurofund study concluded that 15% of European citizens are thinking of retiring to a member state other than their own: 45% of Swedes are thinking of moving mostly south to warmer countries. 32% of Britons and 20% of Germans are also considering this idea. Read more at: www.eurofund.europa.eu

Youth

Youth unemployment and the need to integrate young people in society is a pressing global issue. In Europe, the proportion of young people ages 15 to 24 years is set to decline by a quarter – from 12,6% to 9,7% - between 2005 and 2050, while the 65 years plus group will increase from 16,4% to 29,9%. It is often difficult for young people to get started on the employment ladder. The rate of youth unemployment is 20% or higher in 12 of 26 European countries. read more at: www.eurofund.europa.eu/press

Barbara Molderings, IFSW-E executive member

IFSW is Looking forward to seeing you in 2008 in ...

SALVADOR DE BAHIA, BRAZIL 16 -19 AUGUST IFSW WORLD CONFERENCE 2008

For more information contact::

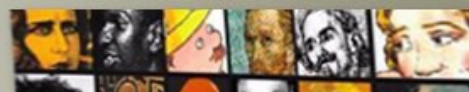
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Conselho Federal de Serviço Social



Check out the following :

Festschrift for Walter Lorenz - Reframing the Social - Social Work and Social Policy in Europe edited by F. W. Seibel, H.-U. Otto and G. J. Friesenhahn: Professor Walter Lorenz (Bolzano, Italy) has made a major contribution to social work study and practice through his work in a number of European countries, including Germany, Switzerland, UK, Ireland, Italy among others. He has spoken at IFSW conferences.

To celebrate his 60th birthday, Social Work & Society on-line journal has published a *Festschrift for Walter Lorenz* on the SW&S-platform. Walter is one of the founding SW&S-Editors and a member of the SW&S-Group of Editors. With this SW&S-Festschrift the Editors honour Walter's impressive engagement for the Online-Journal and for the European Social Work and Social Policy in general. <http://www.socwork.net/>

The Platform of European Social NGOs (the Social Platform) is the alliance of representative European federations and networks of non-governmental organisations active in the social sector, promoting social justice and participatory democracy by voicing the concerns of its member organisations. The Social Platform and its members are committed to the advancement of the principles of equality, solidarity, non discrimination and the promotion and respect of fundamental rights for all, within Europe and in particular the European Union. IFSW Europe has observer membership-status in the Social Platform. www.socialplatform.org

... and in 2009 in Croatia ...

SOCIAL PROFESSIONS & SOCIETIES IN TRANSITION

1st ENSACT
joint European conference

April 26 to 29, 2009

DUBROVNIK, CROATIA



IFSW - International Federation of Social Workers European Region
EASSW - European Association of Schools of Social Work
 Formation d'Educateurs Sociaux
FESET - Européens / European Social Educator Training
ICSW - International Council on Social Welfare European Region
FICE - Internationale des Communautés Educatives
AIEJI - International Association of Social Educators

Who is the conference for?

The biannual European Conference is the main event for IFSW Europe to bring together social workers in large number from all parts of Europe, to promote IFSW and social work for its members, as for our partners and social professions in general. The conference will foster social professionals, trainers and social services in innovating and strengthening their practices, concepts and theories. The conference invites participants from all parts of Europe, representing Social Services, Professions and Education, to join in Dubrovnik in 2009.

Who is organising the conference?

The conference is this time organised jointly between ENSACT, HUSR (Croatian association of social workers) and other Croatian bodies representing the ENSACT partners. The conference preparation is supported by government offices, the University of Zagreb, the neighbouring University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and by the Austrian Association of Social Workers.

The conference is the first **ENSACT** joint European Conference. ENSACT (European Social Action Network) is a network of professional associations, faculties of social work and national councils of social welfare, bringing together European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW), Formation d'Educateurs Sociaux Européens / European Social Educator Training (FESET), International Council on Social Welfare European Region (ICSW), **International Federation of Social Workers European Region** (IFSW), Internationale des Communautés Educatives (FICE) and International Association of Social Educators (AIEJI).

The theme

Committees are now being established to prepare and promote this next European Conference, while the preliminary theme is identified to be: **"Social professions & societies in transition"**.

Social professions, which are to contribute to equalization of inequalities between different social groups, to protect and promote rights of endangered groups and to influence a fairly balanced social development is invited to contribute to the transition process. For this task it is necessary to constantly reassess the obtained professional standards and theoretical frameworks in which the social services operate.

On the verge of the second decade in the third millennium the "Social Professions and Societies in Transition" conference should contribute creating a new agenda for European social work from 2010 onwards. The conference should facilitate the creation of professional inventory for European social services in the period of intensive transition starting in 1990 and create the basis for a new era in professional development. The conference shall enable a discussion on transition influences on practical work of social professions in different European societies, social profession education systems, theoretical and research development in social work, possibilities of social professions' influence on social policy systems, possibility of insuring a harmonised and recognizable European model of social services and future forms of interdisciplinary cooperation of social professions and workers of other professions.

Where and when to read more ?

From October 2007 you can keep up to date with what will happen at the conference at www.ifsw.org, www.ensact.eu or www.husr.hr

Other Forthcoming Events

AIEJI's 17th World Congress in Copenhagen, Denmark, 4 - 7 May 2009

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to AIEJI's 17th World Congress in Copenhagen, Denmark, 4 - 7 May 2009. The National Federation of Social Educators in Denmark will host the congress in partnership with AIEJI and the Nordic associations of social educators.

The participants will be social educators from all over the world, teachers, educational institutions, researchers, organisations, authorities and others who are interested in the profession and professional competences of social educators.

You can read more about the congress in the attached first announcement, and you can keep up to date with what will happen at the congress at www.aieji2009.dk.

The first announcement is available in English, Spanish, French and Danish. You can download it from www.aieji2009.dk. We can also send you *printed copies*. Send an email to aieji2009@sl.dk [<mailto:aieji2009@sl.dk>](mailto:aieji2009@sl.dk) with your *name, address, requested number of printed copies and language version*.

I kindly ask you to distribute the first announcement and the link to www.aieji2009.dk to your colleagues, networks, websites and magazines.

I look forward to seeing you in Copenhagen in May 2009.

Yours sincerely

Benny Andersen
President AIEJI
Vice-President of the National Federation of Social Educators

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THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL WORKER

www.ifsw.org



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