

THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL WORKER



Dignity and justice for all of us

international federation of social workers european region

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President's Address 2008

New Year greetings to all European social workers – let's bring social work together in Europe and Globally.

The weeks around New Year are time for many of us to gather with our family and friends. It is also time to show special awareness towards those citizens who have no family or friends. I hope everybody have had a joyful season celebration, at home and at work.

Looking backward at 2007 and forward towards 2008

In the second half of 2007 IFSW Europe approached social work issues at European level by circulating the questionnaire on an EU Social Reality Stocktaking project. IFSW Europe has discussed 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 Social Platform how we can cooperate.

A number of member organisations organises national conferences and seminars, discussing the development of social work. Some of these discussions are brought out in the European room, by having international speakers and international guests, and through formal and informal rapports in common languages. This is an important part of the European exchange within social work, and IFSW Europe appreciates to highlight and pass on such exchanges. For the ongoing work of the IFSW Executive Committee between Delegate Meetings stories/e-mails from national conferences is an important knowledge base. We thank all who is updating us about what is discussed. Also special thanks to those who communicate their experiences and ideas through the ESW.

2008 is a year without a European Conference, as our conferences are bi-annual, and following the successful Parma Conference in 2007 our next Conference will be in Croatia in 2009. Still 2008 is expected to be a busy year for IFSW Europe – highlighting a new IFSW European project 'STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL WORK MEETING HUMAN RIGHTS', a project which will run all through the year. In April we will all celebrate World Social Work Day (read more about this in this issue of ESW). In May member organisations will meet in Porto (Portugal) for the annual Delegate Meeting – to discuss political, professional and organisational issues within IFSW Europe. A major issue will be a draft proposal for new statutes for IFSW Europe. Also we will have the traditional election for the European Executive Committee. 2008 also brings some of us to Brazil for the IFSW global general meeting in

August.

The new IFSW European project 'STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL WORK MEETING HUMAN RIGHTS' will be highlighted in a separate circulation within the coming month. But let me recall the decisions from 2007, the aims of the new project shall be to

- ▶ let people meet – to exchange, to develop, to empower
- ▶ make a comparison based on the practice experience
- ▶ promote good standards, rather than define the one good standard

The framework will be

- ▶ a questionnaire circulated by e-mail and replied by all member organisations before the Delegate Meeting in Porto (May 16-18)
- ▶ an intensive workshop reflecting on the replies during the Delegate Meeting weekend in Porto
- ▶ regional workshops later in the year, bringing together new common perspectives and regional differences
- ▶ an ongoing update on the IFSW Europe web site
- ▶ a joint report/pamphlet presenting statements/recommendations from IFSW Europe on the project theme.

The questionnaire will ask for factual input on conditions for social work practice in your country, and it will ask for reflections on standards for social work as well as human rights in social work, and how these relate.

The new Project can only be a success by broad involvement from member organisations, and we will be inviting all members to take part in general and in specific parts. The Executive Committee will facilitate the project, but has not the knowledge and the volunteer capacity to run the project by ourselves. We ask for participation and involvement.

Nicolai Paulsen

IFSW Regional President for Europe

NOTA BENE

On the global level, the continued process of policy development has produced a draft Policy Paper on Health for which your consultation is being requested. The draft paper has been done by Lindsey Napier and Paul Bywaters for the Social Work and Health Inequalities Network on behalf of IFSW. A final draft will be presented for approval at the IFSW General Meeting in Brazil August 13 - 15, 2008. Comments in English, French or Spanish, are to be sent by February 29, 2008. Please send you comments directly to Paul Bywaters at P.Bywaters@coventry.ac.uk

You are invited to send:

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

that you would like to share with other colleagues all over Europe through the European Social Worker. You are encouraged to send your articles in English as well as in your own language. Kindly send all information to Siobhan on siobhan.maclean@btopenworld.com or europe@ifsw.org

A WORD FROM ...

THE EDITOR

Sometimes seeing ourselves through the eyes of others can provide insight and inspiration. For this reason I thought that you might like to read the quotes on page eight to start 2008 with renewed confidence and positive energy!

As you will read, very much in theme with the Global Conference for 2008, our regional Action Day and forthcoming project will be giving a rightful prominence to human rights, excuse the pun ... and how our professional journey through the continuous development of good practice is promoting and can further promote the realisation of human rights. Of course, this initiative in true social work style will undoubtedly challenge the definitions, structures and processes surrounding the notion of human rights in the different societies.

Congratulations to our new IFSW Europe Permanent Committee who are now Marjut Kosonen from the UK, Ana Lima from Spain, Barbara Molderings from Germany as well as Georg Dimitz from Austria who was appointed as a specialist on refugees issues and eastern countries.

As promised, this edition brings you further information including web links regarding our sister organisations of the European Network for Social ACTION of which IFSWe is part of.

I would like to forward a special word of thanks to all members who contributed to this edition and continue to invite you to send your input and feedback on antheaagius@hotmail.com.

Anthea Agius

THE HONORARY SECRETARY

I expect to be busy over the next few months sending out papers to member organisations in plenty of time for the Delegates Meeting in Porto in May. In preparation for this I have been updating the contact list for member organisations. If you haven't had any contact from me for a while, I may have the wrong contact details for you – please email me with your current details at either sio-bhan.maclean@btopenworld.com or europa@ifsw.org

I am also working with the Executive on preparing for the new IFSW Europe project on "Standards for Social Work meeting Human Rights" – expect to receive correspondence about this from me soon.

My work on updating the European section of the IFSW website continues. If anyone has any thoughts on how this could be further developed, please do get in touch.

I am really looking forward to seeing everyone again in Porto – we will be sending out more information about the meeting soon. If you need any help or advice in arranging your attendance at the meeting please let me know.

Siobhan Maclean



IFSW Europe is not alone, but cooperates closely with a number of partners who all want to improve a social Europe. The Executive Committee has decided to present the actual partners in the coming issues of ESW. This time we start by presenting ENSACT and its five members beside IFSW Europe.

European Network for Social ACTION (ENSACT) brings together professional social work practitioners, social work providers, social work training, studies and research. **ENSACT** stands for professional quality. It fosters social professionals, trainers and social services in innovating and strengthening their practices, concepts and theories.

ENSACT is a European Network of professional associations, faculties of social work and national councils of social welfare – consisting of six European organisations, of which IFSW Europe is one. The others are the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW), Formation d'Educateurs Sociaux Européens / European Social Educator Training (FESET), Internationale des Communautés Educatives (FICE), International Association of Social Educators (AIEJI) and International Council on Social Welfare European Region (ICSW).

ENSACT was established in 2006 and is still in its early years, still developing the common issues and campaigns.

ENSACT voices social professionals, educators and services in Europe, for example towards Council of Europe, European Union and European Parliament. Through this cooperation we will lobby for the quality for social policies and the provision of social services, giving social professions a stronger voice nationally and in Brussels and Strasbourg.

ENSACT aims at promoting the consistency and effectiveness of professional qualifications and the quality of social services across Europe, including work on the Bologna process and the EU mutual recognition of qualifications processes.

The main activities of **ENSACT** shall be voicing its members on the European Level in taking part in policy making processes and to come up with statements and studies. Bringing the members together at joint European conferences and expert meetings. Providing the members with information on common issues, and activities and documents from the different partners.

ENSACT members have national and regional bodies throughout Europe, some of which are already cooperating at national levels and some will start cooperation.

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The MEMBERS besides IFSW Europe



The International Council on Social Welfare Europe represents national councils, national institutes and international organisations, together forming a wide range of thousands of non-governmental organisations. ICSW-Europe provides a forum for the discussion of social welfare, promotes cooperation, aims at exchange of information, fosters deepening of knowledge and takes actions in social welfare policies and practices, nationally and internationally. Visit www.icsw.org/region/e.htm



The European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW)

brings together schools, universities and institutions engaged in social work education from more than 30 countries. Its mission is to promote and maintain high-quality education, training and

knowledge of social work practices, social services, and social welfare policies in Europe. Visit www.eassw.org



Formation d'Educateurs Sociaux Européens/European Social Educator Training.

(FESET) is the European Association of Training Centres for Socio-Educational Care Work. The aims of FESET are: To promote the education and training for socio-educational purposes; to encourage exchanges and understanding between training centres within Europe and collaborate with other associations with similar goals. Visit www.feset.org



FICE Europe consists of member organisations (sections), which are represented in almost all European countries. Generally they include establishments such as residential homes and other institutions or services

operating in the field of childcare, schools, workshops for disabled people, education and training centres for young people in need of support, training centres for professional staff. The member organisations are also admitting individual members that come from the social field or research establishments. Visit www.fice-europe.org



International Association of Social Educators (AIEJI) unites social educators from all countries and promotes quality practice that seeks to ensure the best for people served by the profession. AIEJI emphasizes and promotes the philosophy of social education and its uniqueness in being actively involved in part-

nership with clients, working with them, not only individually but in groups, families, communities, in the milieu, towards the development of their strengths and in resolving personal, social and community difficulties. Visit www.aieji.net

As someone once said ...

They say that time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself"

Andy Warhol

'At the hospital halfway house, thanks to the social workers and nurses, I felt I rediscovered life. Yes, I am ready to talk in public about my experience, so that others know it was such a positive one.' ***Service user***

"There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread."

Mother Teresa

"I offer you peace. I offer you love. I offer you friendship. I see your beauty. I hear your need. I feel your feelings. My wisdom flows from the Highest Source. I salute that Source in you. Let us work together for unity and love." ***Gandhi's Prayer For Peace***

"Thank you for helping me become more aware that I too have needs. That I too need to be respected and be accepted." ***Service user***

"The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him his own." ***Benjamin Disraeli***

"I know of no great men except those who have rendered great service to the human race." ***Voltaire***

"For us you were a big sigh of relief in a chaotic situation." ***Service user***

"In this age, the man who dares to think for himself and to act independently does a service to his race" ***John Stuart Mill***



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Communiqué

LE STRESS ET LE « BURNOUT » DES TRAVAILLEURS SOCIAUX **UNE ETUDE EUROPEENE A REALISER**

L'Association nationale française des assistants sociaux (ANAS) vient d'être désignée par l'Observatoire de la pauvreté de son pays pour réaliser un survey européen sur le stress, l'usure et le burnout chez les travailleurs sociaux impliqués directement, sur le terrain, avec les personnes en situation de précarité, pauvreté et d'exclusion sociale.

Cette recherche représente un enjeu majeur non seulement pour les nouvelles données comparatives qu'elle permettra de collecter sur le travail social mais aussi pour celles concernant les politiques publiques censées améliorer la vie des personnes et des groupes vulnérables.

L'ANAS doit contacter des organisations professionnelles dans neuf pays européennes, et la FITS les remercie par avance pour leur collaboration à ce projet.

JOB STRESS AND BURNOUT AMONG SOCIAL WORKERS **A EUROPEAN SURVEY TO BEGIN**

The French National Association of Social Workers (ANAS) has been asked by the National Poverty Observatory of its country to conduct a European survey concerning job stress and burnout among social workers who are regularly involved in direct services to the poor, to the socially excluded, and to vulnerable populations.

This research represents an important opportunity to produce new comparative data about social work's role and about public policies relating to poverty and social exclusion.

ANAS will be contacting professional organizations in nine European countries and the International Federation thanks them in advance for their cooperation

TRABAJADORES SOCIALES : AGOTAMIENTO, SUFRIMIENTO Y "BURNOUT" **UNA INVESTIGACION EUROPEA VA COMMENZAR**

Encargada por el Observatorio oficial de la pobreza y del exclusion social de su pais, la Asociacion nacional de asistentes sociales de Francia (ANAS) va realizar una investigacion europea sobre las dificultades de los profesionales quien trabajan directamente con personas y grupos en condicion precaria.

Esta escudrinamento es una oportunidad importante para producir nuevos datos comparativos sobre las realidades de trabajo social y las acciones publicas frente a pobreza.

Por eso, ANAS solicitara organizaciones profesionales en nuevo paises europeos, y la Federacion internacional da gracias anticipadamente para la colaboracion activa de ellas

IFSW Europe PROJECT FOR 2008

At the Delegates meeting in Parma in May 2007 the IFSW project for 2008 was agreed as

STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL WORK MEETING HUMAN RIGHTS

The aims of the project are to:

let people meet

to exchange

to develop

to empower

To compare trends based on the practice experience

To promote good standards, rather than define the one good standard

87% of the French public believes France should play a more active role on the European scene to protect human rights worldwide, *Human Rights Watch, (Paris, October 9, 2007)*

Up until a year ago a social worker of the Jesuit Refugee Service was the only professional operating in the detention services. *Malta 2007*

"... a broader understanding of human rights that can be used to ground community development practices and broaden human services." *Law and Social Inquiry*

The Convention on the Rights of the Child grants all children and young people a comprehensive set of economic, social and cultural and civil and political rights. Article 17 gives children and young people the right to receive, seek and give information ...

Trans-national work and service developments aimed at newer immigrant communities ... are increasingly being established ... within the context of the tightening of legislative controls. In some countries, such as the UK, these are posing problems not just for the immigrants themselves but also for social workers, who are increasingly expected to police eligibility for services (Cohen et al, 2002). Efforts to influence policy by social professionals themselves have been muted (Briskman and Cemlyn 2005) and a number of possible reasons can be suggested ... many social workers do not see this area of work as a particular responsibility; or may lack power or skills in relation to voicing concerns publicly about the situation of particular individuals and minority groups or developing critiques of immigration policies. Lyons K. (2007)

A number of sub themes will be developed and explored within the project. These will include:

- ▶ **SOCIAL WORK CONDITIONS**
- ▶ **REGULATION OF THE PROFESSION**
- ▶ **USE AND MISUSE OF INFORMATION**
- ▶ **TRAINING ISSUES**
- ▶ **USER PERSPECTIVES**

Other sub themes may be identified by member organizations in the initial consultation stage of the project.



A mobile prevention point in the suburbs of St. Petersburg provides medical, psychological, and social assistance for injection drug users and sex workers. *Russia 2007*

WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY 2008

The World Social Work Day is three months away – Tuesday April 15th. The Global theme for the day is “Social Work – Making a World of Difference”. The theme is open and broad and IFSW Europe decided at the Delegates meeting in Parma 2007 that we will interpret this theme into our context – and at the same time link it into our forthcoming project. The decision is a European sub theme:

STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL WORK

PROMOTING THE REALISATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Some of the questions the IFSW Europe Executive Committee invites organisations to highlight on this day are:

What defines the standards of social work practice in your country?

- Framework (law, economy, politics)
- Social work education
- Training
- Ethics

How do these standards meet human rights?

How can the standards of social work practice be promoted and how can human rights be strengthened?

(Note the focus is on *social work practice* not “social work services”).

We hope that all National member organisations will make this date an event through a wide range of activities. The executive committee encourage member organisations to inform others about their plans for the day. We therefore ask member organisations to send a brief report on their planned activities to the executive committee. We will then put this information on the IFSW website in advance of the social work day. The content of the report can be:

- Planned activities
- Partners/cooperation
- Planned Outcomes

Please send the report to IFSW Europe's honorary secretary Siobhan Maclean at Europe@ifsw.org. Deadline for reports is March 14th 2008. After Social Work Day we ask you to report on the outcomes of the day – and we will present these results at the Delegates Meeting in Porto in May. Deadline for reports on outcomes is May 1st.

NEWS FROM THE EU INSTITUTIONS

EU leaders sign new treaty for the European Union

The 27 Heads of State and Government met on 13th December for the signature of the [Lisbon Treaty](#) with European Commission President, José Manuel Barroso and European Parliament President, Hans-Gert Pöttering attending. In order to be implemented the treaty has to be ratified by the 27 Member States before January 1st 2009. Only days after being signed by the 27 EU leaders, the Treaty of Lisbon has received its first thumbs up, with the Hungarian parliament being the first to approve it on Monday 17 December. Only Ireland will ratify the treaty by referendum, the other countries will do so via parliament. So that readers may understand the treaty better the Robert Schuman Foundation has published [10 summary sheets as well as four annexes](#) which focus notably on the articles now governed by the qualified majority and those governed by the ordinary legislative procedure.

Charter of Fundamental Rights officially proclaimed

On December 12, the three main European institutions, the European Parliament, The European Council and the European Commission during a ceremony in the European Parliament in Strasbourg signed the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The Charter sets out the civil, political, economic and social rights of European citizens and all persons resident in the EU. The new treaty confers to the charter a legally binding character. The ceremony was disturbed by a protest of eurosceptic Parliamentarians. [Find the news on the European Parliament website.](#)

2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue launched

"Together in diversity" is the motto for the [2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue](#). This initiative, launched on 4th December by the European Commission aims to promote the wealth of cultural diversity and at the same time foster the feeling of "belonging" to the Union. A package of 10 million Euro has been allocated to support the information campaign, surveys and studies on intercultural dialogue, the co-financing of the seven flagship European projects and 27 national projects – one per member state - on intercultural dialogue across the EU. On this occasion, Eurobarometer has published a [study focusing on intercultural dialogue](#). According to the study around 3/4 of the population believe that cultural diversity is a source of wealth for their country.

2010 to be the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

On 12 December, the European Commission officially designated 2010 as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

The €17 million campaign aims to reaffirm the EU's commitment to making a decisive impact on the eradication of

poverty. Currently, the EU has 78 million people (16% of the population) living under the threat of poverty. 19% of children in the EU are at risk of poverty and one European in ten lives in a household where no one works. The 2010 European Year aims to reach EU citizens and all public, social and economic stakeholders. Its four specific objectives are:

- Recognition of the right of people in poverty and social exclusion to live in dignity and to play a full part in society;
- An increase in the public ownership of social inclusion policies, emphasising everyone's responsibility in tackling poverty and marginalisation;
- A more cohesive society, where no one doubts that society as a whole benefits from the eradication of poverty;
- Commitment of all actors, because real progress requires a long-term effort that involves all levels of governance.

See [the European Commission's press release](#)

NEWS FROM NGOS

Social Platform's annual conference report now available!

The Social Platform, of which EAPN is a member, recently issued the report of its 2007 annual conference "Social NGOs getting ready for the post-Lisbon: From growth and jobs to sustainable and social" which took place on 26 November 2007. Over 100 European social activists met at the event to discuss the EU priorities after 2010, deadline of the so-called Lisbon agenda. With experts and decision-makers they discussed the social and demographic changes facing the European Union in the coming years. Taking stock of today's social reality, the Social Platform presented [key findings and interpretation for the 2010-2020 EU priorities' agenda](#). They exchanged ideas on a renewed vision for the EU that is shaped by a model of development, based on solidarity, social justice and sustainability. [Download full report of conference.](#) [Click here to view the video conference report](#)

Mental Health Europe regrets the missed opportunity of a Mental Health Strategy for the European Union

On 6 December 2007, European Health Commissioner Markos Kyprianou announced that the foreseen EU Mental Health Strategy has been replaced by plans for the establishment of a "Mental Health Pact". "We deeply regret

that the European Union has failed to reach an agreement on the adoption of a common EU Mental Health Strategy", says Mary Van Dievel, Director of [Mental Health Europe](#).

In this context, Mental Health Europe calls upon the European Union and the Member States to ensure that the foreseen Mental Health Pact adopts a wide-ranging approach to promoting good mental health and well-being, and addresses the whole of the European population across all settings. An effective Mental Health Pact shall also support the implementation of appropriate measures and actions that go beyond the mere execution of a series of thematic conferences.

"New draft directive deepens healthcare divide between rich and poor", Social Platform denounces On 18 December, European Social NGOs denounced the lack of solidarity approach taken by Health Commissioner Markos Kyprianou in the draft framework directive establishing a Community framework for the application of patients' rights in cross-border health care, due to be released on 19 December. *"This proposed directive is made mostly for those who have the financial means to seek healthcare in another Member State"* said Social Platform president, Fintan Farrell, underlining it will deepen inequalities in the access to quality health and healthcare services. *"Why does the EU directive not take account of other issues which are in the general interest of everyone living in the EU, such as equal access to affordable high quality health services for all, including particularly vulnerable groups,"* added Farrell. *"That would show that the Commission understands the concept of collective solidarity, not only individual consumers' rights,"* he noted. See [the Social Platform's press release](#)

ENAR Response to the European Commission's Consultation on "Schools for the 21st Century" ENAR's response highlights the key findings of ENAR members in the field of education and makes recommendations for action that ENAR sees as central to achieving the well being of ethnic and religious minorities within the European Union. [Click here to download the paper](#)

European Youth Forum adopts position on equality between women and men During its November 2007 statutory meeting, the YFJ Council of Members (COMEM) adopted a new Policy Paper on achieving equality between women and men. This document follows the YFJ's strong commitment to promote equality between young women and men, which builds on relevant existing YFJ policies on gender equality and discrimination on the ground of sex and/or gender. To download the full text of the position, [please click here](#)

PUBLICATIONS

FEANTSA Magazine (Autumn 2007): "Social and Demographic Change and Homelessness" The new edition of the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) magazine focuses on the impact of social and demographic change.

The evolution of the composition of the European population and the changing social fabric across the EU are having a major impact on the phenomenon of homelessness. [Download the magazine](#)

Asylum is not gender neutral – Protecting women seeking asylum: A practical advocacy guide The European Women's Lobby and the Refugee Women's Resources Project at Asylum Aid (UK) launched a practical advocacy guide on the need for gender guidelines to implement two European Asylum Directives. The publication provides practical proposals on how to monitor these two Directives to ensure that women are guaranteed their right and suggests ways in which women's organisation, human rights and social NGOs can take steps to monitor implementation at national level. [Download the publication](#)

Equal Pay – Exchange of good practices Equal pay for equal work is one of the European Union's founding principles. Despite this, the figures reveal a continuing pay gap of 15% on average between male and female workers. This publication features the profiles of 26 projects co-funded by the European Commission in the context of calls for proposals on the equal pay theme. Each profile provides a brief explanation of the project aims and a review of the methodology and results achieved. Details of the coordinating organisation and its trans-national partners are also included, along with the address of the project website where applicable. [Download the publication](#)

Hard to Deal With? – A research study exploring the relationship between multiple identity and employability in Northern Ireland Produced by Diversity Works a partnership of community/voluntary organisations, public authorities, government and employer representatives based in Belfast, Northern Ireland, this study attempts to fill a gap in research in Northern Ireland and to demonstrate that there are proven links between multiple identities and employability.

It presents ten key findings and 31 specific recommendations. The key findings and recommendations focus on a number of areas including: the benefits trap, childcare and caring responsibilities, and disability. The recommendations are targeted at a number of sectors including, employers and business organisations. [Download the publication](#)

Croatian symposium: Quality and Professional Responsibility in Social Work Practice

Croatian Association of Social Workers has organised III. social work symposium: „Quality and Professional Responsibility in the Social Work Practice“. Third social work symposium was held in the city of Osijek, Croatia, from 28th to 30th of November, 2007. With this symposium Croatian Association of Social Workers wanted to initiate a discussion on the active practice of social work and to accentuate its outreach and possibilities for improving a quality of social work with clients/consumers who are experiencing social difficulties.

In relation to the complexity of the social problems in Croatian society, the process of social changes has already began in the spheres of the social work services delivery. A goal of this symposium was to examine the possibilities of this process of social work change and its effect on helping professions and the advancements on the social work practice. Also, we wanted to start a dialogue about professional responsibility with intention of improving quality of social work services to our clients/consumers. We have looked at the continuous development of the social work practice and the ways to adjust it with an organisational and professional criteria and standards which are valid in the countries of the European union.

Issues as lifelong education and further professional development are needed to achieve a better understanding of the social work needs in the Croatian society as a whole and specific personal social situations and behaviors of our clients/consumers. There is a need for further development of the professional responsibility, as well as development of the ethics for the professional conduct, which are basic standards of the social work practice.

The questions we wanted to answer at the symposium were: „Which social work competencies make us a more competent social workers?“, „Who holds the power and responsibilities for the changes in the practice of social work?“, „How can we empower social workers so they could become a prime-movers of the social changes in the relation to the needs of our clients and in the relation to the ethical values of the social work profession?“, „Which are our obstacles?“, „Where are our resources?.“

These were some of the questions that symposium has tried to answer from the practical, experiential and theoretically-exploratory perspective. Throughout the symposium basic values of the social work were always emphasized, especially through the principles of human rights and social justice.

Plenary session of the symposium was presented by Mr. Nicolai Paulsen, the president of the International Federation of Social Workers (European Region). Symposium was attended by over 400 social workers, social pedagogues, psychologist and other helping professions.

Tatjana Katkić Stanić, President,
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Moving Young Children from Institutions to Family Based Care



© Centre for Forensic and Family Psychology, University of Birmingham, UK
am.ac.uk)

The overuse of institutions for young children in Europe

In 2003, a project conducted under the auspices of the European Commission's Daphne Programme* surveyed 33 European countries to map the number and characteristics of children less than 3 years old in institutional care for more than three months without a parent(1). It was found that there were 23,099 young children (11 per 10,000) in institutional care across the European Union and Economic Community (EU and EEC). There was great variation between countries in the proportion of children under 3 in institutional care. Four countries had less than one per 10,000 young children in institutions, 12 countries had between one and ten per 10,000, seven countries had between 11 and 30 per 10,000 and, alarmingly, eight countries had between 31 and 60 children per 10,000 in institutions (Czech Republic, Belgium, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovak Republic and

Hungary).

The dangers of institutional care

Research has demonstrated that young children who are institutionalised before the age of six months suffer long term developmental delay (2). Those who are placed in a caring family environment by the age of 6 months will probably recover and catch up on their physical and cognitive development (3). Improvements are seen in cognitive ability when children are removed from institutional care at an early age and placed in a family (2,3). However, difficulties with social behaviour and attachments may persist, leading to a greater chance of antisocial behaviour and mental health problems (4). Consequently, it is recommended that children aged less than 3 years old, with or without disability, should not be placed in residential care without a parent or primary caregiver (5).

Alternative care for young children

Institutional care has been shown to cost on average three times more than foster care, nevertheless one third of countries in Europe place more young children in institutions than in foster or kinship care (1). To reduce costs, some countries in economic transition have promoted international adoption as an alternative to the long term institutional care of their children (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Romania), usually in the absence of established services for family support and rehabilitation, foster care and national adoption (1,5). By contrast, countries that have well developed family support and rehabilitation services, foster care and national adoption have hardly any young children in institutional care (UK, Norway, Iceland and Slovenia). The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly stipulates (Article 21) that inter-country adoption should only be considered as a last resort and evidence suggests that only 4% of children in institutional care are "true" biological orphans, where both parents have died(6).

Good practices in deinstitutionalising children into family care

A follow-up Daphne project* in 2004 (6) identified ways in which young children in institutional care were being de-institutionalised and returned to family-based care in seven European countries: Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Approximately one in five children returned to their parents



or relatives, 63% entered a new family (foster care or adoption) and a quarter were moved to another institution (of 11 children or more). The study found that countries with better community support services were more likely to base their decisions on the child's needs and to provide better preparation for the move. Most countries assessed children's physical, health and developmental needs together with the physical environment and carer suitability. However, only half of the disabled children had their disability assessed as part of the decision-making process and only 38% of children with siblings were placed with one of their siblings.



Transition and the rights of the child

The transition from one placement to another should be carefully planned with the following steps (7):

Assess the needs of the child;

Assess potential carer(s) who best match and meet the needs of the child;

Introduce potential carer(s) to the child in an environment familiar to the child (old placement);

Involve potential carer(s) in looking after the child in an environment familiar to the child, preferably on a daily basis. The parenting skills of the new carer should be assessed prior to any move into a new placement;

The child visits the new placement and the new carer is again assessed in the child's new environment.

If positive and sensitive interactions are observed then the child makes the transition from the old to new placement, together with transition objects (e.g. toys, clothes, photo album), having already developed a relationship with the new carer.

Return visits to the old placement should be considered on occasion if practical. Contact with siblings is essential if not placed together and these need to be arranged regularly, if feasible.

The above process protects the rights of the child and promotes secure attachment between the child and the new carer. The process is more difficult to achieve when the child is placed a long distance away (geographically, culturally or ethnically), which heightens the potential for harm. However, children should not remain in an institution while waiting for appropriate adopting parents matched to the child's needs. It is in the best interests of the child to be placed in foster care while waiting for adoption. Indeed, the foster carers or relatives might be first to be considered.

Training and information on de-institutionalising and transforming children's services

In 2006, the Daphne II Programme supported a further project* to develop a training and information pack in order to disseminate the findings and good practices identified from the previous work. The training was initially targeted at those countries with the highest rates of institutional care for young children but other European countries have also requested the training. Within one year, the principle of deinstitutionalising young children into family based care to reduce harm has been disseminated in sixteen EU member/EU accession countries and four other countries in the region. The training aims to prevent the placement of all children under five years (whether disabled or not) in residential institutions through the implementation of a **Ten Step**

Model (7):

STEP 1 <i>Raising awareness</i>	Raising awareness of the harmful effects of institutional care on young children and their development.
STEP 2 <i>Managing the process</i>	The establishment of an effective multi-sector project management team (at national and regional levels) to pilot projects in one or more areas or institutions.
STEP 3 <i>Country level Audit</i>	To audit the nature and extent of institutions for residential care of children nationally and to measure the number and characteristics of children who live in them.
STEP 4 <i>Analysis at institution level</i>	Data collection and analysis within an institution of admissions, discharges and length of stay of children and an assessment of individual needs of the children in residence.
STEP 5 <i>Design of alternative services</i>	Design of alternative services based on individual needs of children and an assessment of family based services currently available (e.g. mother baby unit for parents at risk of abandonment) and those new services that need to be developed (e.g. day care and foster care services for children with disabilities).
STEP 6 <i>Plan transfer of resources</i>	Management plan and practical mechanism for the transfer of resources - financial, human, and capital. Finances should always follow the child.
STEP 7 <i>Preparing and moving children</i>	Preparing and moving children and their possessions on the basis of their individual needs and treatment plans. Matching these needs and plans to the new placement and the capacity of the new carers. Transfer procedures need to respect the rights of the child and always be in their best interest.
STEP 8 <i>Preparing and moving staff</i>	Preparing and moving staff by assessing staff skills, staff training needs and staff expectations in relation to the new demands of transformed services for children.
STEP 9 <i>Logistics</i>	Carefully considering logistics to scale up a successful pilot project involving one institution or one region, to a national strategic plan.
STEP 10 <i>Monitoring and evaluation</i>	Setting up a national database of children in public care to monitor and support the transfer of children from institutional care to family based care. This involves health and social service staff making home visits to families with deinstitutionalised or newly placed children to assess, monitor and evaluate the treatment plans and optimal development of the children.

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Web resources

Daphne Programme (<http://www.daphne-toolkit.org>)

Centre for Forensic and Family Psychology (http://psg275.bham.ac.uk/forensic_centre/index.htm)

Daphne Project 1 (<http://www.daphne-toolkit.org/prjFiche.asp?prj=2002017%20&lang=EN>)

Daphne Project 2 (<http://www.daphne-toolkit.org/prjFiche.asp?prj=2003046%20&lang=EN>)

Daphne Project 3 (<http://www.daphne-toolkit.org/prjFiche.asp?prj=20052037&lang=EN>)



LINKS TO CHECK OUT ...

<http://www.un.org/events/humanrights/2007/> - Human Rights Day 2007 marked the start of a year-long commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This link contains information and useful resources such as downloadable logos in various languages, newsroom and guidelines for planning your human rights event and more ...

<http://www.hrw.org/> - Human rights watch, defending human rights world wide. Various languages available.

<http://www.oi.acime.gov.pt/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1461> - "We solicit proposals for papers that will focus on issues involving migration and human rights in the Mediterranean region. We welcome contributions from a wide range of disciplines, including, but not limited to, law, economics, social sciences, history, demography, political science, and psychology, and from members of non-governmental organizations. We also welcome comparative and interdisciplinary research on migration."

<http://www.eusw.unipr.it/> - a network to develop a robust knowledge base on social work, service users, policy, practice and education across Europe. This network claims more than ninety social work organisations represented and will seek to draw in many more as it progresses ...

<http://isw.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/50/6/859.pdf> - News and Views...from IFSW: Renewed global interest in the profession, *International Social Work* 2007

Europe and Social Policy Update

This time the update will inform you about new books published by the Council of Europe and the annual Meeting of the Social platform.

Council of Europe Literature

There is a series "Trends in Social Cohesion" and until now three books are published.

1. *Achieving Social Cohesion in a Multicultural Europe* (Concepts, situation and developments)
2. *Reconciling Labour Flexibility with Social Cohesion* – The experiences and specificities of central and eastern Europe
3. *Reconciling labour Flexibility with Social Cohesion* – Ideas for political action
4. *Concerted Development of Social Cohesion Indicators* (Methodological guide) This book comes with a CD.

1.2. *Young People from Lower-income Neighbourhoods* – Guide to new policy approaches

1.3. *Report on User Involvement in Personal Social Services*

1.4. *Integrated social services in Europe*. This is a very new one, first published 23.10.07. This report is the result of a two-year project carried out by a group of specialists, whose task was to examine the integration of social services with other selected public services

You will find all these books on the website of Council of Europe Publishing <http://book.coe.int>

The 26th of November the annual conference of the social platform took place in Brussels. The title was: Social NGOs getting ready for the post-Lisbon: From 'growth and jobs' to sustainable and social'. There were 135 participants from 30 NGOs. The meeting had three main parts.

- ▶ Taking stock of today's social reality – is the EU busy with the right priorities?
- ▶ Europe's future: Is it all about money?
- ▶ Changing Europe: Stop scaring, start sharing?

Today we have 27 nations in the EU. That means a lot of varieties and different development. To have a minimum of consensus in between these nations is a big challenge for all.

70% of the people in the EU said that they are content with their life as it is now. But they are afraid of their children's future.

No good education is the way into unemployment and poverty especially poverty of children and elderly. And it is the way into exclusion.

On the one hand the EU is the world's largest economic area in the world. It had in 2005 30,3% of the world's total GDP. On the other hand 78 million people are facing poverty in the EU. 11 child out of 5 aged 0 to 15 is living or at risk of poverty. IN some EU countries, unemployment among minorities and immigrants is twice as high as the rest of the population.

The social, economic, natural and cultural environment in which people live has changed drastically. This has implications for family relations, consumption patterns, the circumstances under which we are born and we die, and the way our children grow up.

Actually, in many European countries, there is a re-merge/growth of extreme forms of poverty and social exclusion, such as homelessness. For instance some of Europe's richest countries (such as Ireland and the UK) have the highest level of child poverty.

In a lot of EU countries the birth rates are decreasing dramatically. This influences the social insurance systems and health systems. The so called 'sandwich generation' should be responsible for itself for the birth rate and

the pensions for their parents generation.

The balance between social and economic is disturbed. Social policy and social cohesion is one thing we need as sustainable development, but it cannot be without economic.

In 2002 the European Commission researched what is important for people to feel happy:

This is the result:

a good job	91%
sufficient accommodation	89%
being able to help each other	80%
feeling recognised by the society	67%

The question is, do we have enough money to finance an European Social Model?

In an EU of 500 million people the wealth gap is grater than ever. The richest corner, inner London, generates more than three times the wealth of the European average, while north eastern Romania manages barely a quarter.

Is all the money invested in the right priorities? In Barcelona in 2002 the EU Council said: “ By 20010 childcare should be available to at least 90% of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age” Yet 5 years later, these targets have not been reached and different still exist between member states and between regions within member states. Only 3 Member states spend more than 1% of their GDP on childcare. So the Social NGOs call on the EU to achieve the above Barcelona target.

Seeing the diversity in the social development of the EU countries the Social platform adopted in 2005 the following principles.

1. **Fundamental right** – Guaranteeing fundamental right, as enshrined in the EU Charter of fundamental rights and other international instruments, must be at heart of all policies. Fundamental rights are violated when people are unable to live in dignity due to poverty, social exclusion, discrimination or inequality. This means guaranteeing the fundamental rights such as access to education, social protection, health and housing of every person in the EU.
2. **Solidarity and Participation**- The wealth which is created in the European Union must be shared and redistributed to ensure that everyone can have a decent quality of life, opportunities and chances to participate fully in society.
3. **Democracy and Participation**- The demands of accountability, transparency and democracy require an effective participation in decision-making by all relevant stakeholders. Public authorities must be proactive in engaging civil society in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies through an appropriate and effective involvement.
4. **Responsibility and sustainability**- The development of the EU must respect the rights of the future generations and ensure that their ability to decide for themselves, and live freely and happily is not undermined.

This time the Portuguese Government has the presidency of the EU. The Portuguese Minister of Employment and Social Affairs was one of the speakers in this meeting. His presents show that the Social Platform has a voice and is an important partner.

If you want more information about the Social Platform, please visit its website www.socialplatform.com

In future the IFSW European region will have more contact with this umbrella organisation for the NGOs.

Barbara Molderings - IFSWe, Executive Committee Member

La rencontre entre l'ANAS et NASW d'illinois en collaboration avec l'organisme Chicago sister city :

Le programme international de « sister city » a pour but de développer, organiser, coordonner des échanges avec les villes internationales membres de sister cities. L'objectif de cette rencontre fut de discuter sur un projet d'échange possible entre Paris et Chicago au sujet des problématiques sociales communes avec des équipes pluridisciplinaires et des systèmes d'organisations différentes.

Le programme serait :

Immersion sur la culture et l'histoire du service social

Partagé et discuté des meilleurs pratiques, modèles et méthodes de travail

Dressé les problèmes sociaux et la politique sociale

Développé de nouvelles connaissances et de nouvelles compétences qui pourront être utilisées chez eux

Encouragé les résultats qui auront un impact sur la politique sociale.

La rencontre :

Kathleen Borland est membre de NASW et de

Chicago sister city.

Christine Windstrup a rencontré Kathleen à Chicago à NASW au mois de juillet 2007.

Au cours de cette rencontre Kathleen a parlé de ce projet d'échange. Depuis le retour des USA,

Kathleen a parlé à un membre de sister city à Paris. Elle essaye de fixer un rendez vous entre ce membre et Christine Windstrup afin de discuter de ce projet. La commission internationale de l'ANAS encourage Christine à poursuivre ce projet.

Christine Windstrup
ANAS France

A meeting between a member of ANAS and a member of NASW chapter Illinois combined with sister city:

The objectives:

The Chicago sister cities international in collaboration with the national association of social workers, Illinois chapter coordinate social work exchanges.

The Chicago sister city international program provides leadership to develop, manage, and coordinate comprehensive exchanges with Chicago's international sisters cities

The objective is to have a city like Paris which participates in an initiative project of social service exchange program with Chicago.

The meeting:

Kathleen Borland is a member of NASW and sisters city.

Christine Windstrup met in July Kathleen in Chicago at NASW.

Kathleen talks about her exchange in social work with other countries through sister cities. Kathleen talked with the member of the sister's city in Paris. She tries to set up an appointment between Christine Windstrup and this member to discuss the project.

The commission of the international ANAS encourages Christine to pursue this project.

The program will:

Immerse delegate in host city's culture and social service history

Share and discuss best practices, models and methods

Address social problems and social welfare policy

Imbue delegates with a broader vision incorporating global consciousness

Develop new knowledge and skills to be used in participants' home city

Emphasize outcomes that impact on social policy.

Christine Windstrup
ANAS France

Russia in Strasbourg, Poverty in Europe

On Wednesday 17 October 2007 the Council of Europe NGOs, in particular the Extreme Poverty and Social Cohesion Grouping, together with the International Movement ATD-Fourth World, marked the World Day to overcome Extreme Poverty with a workshop and a ceremony at the Council of Europe. The Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Maud de Boer-Buquicchio and the Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, who participated in both events, heard first-hand accounts of different experiences from representatives from Romania, Moldova, Russia, Germany and France. The Union of social workers and social pedagogues of Russia were invited to participate. I was accompanying the group of two people living in poverty – one is a 57-year old pensioner with 50 Euros a month pension and very disabled mother and another – a social worker with 80 euros a month salary, mother of 3 children. Both of them were from remote rural area of Russia – 24 hours by train from Moscow.



For me personally it was a great privilege to be with those people as I have found much more about poverty in rural area and about the needs of its population and wonderful job of rural social workers. All delegations were hosted by French families. We were staying with the fantastic couple – activists and volunteers of International Movement ATD-Fourth World Annick and Jeanne-Pierre Gaulle. At the workshop our delegation made a presentation where we identified the responsibility of people who live in poverty, of social workers and governments for poverty which does exist in Europe. Here is Russian presentation:

Background

Extreme poverty is the shame of any state. In Russia the equality that prevailed under the communist system, despite all its faults, has gone. There is no culture of sharing despite of the fact of the widening gap between poor and rich. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union the social safety net was lost. The move to a market economy hit not just the least educated members of society but also many doctors and teachers, social workers and engineers. The salaries of social workers for instance are sometimes lower than pensions of their clients, though salaries are slowly improving. We in Russia are at the process of restoring a more justice system for people. It will take time but we have to try to achieve. In Russia the process of sharing has recently started. Some of the major companies now have charitable trust funds, to provide some limited support for the most vulnerable members of society, as in many European countries. Programmes of support of those in need.

Poor people and poverty

In Russia even people who are really poor often do not acknowledge this fact. It can be seen as a positive aspect of Russian culture that people are often more self reliant. But it is negative as they often do not seek the help and benefits that are available to those most in need.

Rural areas in particular have witnessed high levels of unemployment due to the collapse of the collective farming system and the movement of younger people to cities in search of education and work. There has also been a general reduction in rural living standards pushing many disadvantaged groups such as elderly and disabled people to below the poverty line (as defined by the Russian Government).

The low income population will often grow vegetables, and then bottle them to make very tasty preserves and it helps them to survive the long and cold Russian winters. My colleagues from Orenburg villages are very good at making their own preserves during the communist era people were provided with plots of land, including those who lived in the cities and there is still a strong culture of growing vegetables for the winter. The land is rich and usually provides good crops, and people preserve their produce. My Orenburg colleagues are self dependent. They rely on themselves and their families.

The Social Workers and Poverty

Social work's concern with poverty is linked to the profession's ethical norm of justice and professional competencies. From the early social work efforts to ameliorate poverty through the distribution of emergency food and clothing to efforts to create community- and self-sufficiency, social workers have been on the front lines of poverty work.

Although the term "poverty" can be applied to relative depletion of any resource—of the spirit, of health, of attitude—the term usually refers to economic poverty. How one perceives poverty guides the approach to solving the problems associated with it. Social workers' perspective on both the person (those who are poor) and the environment (the circumstances that produce poverty) have engaged this profession's efforts over the past 15 years to mitigate the impact of poverty on people as well as to develop policies that either prevent poverty or ease poor people's rise to greater economic security. Indeed, many would say that our profession, more than any other, is engaged in working with poor peo-

ple, those who live in communities with broken infra-structures and those who live on the basic incomes or no incomes as in many rural regions. The list of poverty causes is almost endless – and the social workers meet them all. Social workers see first-hand the debilitating effect of poverty on those struggling to patch together meagre resources to live. Social work's concern with poverty is linked to the profession's ethical norm of justice. As such, special attention is given to those who are not only poor, but are members of groups that often are excluded from pathways to self-sufficiency, such as women, children, and the mentally ill. Social workers also see the resilience and creativity of those who develop alternative economies and approaches to problem-solving in ways that other economic entrepreneurs might envy.

Government and Poverty

President Vladimir Putin said recently that “Poverty is one of the biggest problems facing Russia. A large percentage of the population lives below the poverty line or is simply poor” and that the government is working hard to increase economic growth rates. Putin said ensuring sustainable economic growth was the best way to solve the problem. The Government is making attempts to alleviate extreme poverty by raising benefits for the poorest and increasing salaries for the lowest paid and social workers are amongst this group. The Government has also begun to provide financial support and to work in partnership with NGOs which it now understands has a key role in supporting poor people in particular those who live in rural communities. With the increased wealth in Russia we must hope that the aims of our government will be realized.

Conclusion

In order to change the situation in Russia all parties must work together to address this issue. In this process the role of poor people themselves is very important as is the role of social workers. Social workers must be enablers and empowers of poor people in Russia as is stated in the Russian Social Work Code of Ethics. We have to empower people to make decisions and ensure them better access to services. There must also be a higher awareness in societies and communities about the importance of the role of social workers when assisting poor and socially excluded citizens if we are to create socially and economically sustainable development in our society.

Our colleagues from Moldavia, Romania, France and Germany made a good analysis of their situations. IFSW Europe has very good relationships with COE and we think it is a very important link for our organisations.

Thanks to the paper which was sent to member organisations before this day. Russian delegation used it when the presentation was made from the steps of Council of Europe. Our member organisations can be acquainted with what was said at the COE. We think it was helpful to have a paper from IFSW about poverty which helped a lot.. The 17 of October in Strasbourg is a big event for our delegation from Russia. We are here to celebrate this day together with all of you and to bring back the ideas of social cohesion, social solidarity and social justice. Yesterday we heard from Yuta Gudtskov from COE very important words – we need you. I believe it is absolutely right as it is about knowing each other better and sharing thoughts and concerns together which will help to overcome poverty.

I am a social worker as well as my colleague from Russia Irina Berezovskaya. For social work, to fight poverty is a front line issue. Since professional social work was established some hundred years ago, working with, for, together and on behalf of the people living in poverty has always been a main focus. We seek more social justice for those affected by poverty. We know that 40 % of poor people of the world live on less than 1 US Dollar a day. But poverty is not only an issue in the developing countries, also in Europe many live in relative poverty.

We – Europeans who live in poverty, European social workers, European NGOs – would like poverty to become a history. We would like to live in Europe where the gap between those who have and those who don't is less and less, where people living in poverty are seen as agents of change, as owners of their own development possibilities, where political will is aimed to create a world where people are no longer condemned to a life in poverty. Our delegation is proud to know that COE cares about poverty and implements programmes for social cohesion. All different – all equal – is a slogan which we will bring back to Russia to use it in our work, in our fight, in our struggle.

The Declaration of solidarity was signed by people in Russia making them think how they contribute to peace and solidarity of the Fourth World movement. We want more and more people in Russia – rich and poor, young and old, living in cities and villages – to understand that only together, ensemble, zusammen, вместе we will be able to overcome poverty. (If you want to add it in your language – please do)

The International Federation of Social Workers, its European branch and Union of social workers of Russia urge the world's and European leaders to focus their attention and resources to contribute in making the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals a reality.

Antonina Dashkina, IFSWe, Executive Committee Member

IFSW World Conference 2008

The Challenge of Ensuring Rights in a Global and Unequal Society



The web site for the upcoming IFSW World Conference now is available at
<http://www.socialwork2008.com>

The conference called
The Challenge of Ensuring Rights in a Global and Unequal Society will take place in
Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, August 16-19, 2008

Planning for the conference is progressing well. The outline programme, call for abstracts, a registration form and accommodation information has now been announced on the conference website.
Please keep visiting the site for updates.

Some important dates:

The Early Bird (Discounted) registration is possible until January 31, 2008

Please also observe that only 100 students are accepted on the reduced rate for students, first come first served

The deadline for Abstracts is February 9, 2008

The IFSW General Meeting is taking place in Salvador de Bahia August 13-15, 2008

Please also observe that the deadline for applying for the Eileen McGowan Kelly Scholarship (http://www.ifsw.org/en/p38001180.html?force_folder=038000059) to the World Conference 2008 is January 31, 2008

We hope to see as many as possible of you in Brazil in August, and wish you warmly welcome

Yours truly,

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SOCIAL PROFESSIONS & SOCIETIES IN TRANSITION

FIRST 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