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THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL WORKER



international federation of social workers european region

Volume 6, Issue 2

July 2009 SPECIAL EDITION

President's Address—July 2009

This spring once again brought up the issue on migration and human rights, IFSW Europe as part of ENSACT made a statement on the legal development in Italy (read the statement in this issue of ESW). Migration has always been part of societies and not always caused problems, it is a global issue influenced by political, financial and human instability and imbalance. These years we experience a global push and pull factor, where migrants becomes the innocent victims, some countries feels helpless left alone with major migrant problems, while the international institutions (for Europe the EU and the CoE) needs to stand up and take a joint responsibility – to approach migrants, those who help migrants and the migrants' home countries with solidarity, human dignity, support and justice, rather than building up national or regional legal fortresses.

Internally for IFSW Europe it is time to celebrate, as we recently have succeeded with two major visions: 1) We obtained a legal status, we are now registered as a legal body, IFSW Europe e.V., at the German Court in Berlin. The legal status gives us new passes and opportunities for action and cooperation. 2) We were accepted as fully members of Social Platform (read more in this issue of ESW), giving us more tools and partners to fight poverty and social exclusion as well as to develop and promote social work.

2010 is named the European Year Against Poverty, supported by the European Union and the Council of Europe. IFSW Europe and member countries are invited to take part, to consider actions nationally and regionally. Social Platform (and IFSW Europe) is at EU level challenging The Swedish Presidency of EU to ensure that the conclusions of the 8th round table on poverty shall generate clear objectives supported by civil society and that the December European Council adopt conclusions based on the results of the Round table.

In April this year more than 700 participants met in Croatia for the European Conference 2009 '*Social action in Europe: different legacies & common challenges?*' IFSW as one of the prime organizers of this 1st Joint ENSACT Conference can now look back at a successful event, where IFSW and the daily practice of social workers across Europe was tabled in the exchanges and dialogues with fellow social workers and other actors in the social work field,

mainly representing our partners in ENSACT [ENSACT = European Network for Social ACTION]. You can read summaries from some of the presentations/discussions at www.ensact.eu.

Ahead of this event Delegates from 20 member countries – of which one was represented by a proxy – met to discuss the outcome of the past year's work within IFSW Europe, and next to outline the work for IFSW Europe for the coming year. Thanks to the Delegates for your involvement in developing the future steps of IFSW Europe in a very participatory and proactive way, expressed through high involvement and specific promises to support the work of IFSW Europe and the Executive Committee in the next period. A support from member organisations, which is highly needed, as the Executive Committee is leading the work on a voluntary basis, aiming at fulfilling the agreed 2009-2010 work programme. In general I noted a very good atmosphere in the meeting, with very positive support to the major issues tabled for the coming period – the legal status, the Social Platform membership, the project on standards in social work and the ongoing communication with members. New potential members joined us as observers, Serbia and Kosovo, who I hope we can welcome as new members in the coming period. Following the Delegate Meeting, we also welcomed an application for membership from Belgium.

The Delegates raised the challenge which has met social workers across Europe following the present economic crisis. Reflecting on the facts that a number of social workers are closely affected by the crisis, some directly themselves or through relatives, and many through their work, where the conditions for social workers and clients are worsened. How for IFSW Europe to approach this, how to support these social workers and the work of their national organisations? Three immediate approaches:

We must share national or regional experiences on how member organisations are handling differently due to the economic crisis. Share the stories by informing the Executive Committee, and eventually by publicizing it in the ESW or the IFSW Europe blog.

We will work closely with Social Platform in their approach on this issue towards the EU institutions, the Commission and the Swedish presidency, raising the social responses towards the present economic recession. Social Platform states that *the impact of the crisis is indeed far-reaching and requires an integrated social and economic package of solutions. The current crisis should provide an impetus for correcting the social deficit in policymaking and should yield a new Post-Lisbon strategy, where social, environmental and development issues are prioritized.*

The Spring Alliance has brought social civil society organisations, together with European trade unions, with environmental and development organisations have joined force to prepare a proposal for a revised strategy that would put people and planet first. The first result is a Spring Alliance Manifesto, which I recommend you to support, many supporters will form a civil society front so united and diverse that it makes the EU sit up, listen and take the action that's seriously needed. You can sign the Manifesto today by links at the Social Platform website <http://www.socialplatform.org/News.asp?news=22094>

Looking forward to see further actions and exchanges in the autumn ...

Nicolai Paulsen

IFSW Regional President for Europe

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We are a member of the...

socialplatform

After having so many years an observer status we are now since the 26th of April 2006 member of the Social Platform. The information was emailed at our Delegates Meeting in Croatia.

Under the condition that we will become a legal body it was possible to apply for membership. So we did both, applying for registration at the court of Berlin and at the same time sending our application form to "social platform"

Why is the membership so important for us? Social Platform is an umbrella organisation for social NGOs. At the moment 42 associations are in social platform. These are e.g. welfare organisations, ICSW, user Organisations, employer organisations. Some of them have their offices in Brussels. We have now the possibility to get easier access to the EU information and politics and if necessary we can act together. Due to our membership IFSW Europe e.V. will become much stronger and more be seen. It is a big chance for us and a great challenge.

The membership will create a lot of more work for the executive and the permanent committee. We have to look how we can handle and structure it. The executive will discuss about this item at the next meeting in autumn.

Nicolai attended the 11th of June the steering committee meeting of Social Platform and introduced us. We were welcomed and they have a lot of expectations on us.

In the future we will inform you in the ESW about the work in Brussels and if there is anything urgent we will do it immediately.

Barbara Molderings

“The Social Platform was established in 1995 and brings together more than forty European non-governmental organisations, federations and networks which are working to build an inclusive, society.”

“The members of the Social Platform represent thousands of organisations, associations and other voluntary groups at local, regional, national and European level representing the interests of a wide range of civil society.”

“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.”



www.socialplatform.org

DELEGATES MEETING 2009: PARTICIPANTS

ARMENIA : Mira Antonyan

AUSTRIA : George Dimitz and Andrea Tenkwalder Egger

BULGARIA : Herbert Paulishin

CROATIA : Štefica Karačić, Lovorka Pandur and Rajka Papić

DENMARK : Henrik Egelund Nielson, Benny Andersen, Birthe Bille Hansen & Kaj Skov Frederiksen, Ulrik Frederiksen, Bodil Otto and Per Støve

FINLAND : Kristiina Koskiluoma and Päivi Mäkinen

FRANCE : Marie Geneviève Mounier, Didier Dubasque, Marie Andrée Sadot and Christine Windstrup

GERMANY : Gabrielle Stark-Angermeier

IRELAND : John Brennan

ISRAEL : Brian Auslender

KOSOVO : Hamdi A Boja

MALTA : Rosalyn Vella

NORWAY : Mimmi Kvisvik and Kjetil Ostling

PORTUGAL : Graca André and Graca Rafael

RUSSIA : Anna Egorava

SERBIA : Tasic Miodrag

SPAIN : Rosa Maria Ferrer and Ana Lima

SWEDEN : Ivonne Ahlstrom, Titti Fränkel, Camilla Ring and Annica Skoglund

DELEGATES MEETING 2009: PARTICIPANTS

SWITZERLAND : Klaus Kuhne

TURKEY : Hakan Acar, Murat Altuggil, Hakan Erdoğan, Verdor Gozukara, Gulsum Namur Duyan and Hakan Sahinkol

UK : Ronnie Barnes, Ian Johnston, Marjut Kosonen and Ruth Stark

GLOBAL : David Jones, Tom Johannesen and René Schegg

EXECUTIVE : Anthea Agius, Tatjana Katkic Stanic, Siobhan Maclean, Cristina Martins, Barbara Molderings and Nicolai Paulsen



Dubrovnik Croatia 2009

REPORT ON IFSW EUROPE DELEGATES MEETING

The Delegates Meeting of IFSW Europe was held in Dubrovnik Croatia from 24 to 26 April. More than 50 delegates and observers from 22 organisations were present or represented by proxy.

The following countries were represented on the meeting: Austria, Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden (with proxy for Iceland) Switzerland, Turkey and United Kingdom. Kosovo and Serbia were present as Observers.



Tatjana Katic Stanic gave a welcome to the Delegates Meeting on behalf of the Croatian Association. She referred specifically to the fact that the Croatian Association of Social Workers was very proud to host the **first ENSACT Conference**.

After the Presentation of the Executive Committee's written report on the Work Programme 2008-2009 by the president Nicolai Paulsen, the communications team, Cristina Martins and Siobhan Maclean gave a presentation on their work over the last year.



From the Permanent Committee on EU Issues, Barbara Molderings, explained that the main focus this year has been on applying for membership of the social platform.

The Representative to the Council of Europe, Gabriele Stark- Angermeier explained that Antonina Dashkina (Russia) now has a new role within the Council of Europe, having been nominated by IFSW Europe. She is now the vice chair of the social cohesion and eradication of poverty committee.

The Reports of the Executive Committee, the Permanent Committee on EU Issues, the Representative to the Council of Europe, the Representatives of IFSW Europe to other organisations and IFSW global committees were discussed and approved.

Dubrovnik Croatia 2009—REPORT ON IFSW EUROPE DELEGATES MEETING

Definition of Social Work

Nicolai Paulsen reported on the global group currently reviewing the Definition of Social Work and then group work took place in cross country groups, looking at the following questions:

- Does the definition cover your actual understanding of social work?
- Is there anything missing from the definition?
- Would you like to add something to the definition?
- Would you like to change something in the definition?



IFSW Global

The Secretary General Tom Johannesen and the President of IFSW David Jones gave information about the world conference in Hong Kong next year. The theme is the social agenda. The theme has been used to celebrate World Social Work Day 2009 and again next year. IFSW wants to develop an agenda for social workers to become more powerful and can contribute actively to policy development.



IFSW Europe Regional Project "Standards in Social Work Practice Meeting Economic Social and Cultural Rights

Anthea Agius Executive Member gave a presentation about the project development. She referred to the next steps on the ongoing process in this matter: to collect feedback from the Delegates at the meeting, a symposium on the project during the ENSACT conference and a sub committee group to further work.



Also some group work took place to discuss the project.

Dubrovnik Croatia 2009—REPORT ON IFSW EUROPE DELEGATES MEETING**Policy Issues**

Rights and Responsibilities- the safeguarding, sharing and disposal of personal information entrusted to social workers by those using their services.

Ian Johnston gave a presentation about some joint work which BASW (UK) and ANAS (France) has been doing in this area. There was a proposal to IFSW Europe look to formulate an IFSW policy statement on this issue which was included on the work programme to establishing working groups for further discussion.

World Social Work Day

The next WSWD will be on 16th March 2010. The Communications team will work on publicising this World event. The global theme is the Social Agenda but the Executive Committee proposed a sub theme to link with the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

The meeting also included the Approval of the annual accounts and the report of the auditors, the adoption of the Work Programme 2009-2010 and the Budgets.

Elections

Following elections the new Executive Committee consists of Nicolai Paulsen, Barbara Molderings, Cristina Martins, Verónique Barré, Anthea Agius and Ian Johnston.

Appointment of Representatives

Gabriele Stark- Angermeier was appointed as Representative to the Council of Europe, Graça André as IFSW European Contact person to the Global Human Rights Commission, Titti Frankel as IFSW European contact person to the Global Expert group on Ethics and John Brennan as IFSW Europe Election Officer.

The next Delegates Meeting will be held in Malta from 14 to 16 May 2010.

What were your impressions of the Delegates Meeting?

Cristina Martins of the Executive Committee talked to some of the Delegates at the meeting to see what their impressions were:-



TASIC MIODRAG, Serbia (Observer)

“Very well organised, without nervous discussions. We should have more time to discuss outside the DM, to communicate more to each other in a more not formal way. There are problems with language to speak during the meetings.

I enjoyed the training session; the way she talked was very interesting using the right words easily to understand.”

GRAÇA RAFAEL, Portugal (First time as Delegate)

“Well organized, the items are deal in time as agreed in the agenda without stress. The contact and exchanges with other countries members is very interesting and appealing, about subjects like Ethics connected with other Social Work areas, the definition of Social Work and differences of intervention. The language is a limitation!”



HAMDIA A. BOJA, Kosovo (First time as Observer)

“I had a good impression. I don’t understand everything but a Croatian colleague helped me in translation. We want to join IFSW as soon as possible. We need help from IFSW. A Colleague from Sweden has offered help to my association.”



HAKAN ACAR, Turkey

“This is the 3rd time Turkey is coming, we are getting more involved and we clearly understand the process.

A positive thing is we have the chance to see what is going on at European level and realise that we are sharing the same problems.

Important things: some countries are mainly talking. IFSW Europe should think about what can be done to create a more participation of all delegates.”

KRISTIINA KOSKILUOMA, Finland

“20th time (first time in 1989) I am coming to a IFSW Delegates meeting. Very well organised, just like in Porto. We are really discussing matters that are really important for the majority of countries. In the past there were meetings very chaotic and sometimes people did not know what they were doing there. Now focus on things that really matters. We can see that the Executive Committee is working well. The Executive has a very big role in these subjects and seems to work very well. Now is also very important to discuss the working conditions of Social Work and is important that IFSW does something about this involving all countries organizations”.



MIRA ANTONYAN, Armenia

“I can feel a lot of preparation and work before the DM. Maybe it’s time to open discussion for new developments inside the association. Not everything is understandable for all members not only because of the language but because we are not involved in the process. I think is good doing sub groups for getting new members involved at first with groups that are already there. I am very thankful that my attendance was supported because other way it would be impossible for me to come. Being here is

being part of a big family, not being is not being involved in the process. It would be good to promote meetings in countries like ours for other countries to know more about countries in transition. It would be like being poor for one night to feel and understand the differences and possibilities in harmonizing societies”.

Titti Fränkel reflects on her new position within IFSW Europe



I have recently been appointed as the IFSW contact person on ethics for IFSW Europe. I am honoured by this, the work that is expected from me is a great challenge which I look forward to.

I will in this position take the opportunity to highlight norms and values that I believe are essential for social work all over the world.

My name is Titti Fränkel and I represent the Swedish coordinating body in IFSW. In my daily work, I serve as Director of Development in Social Work in Akademikerförbundet SSR, Sweden.

Personally and professionally I am committed to the field of Ethics in Social Work. In 2006 I was responsible for the process of revising our local ethical guidelines, resulting in “Ethics in Social Work – An ethical code for social work professionals” (see the IFSW website <http://www.ifsw.org/p38000298.html>), and to implement this code among Swedish Social workers, politicians and decision makers. It has generally received a very positive response from both social workers and Swedish authorities.

In social work one is forced to make decisions and interventions that involve ethical judgements. I believe that the International code of Ethics should reflect values and norms related to human dignity /equal human value, human rights, humanity and solidarity and that its main function is to serve as a pedagogic framework, from which each country may retrieve ideas and inspiration to form their own specific code.

Finally as the contact person on ethics, I hope that I will be able to contribute to vibrant discussions on ethics within the IFSW Europe.

Titti Fränkel

Pay back time—Ian Johnston of the British association of Social Workers (BASW) reflects on his appointment to the IFSW European Executive Committee



My election statement to the delegate meeting in the beautiful city of Dubrovnik on the magical shores of the Adriatic outlined some of the things I have achieved in my 38 years as a social worker. I have had the good fortune to be able to play a leading role in a range of settings at home and abroad and remain proud to be a member of a profession that is concerned with equality and human rights.

Fighting for peoples rights and challenging the injustice faced by service users often puts us in the firing line ourselves. Without the support of BASW some 30 years ago I might not have been able to take an important stand against a resource driven decision about a child. It has been a very great privilege to serve as chief officer of the Association for the 10 years preceding my retirement in April this year and I'm glad to report that membership has risen from 7,000 to 12,000.

The current furore over the expenses of politicians in the UK serves as a timely reminder that self interest is the driving force for most of our activities in the west and how easily a "public service" ethos can be translated into one of the "self service". The collective commitment to professional ethics that I share with other members of social work profession has been a source of great strength to me throughout my social work career.

During my time at the helm of BASW I have actively promoted international activities and contributed to capacity building partnerships with the Russian Union of Social Workers and the Ukraine League of Social Workers. I believe that I have contributed very actively to IFSW both in Europe but have also benefited greatly from the opportunity to meet and discuss common goals with like-minded people from all over the world.

Social work will never be a flavour of the month in relatively affluent countries. Over the past decade a number of highly publicised tragedies have put the our role and responsibilities in the UK under the microscope. People in positions of power have sought to portray social workers as part of the problem rather than the solution. In this context I've drawn strength from my involvement with IFSW and the fact that social work is an internationally recognised activity that cannot be threatened by Government forces in one small part of the world.

At times of personal change we should reflect on who we are really serving. A particular concern for IFSW must be to ensure that accessible social work services are available to all those who require these throughout Europe and that organisations and individuals are empowered to deliver high quality services. Having been elected to the Executive I am determined to work with others to enhance IFSW's impact on social work and practice and social policy developments throughout Europe.

Ian Johnston

Training Session on Lobbying

Communication and Lobbying for making a difference!



Ana Carvalho from Portugal was the facilitator of this training session. She has a degree in Economics, from the Faculty of Economics, University of Porto, Portugal, a Master of Arts in Arts Management from City University, London and a Post-graduation Course in Marketing Management, by IPAM (Portuguese Institute of Administration and Marketing), Porto, Portugal.

This workshop introduced some simple approaches about how to use lobbying to stimulate effective social change. Basic guidelines and strategies for improving communication and advocating in public policy were presented in a non-technical language. It aimed to give a road map for setting a clear positioning and defining an agenda for action.

Ana Carvalho started the session asking participants to decide on **WHAT IS THE ORGANISATION WE ARE GOING TO BE?** As we are the Organisation we chose to be...

Following some group discussions it was clear that members want **MORE VISIBILITY OF SOCIAL WORK/ SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE MEDIA** and all want **IFSW TO BE THE VOICE OF SOCIAL WORK.**

Training Session on Lobbying Communication and Lobbying for making a difference!

Some comments from the session

Participants agreed that we should work on **IMPROVING THE IMAGE OF SOCIAL WORK**. One idea was brought to help with this: promoting popular TV series that show Social Workers in action.



Our strength was referred as being also our weakness: our diversity. The General public don't know or understand exactly what the Social Worker's work is.

All aim for **MORE PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION**. To be recognised in society as a profession of social change.

All agreed that we are very good in communication but we know very little on lobbying...

Ana Carvalho's presentation has now been placed on the IFSW Europe website.

We thank all participants that joined in this first initiative of the Executive Committee in promoting a special training session during a Delegates Meeting and kindly ask for your comments and feedback. Please let us know if you would like us to organise more similar activities in the future.

Cristina Martins



Pre-Conference Human Rights in Teaching and Practice

ENSACT Conference

Dubrovnik, 26 April 2009



This Pre-Conference has followed the meeting that has been held at the European Conference in Parma, in March 2007, where colleagues from Schools of Social Work and from Social Services joined together. The participants closed that meeting with the idea to start European Network about the relevance of Human Rights topics in teaching and practice of Social Workers.

We must consider nowadays a lot of challenges to Social Work related with Human Rights violation that ask us reflexive attitude, debate and training competences. We have realised the pertinent role of teachers, practitioners, experts and students about this topic.

At the Pre-Conference there were 9 presentations, whose

Ruth Stark, IFSW Global Human Rights Commissioner, addresses the pre-conference



authors were researchers, teachers and practitioners, in Human Rights view. Also a group of students of a German Social Work School presented their perspectives about teaching and learning for Human Rights education.

The organisers will try next steps to enlarge this network to develop the debate, the teaching and join strategies in a more pertinent view on Human Rights appliance and considering the several debates on going.

Pre-Conference documents are available at www.ensact.eu/conferences/index.php.

Graça Maria André

IFSW – European contact person to the Global Human Rights Commission

Organising Committee of the Pre-Conference

gandre@net.sapo.pt



1st ENSACT JOINT EUROPEAN CONFERENCE DUBROVNIK, 2009

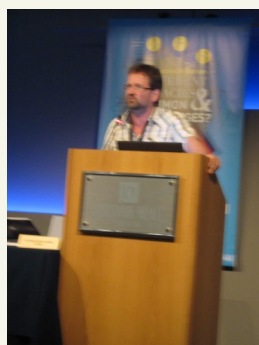


I've never been to an international conference before so I had no idea what to expect. From the opening ceremony to the closing ceremony there was such a lot to see, do and learn that I'll certainly be attending future conferences.

I approached the conference very tired following various meetings of the Executive Committee and the Delegates Meeting but I found that the opening ceremony refreshed my energy, setting a fantastic tone for the rest of the conference. The choir singing "Go Johnny Go!" had me up on my feet singing along.



Some of the highlights of the conference for me were:-



Review of the International Definition of Social Work

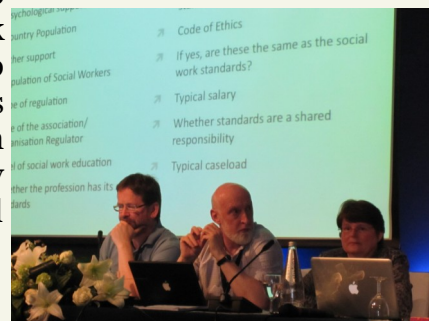
This symposium led by Nicolai Paulsen and Jan Agten was very well attended. Participants comments really helped me to learn more about the way the definition is used in different countries and about how perspectives on the social work role differ in different parts of the world.

Standards in Social Work Practice Meeting Social and Economic Rights

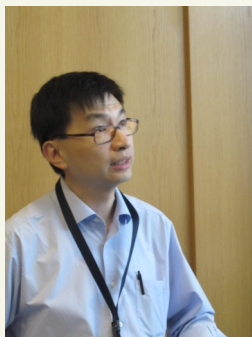


This symposium led by Anthea Agius, Marjut Kosonen and John Breman brought the IFSW Europe project into a bigger arena for the first time. It was exciting to see how much people engaged with the aims of the project and how committed everyone was to effective social work standards. It was also good to see how many IFSW members contributed to the symposium discussions. I was certainly

left with the feeling that the symposium gave a real springboard for the continuation of the project.



1st ENSACT JOINT EUROPEAN CONFERENCE DUBROVNIK, 2009



IFSW Open Space

In the IFSW open space David Jones and Social Work colleagues from Hong Kong gave a presentation about the Hong Kong Conference 2010. This really helped me in understanding how the development of the “social agenda” is a process which will be brought together in Hong Kong. The power that social workers can claim from the agenda development really excited me.

The Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony, particularly the presentation by social work students energised me and made me proud to be a social worker! I took so many photos of the students singing at the end of the conference and I have put one up in my office to remind me of the feeling of pride in my profession.



General Comments

I truly enjoyed the Conference and through it was my first experience of an International Conference it certainly won't be my last. I learnt a lot—not just from the workshops and presentations but also from chatting to participants about their work and their organisations.

One thing that did disappoint me in terms of the Conference was the IFSW stand. I really felt that we could portray much more proactive image of IFSW Europe. We have discussed this as an Executive Committee and agreed that in future the communications team will take responsibility for organising the stand. Cristina and I already have some exciting ideas about this—so watch out next time!



Thanks

I'd like to extend my thanks to all of the Conference organisers particularly Tatjana Katkic Stanic and the Croatian Association.

I'm now really looking to my second European Conference—the 2nd ENSACT Conference in Belgium in 2011.

Siobhan Maclean

News from Member Organisations.....

British Association of Social Workers



ebulletin

BASW – HAVE YOUR SAY

Please take a few minutes to have your say on the future strategy and leadership of the association.

BASW – UK TOUR

'Listening to Social Workers – Valuing Social Work'

BASW Chief Executive Hilton Dawson's UK Listening Tour is making its way around the UK. Find out what Social Worker in Newcastle and Leicestershire had to say about the future of Social Work and BASW's leading role in raising the standing, status and quality of our profession. Please just come along and make your voice heard.

BASW'S BID TO CREATE A COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

BASW, the leading professional association for social work in the UK with 12,000 members, has announced its intention to begin moves towards establishing a College of Social Work. Speaking during their Annual General Meeting in Birmingham, BASW's Chair Tim Chittleburgh said a College would pave the way for a comprehensive professional career structure, and ensure people get the best possible services from highly-trained and qualified social workers.

BASW CHIEF EXECUTIVE WRITES TO PRIME MINISTER

Hilton Dawson's Letter on Social Work has gone to Gordon Brown and to key politicians, policy makers and newspaper across the land.

Read all on www.basw.co.uk

News from Member Organisations.....

General Council of Social Work of Spain

Manifiesto "Social Work in View of the Downturn"



The General Council of Social Work of Spain encourages all social workers, citizens and institutions (organisations, associations, companies, the media, etc.) to join together by adhering to this manifesto.



Sign **MANIFESTO**
**"SOCIAL WORK IN VIEW OF
 THE DOWNTURN"**

[http://www.cgtrabajosocial.es/
 manifiesto/index_eng.htm](http://www.cgtrabajosocial.es/manifiesto/index_eng.htm)

We request the maximum diffusion to this campaign

Thanks in advance. Best regards,

GENERAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL WORK OF SPAIN

Consejo General de Colegios Oficiales de Diplomados en Trabajo Social y Asistentes Sociales

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ENSACT STATEMENT OF CONCERN



ENSACT: Statement of Concern 29 April 2009

Xenophobic direction of new proposals approved by (a branch of) the Italian Parliament

The Italian government is heading in the regrettable direction of promoting xenophobic legislation by approving a new law entitled 'safety measures' that criminalises undocumented migrants, the homeless and the needy in general. Under the new law, health and even public officials such as social workers are expected to inform authorities when undocumented clients seek public health and social services.

This law not only carries the danger of turning social challenges into problems of public order, it undermines professional intervention by placing a 'policing' duty upon health and social practitioners. As it is now, the law puts forward a position that contradicts the social professional code of ethics and professional conduct, including client confidentiality.

ENSACT supports the protest of the President of the EASSW, the Secretary of AIDOSS (Italian Association of Social Work Teachers) and of the association of the Professional Register of Italian Social Workers against the new Italian legislation and, as such, strongly opposes the direction of the Italian Parliament, requesting it to retract its intention to obstruct the indispensable work of health and social professionals with needy populations and, essentially, avoid an escalation of xenophobic tendencies in Italy.

Nol Reverda



MASW Press Release on World Refugee Day

“IT’S A FALLACY TO THINK THAT PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN FAVOUR OF ASYLUM SEEKERS IS ENCOURAGING IRREGULAR IMMIGRATION” - MASW

“Knowledge and information about the situation in the countries where asylum seekers and refugees originate will empower government and civil society to respond to the phenomenon of irregular immigration in Malta”

To mark this year's World Refugee Day, the Maltese Association of Social Workers (MASW) is expressing its solidarity towards all those people living in situations of danger, persecution and poverty in the countries from which asylum seekers and refugees in Malta and across the world originate.

In a recent event organized by the Association in collaboration with the three other NGOs, a film was viewed and discussion held in order to raise awareness on the situation in Sudan as an example of one of the countries from where people flee from.

The life-threatening circumstances such as conflicts, famine, entire devastation of villages and mass murders were shown and discussed. Such an event can only serve to give a small view of the kind of situations and reasons that drive people to leave their country.

As one person stated, “... it really does take COURAGE, to be a refugee, it must be the most vulnerable and lonely experience ... nobody should have to go through such tragedy.”

The political, legal, socio-cultural, foreign policy and infrastructural factors displayed in the film about Sudan all highlighted the complexity of the problem that has been going on for years making it clear that the serious problems will not be solved overnight.

The situation in other countries like Somalia where a state of lawlessness, chaos and terror continues to reign and solutions seem even bleaker.

The political powers of the Western, developed world continue to struggle with the complexity of these problems, haunted by a past of colonialist interference and compromised political and economic interests.

The result is deaths, tragedies and hardships for these people that go on for interminable years.

The MASW and collaborating NGOs believe that education, knowledge and information about the situation in the countries where asylum seekers and refugees originate will empower government and civil society to respond to the phenomenon of irregular immigration in Malta. Further, the organizations warn that fear and policies of exclusion will only create a local environment which is detrimental to our society, our economy and our identity; An identity which must prove its strength by demonstrating its cultural

MASW Press Release on World Refugee Day

richness, openness and resilience.

A political system cannot claim civilization and development if it creates further incumbencies to those who are rightfully eligible to be given humanitarian protection and refugee status or if it shuns and criticizes those who exercise their freedom of speech to advocate for the rights of asylum seekers.

The current detention policy and the growing preoccupation with border control disputes are resulting in conditions where asylum seekers are deprived from their human rights. The Association reiterates and reinforces the public statement by the Jesuit Refugee Service that the detention centers are not the solution but rather another infringement of a human's right to seek protection from harm and persecution.

It is a fallacy that being in favour of human rights encourages the increase of irregular immigration, rather, it is quite the opposite because it is the lack of human rights that drives people to escape from the home country that they nonetheless many treasure in their hearts forever.

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A Note From the Editors.....

We hope that you have enjoyed reading this special edition of the European Social Worker, focussing on the IFSW Europe Delegates Meeting and the first ENSACT Conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

We would like to thank everybody for their contributions to this edition especially John Brennan who acted as our roving reporter in Dubrovnik.

Our next edition of the European Social Worker is due out in December Please send us your articles and any news you wish to be included by 15 November.



Siobhan Maclean

Honorary Secretary

Remember you can send us your news and articles at any time and we will post them on the blog!



Cristina Martins

Executive Member

A few final memories from the beautiful city of Dubrovnik.....



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Looking forward to ...

“Following the Delegates Meeting, it was agreed that the Project on Standards in Social Work Meeting Human Rights will be finalised by a working group.

Members who volunteered to be on this working group will be meeting on the 22nd and 23rd October in Paris . This meeting is being combined with the executive committee meeting which will be held immediately after. Both meetings are being kindly hosted by our colleagues from ANAS, France .

The group will be discussing:

- a. Bringing ownership of the Framework on Standards by empowering Social Work Service Users in the design and delivery of services
- b. Standards in Education
- c. Standards in the work conditions of social workers
- d. Finalisation of a Framework for Standards in Social Work

The group will then report back to the next Delegate’s Meeting which will be held in Malta in 2010.