

The European Social Worker

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International Federation of Social Workers European Region

President's Address

Dear Colleagues,

It's a great honor and privilege to address you all for the first time in my new role as Regional President for Europe.

I hope that my experience over the past decade in IFSW and in the executive work for the last 4 years, with special responsibility on the communication area, helps me to carry this enormous responsibility.

I know that I will be counting with the support and advice of the Colleagues that left recently the executive, Nicolai Paulsen, Anthea Agius and Barbara Molderings, the Colleagues that are in the executive for some years, Ian Johnston and Maria Moritz (also my partner on the global level) and with the enthusiasm of the new comers, Annica Skoglund, Gabriele Stark-Angermeier and Hakan Acar.

After the General Meeting in Stockholm the European executive had the opportunity to meet briefly for the first time to welcome the new members and to start the reorganisation of responsibilities in the executive.

A big exchange of ideas and proposals about ways to progress our work emerged immediately and showed how important it was to set urgently a date for our next face to face meeting.

I began representing internationally Portugal in 2001 by attending the first time a Delegates Meetings in Vienna, so I am looking forward to meet the new executive committee very soon in Vienna from the 14 to the 16 September, hosted by Maria Moritz and the OBDS, Austrian Association of Social Workers.

I want to express to all my best wishes for Good Holidays or Good work depending on the situation you are at the moment. Thanks!

Cristina Martins
Regional President of the IFSW Europe



Special points of interest:

- Changes in the executive
- Memories of Armenia
- Social work conferences - A practitioner focus

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A report From Our Out Going Regional President Nicolai Paulsen



Welcome Cristina

- and some reflections after nine years within IFSW Europe's leadership

First I like to express my warm welcome to Cristina as my successor as Regional President for IFSW Europe. I have known Cristina as an excellent colleague and team-worker within the European Region for years, also recognising her ongoing and dedicated work as social work practitioner at the hospital in Porto, and I am very confident knowing Cristina will bring IFSW Europe forward together with the new regional executive committee.

Opportunities, achievements and challenges, combined with a strong network, fun and excitement reflects my memories after nine years within IFSW Europe's leadership.

Social Workers represent a profession that is valued in official speeches and also listened to by politicians and managers in practice. IFSW Europe has over the years updated and improved its structures, volunteer capacity and strategies, and is underway with a more clear strategic priority of what to do next. The challenges for social workers are broad and seem often endless, also recognising that our profession serves citizens, who lack strong lobbyists and financial awareness. It is for every national social work organisation an ongoing hustle to speak out about the lack of financial resources within social work, affecting the quality of the services, the conditions for the people in need and also the competences and working conditions among social work professionals. IFSW Europe brings together the national organisations and gives them space to exchange and develop common as well as individual strategies, IFSW Europe network and lobby within European organisations and institutions, primarily linked to either the Council of Europe or the European Union - despite IFSW meets similar challenges at European level as national organisations face nationally and locally.

In practice I have experienced the strengths and excitements of standing together with professional colleagues across borders. Personally it has been an honour and privilege to be within the leadership of this European organisation for the past nine years, chairing the region for six years, and for the same period developing the work and cooperation within the global body of IFSW. Volunteer resources is a must for an organisation like IFSW, and we must not forget to recognise the enormous amount of hours offered from a large number of colleagues within IFSW, thank you all for joining the IFSW team, and all the best wishes for the new leadership. Looking forward to stay in contact and support IFSW in the future.

Some short notes on recent meetings

DM Armenia

More than 50 Delegates representing 24 European countries met for the IFSW European Delegates Meeting 2012 in Yerevan this spring, where we were warmly hosted by our Armenian member organisation. The Delegates Meeting had reports on actions taken the past year, and also agreed on **the regional plans for the coming year** (these together with the minutes from the meeting can be found on the regional web page www.ifsw.org/Europe).

Key issues discussed were 1) the Human Right situation affecting service users and social workers; 2) the social impact of the recent financial crisis across Europe; 3) the role and identity of social work; 4) the promotion of workforce mobility; 5) the Qualification Directive; 6) the communication and promotion initiatives within IFSW; 7) the European Conferences for social workers; 8) the future structure of IFSW work towards the European Union and further involvement of volunteers; and 9) the development within IFSW global represented by the newly appointed IFSW Secretary General.

A statement was agreed, stating that "Social workers demand radical measures to redistribute wealth and opportunity" (see it on www.ifsw.org/europe).

IFSW Europe Delegates Meeting 2013 will be **19-21 April 2013** in Istanbul, Turkey, linked to the joined ENSACT Conference.

Informal meeting in Stockholm

Connected to the IFSW General Meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, in July 2012 was held an informal European meeting, gathering all European member organisations present. The two main issues handled at the informal meeting were:

1) The election of the new regional president for Europe, **Cristina Martins**, and the new member at large for Europe, **Maria Moritz**. The result of these elections was also that the 1st and 2nd deputies, **Gabriele Stark-Angermeier** and **Hakan Acar**, elected at the Delegates Meeting in Yerevan in April moved into the Executive Committee as ordinary members, and **Salome Namicheishvili** is the new 1st deputy.

2) A debate and recommendation about the future for IFSW involvement in European Conferences. Following an intensive debate a clear majority of members present recommended continuing to have joined European conferences with the ENSACT partners, but only every fourth year (next time as planned in Istanbul in 2013). The uneven year in between (next time 2015) should then be for European IFSW events and exchange, an event that shall attract more practitioners and also highlight specific social work practices, respecting different needs for events/rooms to meet and exchange/develop social work. The joined ENSACT conferences every fourth year (2013, 2017, etc.) will continue to give room for the ongoing need to cooperate and join forces with our close partners, as also will happen at the joined global conferences in even years (every second year). This recommendation is now to be followed up by the new Executive Committee, and to be shared with our ENSACT partners.

MEMORIES OF ARMENIA



REPORT ON THE 2012 DELEGATES MEETING IN ARMENIA

Siobhan Maclean and Cristina Martins



The Delegates Meeting of IFSW Europe was held this year in Yerevan, Armenia, from 27 to 29 April 2012. Delegates and observers from 24 member organisations/countries were present or represented by proxy:

Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark (with proxy for Croatia), Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Macedonia, Malta, Norway (with a proxy for the Faroe Islands), Portugal, Romania, Russia, Spain, Sweden (with a proxy for Iceland), Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom (with a proxy for Ireland).

The European President Nicolai Paulsen welcomed delegates and observers to the Delegates Meeting and Mira Antonyan welcomed the Delegates on behalf of the Armenian Association of Social Workers, saying that the Delegates Meeting being held in Armenia had supported the Armenian Association with many more social workers asking to join the Association.

Unfortunately the delegate from Kosova, Hamdi Bodga, was not able to attend besides all the support that has been provided to help him obtaining a visa. The meeting decided that the Federation should write to the Minister for Social Affairs to complain about this.

The President gave a particular welcome to Macedonia who have not been present for some time at a Delegates Meeting and also gave a formal welcome to the Secretary General, Rory Truell who attended for the first time a Delegates Meeting after his appointment.

Council of Europe

Gabriele Stark-Angermeier gave a presentation on her role as the representative to the Council of Europe. Gabriele said it is a very good success for IFSW Europe e.V. that Antonina Dashkina has become involved in the key pillars of the Council of Europe.

The work programme of IFSW was presented around the four core items: human rights, social policy, professional development and organisational development.

Human Rights

Graça André from Portugal, as the IFSW European contact person for the Global Human Rights Commission, gave a report on her work. She talked about the project "Social Workers Realising Human Rights." A number of member countries have become involved in this project - Austria, Belgium, Georgia, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Turkey. She said that a presentation about this project will take place during a workshop at the conference in Stockholm.

Ian Johnston then talked about his work as an Executive member representing IFSW Europe e.V. on the Fundamental Rights Platform (FRP), a network of more than 300 organisations committed to human rights and social justice established by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the Social Platform Fundamental Rights Working Group (FRAND). He said that a range of useful resources on human rights issues compiled by FRA can be accessed on the internet and on smartphones. He also said that he feels that both FRA and FRAND are now listening to the social work voice. He is drafting a strategy for IFSW's work on human rights. Ian drew delegates attention to IFSW's contribution to a research project carried out by the Global Alliance to End Corporal Punishment for Children focusing on alternative care settings.

Social Policy

Project: Social Impact of the Financial Crisis

Nicolai Paulsen said that the project has developed since the last Delegates Meeting. The Executive facilitated a symposium in Brussels at the ENSACT Conference 2011. The Executive also analysed the questionnaire returns and have released a statement. They have also fed back the findings of the questionnaire to key organisations in the EU.

A statement on **"Social workers demand radical measures to redistribute wealth and opportunity."** was developed and adopted before the end of the meeting.

Anthea Agius gave a presentation on the application for EU funding for the proposed Phase 2 of the project. We were not successful. It was a very long project. Our application achieved a score of 77.75 and projects receiving a score of 82.25 were granted funding. 665 applications were received and 35 were granted funds. Anthea said that although we were not granted funds, we should view the outcome positively, as it will assist us to be more effective in future.

Professional development

Role and Identity of Social Work

A working group consisting of the UK, Georgia, Bulgaria and Armenia has been working on this area. The group developed a questionnaire to develop a baseline understanding of the state of social work in Europe. 18 countries returned the questionnaire. The project has considered 4 areas: Education, Standards of practice, Law relating to social work and Professional Associations.

The working group suggested a number of recommendations: that all countries present at the meeting complete the questionnaire, look at the questionnaire and give feedback on refining the questionnaire and that this questionnaire could be updated regularly so that IFSW Europe e.V. can hold vital updated information on member organisations.

Promoting Workforce Mobility

Marjut Kosonen gave a presentation saying that BASW carried out a survey of international social workers. At the Delegates Meeting in 2008 there was an agreement that there is increased mobility of people who use social services and cross border mobility of social workers too. This leads to issues for professional organisations including:

- . Mutual recognition of qualifications
- . Ethical international recruitment
- . Regulation of social workers and fitness to practice
- . Protection of service users and movement of 'unfit' practitioners across borders
- . Need for organisational recognition and support
- . Orientation to workplace, training and support
- . Intercultural competence for all social workers

Qualifications Directive

Anthea Agius gave a presentation about IFSW Europe's feedback on this. The feedback was co-ordinated by Maria Moritz, Ian Johnston and Anthea Agius. The Directive is expected to be agreed by the European Parliament and Council by end of 2012. Concrete effects can be expected for 2014. The comments made by IFSW Europe were referred to nine times in the report to the EU Parliament, so it is positive to see that our feedback is being used and read.

National and European Campaigning on the identity and role of social work

Ian Johnston gave a presentation on the research completed by Kings College on the diversity of social work qualifications across Europe. He would like people to check the data from their countries. Ian asked delegates to consider whether IFSW Europe should consider getting into partnership with Kings College research Unit and other bodies.

Organisational development

Cristina Martins, Executive committee member, gave a presentation on communication. She and Siobhan Maclean, Honorary Secretary, have specific responsibility for communication within the Executive and are trying to improve communication within the Executive, with members and between members.

Cristina explained that the DVD and song for social work will be produced in a hard copy and we will seek to sell these at conferences. Each member organisation will get one copy free.

Siobhan Maclean, Honorary Secretary gave a short presentation about the revised website. She asked for feedback from members about what they would like to see on the website.

Maria Moritz gave a short presentation on the development of a press strategy for the region. A press strategy is important to ensure that our messages are spread widely.

IFSW Global

Rory explained that he has the following priorities for his role:

- . Developing outcomes
- . Aligning work activities
- . Making work more relevant for members

Turning the Global agenda into outcome standards is important and will be a key challenge for the working group. The agenda is an excellent social work document. It illustrates the way that social workers across the Globe are doing the same thing in different circumstances. However, outcomes which are relevant to each social worker need to be redeveloped.

The website has been rebranded.

The consultative status that IFSW has in the UN is very important. There are now representative teams in each UN office. This work is now being more aligned - IFSW representatives are happy to hear about priorities from regions which can be addressed within the UN.

IFSWs links with the World Health Organisation are also important. Rory feels that we should tap into some of the WHO resources, and he would like to see IFSWs representation there growing.

World Social Work Day was a great success. The launch of the Global agenda for social work went very well. Helen Clark, who is Head of the UN Development Programme, said she was keen for the UN to partner with IFSW, ICSW and IASSW as the UN recognise the importance of social work.

Rory's vision and future plans include:

Campaigns - IFSW Global is happy to campaign and support member organisations.

Regional websites - these will be developed soon.

Social Work News Service - at present news items are placed on the website. However, this could be developed much more.

IFSW Connect - this will be a software system similar to Facebook. This will enable international collaboration. It will only be available to IFSW members - under the proposed new management structure.

Fundraising for regional development - Rory sees fundraising as a key issue. The first thing that IFSW need to do is increase basic finances.

To create new funding opportunities - IFSW Global is proposing increasing membership criteria.



Elections/New Executive

Annica Skoglund from Sweden and Cristina Martins from Portugal were elected to the executive committee. Gabriele Stark-Angermeier from Germany was elected for the first deputy and Hakan Acar from Turkey for the second deputy.

Appointment of external and internal representatives of IFSW Europe e.V

Gabriele Stark-Angermeier (Germany) was appointed for the Representative of IFSW Europe to Council of Europe and Antonina Dashkina (Russia) and Hakan Acar (Turkey) for the support team.

Georg Dimitz (Austria) and Diana Petrova (Bulgaria) were duly appointed to the support team on EU issues.

Graça André (Portugal) has been appointed for IFSW European contact person to the Global Human Rights Commission and Stephane Beuchat (Switzerland) as deputy.

Salome Namicheishvili (Georgia) was appointed for IFSW European contact person to the Global expert group on ethics.

John Brennan (Ireland) was re-appointed for IFSW Europe Election Officer.

The delegates congratulated Nicolai as the outgoing President.

Nicolai thanked the Executive for their work. He gave special thanks to Barbara Molderings and Klaus Kühne who are leaving the Executive, thanked Hilton Dawson and Marjut Kosonen for doing the screen notes during the meeting, and also thanked Siobhan Maclean for organising things and taken the minutes.

The Delegates Meeting recorded a big thanks to the hosts in Armenia.

Next Delegates Meeting will be in Turkey from 19th to 21th of April 2013 after the 3rd Ensact Conference 2013, in Istanbul.

A Special Thanks to Armenian Social Workers

I am sure that all participants that have attended the Delegates Meeting in Armenia returned to their countries with an unforgettable memory of our Armenian's hosts.

Mira Antonyan, the President of the Armenian Association of Social Workers, Manane Petrosyan, their Colleagues, friends and family did all they could to provide delegates a fantastic staying in Yerevan, before, during an even after the Delegates Meeting.

It all began with the very professional work on the preparation and organisation of the event with constant contact with the IFSW Europe's communication team, sending all the necessary and useful information about the country, visa requirements, venue and hotels arrangements and even providing transportation to delegates from the airport.

A very important Conference on "Social Work in the Context of Current Social Reforms: Reality and Perspectives" also took place before the meeting giving the opportunity to members that were already in Yerevan to learn about social services in Armenia.

Last but not least they gave to all the chance to do some Social and Field Visits and a special Armenian ambiance was experienced during the dinner for the delegates making it a very happy, friendly and enjoyable evening.

Thank you again for all your good work and warm hospitality.

Cristina Martins

Regional President for IFSW Europe e.V.





MARJUT KOSONEN REPORTS ON HER TRIP TO ARMENIA

Developing the social work profession and services in Armenia

Armenia - A sweet country

"*We are a sweet country*" - this is how Mira Antonyan, president of the Armenian Association of Social Workers described her country. I was in Yerevan attending the IFSW Europe Annual Delegates Meeting 27-29 April. Mira and the association were our hosts. Armenia is known for its delicious apricots, figs, pomegranates and nuts, and its honey. I soon discovered that Armenian sweet wines, preserves, dried fruit and baklavas were unbeatable in taste.

For many Armenians sweetness is tinged with a bitter taste. Having once covered an area in South Caucasus stretching from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea, it is now the size of Belgium and landlocked. It shares open borders with Georgia and Iran; its borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey are closed. Over centuries, Armenia has been subject to Persian, Turkish and Russian interests, its borders changing according to the prevailing power. "*We are sweet to our neighbours*", Mira qualified her introduction with irony.

Mira and her family took me to meet their friends and family in Yerevan, and later on an 800 mile tour of Nagorno Karabagh - her home country. As we travelled across this beautiful mountainous country, I learnt about its history and fiercely nationalistic people, the combined impact of the 1988 earthquake, economic collapse and war with Azerbaijan, and challenges in developing social work in post-totalitarian context.

It is a huge credit to Mira and her colleagues that social work is being taught at university level, there are enthusiastic and skilled social workers practicing in the NGO sector, and that there is a thriving professional association at the forefront of developments. In order to place the Government's proposed social work reforms in context I will tell you about my impressions about Armenia.

Cultural, religious and political crossroads

Armenia, along with its neighbours Georgia and Azerbaijan have existed at the crossroads of cultures, religions and political systems. Armenia was the first country to adopt Christianity as a state religion in 301 AD. Churches and monasteries became centres for teaching and learning. Many of these had large libraries - *Matenadaran*s. The distinctive Armenian alphabet, currently with 39 letters originates from that time. Appropriately, Yerevan was named as the UNESCO Book Capital 2012. An exhibition held to celebrate this contained a large number of illuminated manuscripts, some dating back to the fourth century. While Armenia is a Christian country, there is a small Muslim minority. The Blue Mosque, a haven of calm in the middle of the busy capital city, has recently been renovated with Iranian support.

Armenia has been an independent nation in between being ruled by others; however the first Armenian Republic was not established until after the end of the First World War.

Within two years Armenia, along with Georgia and Azerbaijan, became the *Soviet Transcaucasian Federation*. Armenia became a Soviet Republic on its own right in 1936.

The period of sovietisation saw the many minorities in South Caucasus being assimilated into separate nations. The borders between Armenia and Azerbaijan were drawn arbitrarily, with Azeri villages located deep in Armenia, and the Nagorno Karabagh and Nakhichevan areas located in Azerbaijan. At the time, both areas had mixed ethnic populations, including Kurds and other groups. These borders have been, and continue to be disputed by both nations.

Armenian Genocide, as the systematic killing of ethnic Armenians before and at the beginning of the 20th Century is known, has left deep wounds in the national psyche with intergenerational impact still felt today. One and half million Armenians were estimated to have been killed in Armenia and other parts of the Ottoman Empire in 1915. Many Armenians sought refuge in Europe, US, Canada and South America, where there continues to be a large Diaspora. Our visit to the Genocide Memorial was a painful reminder of how little we Europeans have learnt from the past.

Armenia's relationship with Turkey has been difficult due to Turkey's reluctance to acknowledge its role in the Genocide. While the border with Turkey remains closed more recent attempts at reconciliation have been made, and relationships are said to be improving. In a very concrete way this was evidenced by the four Turkish social workers attending the meeting being invited to Mira's home to enjoy her hospitality. This to me, though not easy for both parties, was social work at its best.

Greater tensions appear to exist between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which was not represented at the delegates meeting. Sadly, and to our surprise, a Kosovan delegate to the meeting was barred entry to the country at the airport, a matter that caused considerable discomfort to the participants.

At present, there are by far more Armenians living outside the country (estimated 8 mil) than within it (3.2 mil). The collapse of industry in post-Soviet countries like Armenia led to high unemployment, and economic migration. Most families were said to have one or more members working abroad. At a 75th birthday party held for Mira's Godfather, I witnessed him receiving telephone calls from his children, nephews and nieces working in Germany, New York, Moscow and Spain, an experience repeated in many other families.

The 1988 earthquake

Armenia has experienced many natural disasters, most recently in December 1988 when a powerful earthquake hit the North Western part of the country. At least 25 000 people were killed, many more were injured, the city of Spitak was destroyed along with other towns and villages being severely damaged. The destruction of infrastructure and loss of power supply (as a result of the damage to the main nuclear power station) made rescue efforts challenging in this mountainous area in the midst of bitter winter weather.

For an example of recent initiatives in reconciliation refer to: *Speaking to One Another. Wish they had not left Leila Nazi, and Whom to forgive? What to forgive?* Hranush Kharatyan-Araqelyan (2010), "Adult Education and Oral History Contributing to Armenian-Turkish Reconciliation. Published by dvv international, www.dvv-international.de.

For more information on history refer to De Waal, T (2010) *The Caucasus*. Oxford University Press.

Nagorno Karabagh and Nakhichevan

Following Gorbachev's promised liberalisation and rising Armenian nationalism, a movement for the *Unification of Karabagh with Armenia* was established in 1987. This begun with peaceful demonstrations in February 1988, but soon led to conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan resulting in a bitter war over Nagorno Karabagh or *Artsakh*, as Armenians prefer to call it. Ceasefire was agreed in 1994, though the territorial dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan has not been resolved.

The region is governed by the Nagorno Karabagh Republic, a *de facto* independent state not recognised by the international community, which regards it as part of Azerbaijan. However, road access is through Armenia, and Armenian troops are positioned in the area. Peace talks, mediated through OSCE (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe) Minsk Group have not been successful in settling the dispute. UK and other governments advise against travel to the area, not because it is particularly dangerous, but because no consular support is provided.

Nakhichevan is governed by Azerbaijan, though it is physically cut off from the country and cannot be accessed directly; Azeris travel via Iran or Turkey between the two areas. While Azeris living in Nagorno Karabagh fled to Azerbaijan during the war, Armenians living in Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan fled to Armenia. Sadly, centuries of mixed ethnic co-existence have now come to an end in these areas. Nagorno Karabagh is very beautiful, fertile and ripe for social, agricultural, and industrial development, however little investment is being made, apart from some Diaspora support to repair war damage, build roads, schools and hospitals. The lack of international recognition has many practical consequences, for example the UK postal system did not allow me to send thank you letters to the many families I had visited in Nagorno Karabagh. The Royal Mail computer said 'no'.

Impact of adversities

The combined impact of the 1988 earthquake and the war in Karabagh took a severe toll on the nation's infrastructure and the population. These events coincided with an economic collapse resulting from the breakup of the Soviet Union. Mira recalled the period up to mid-1990s as being very difficult. Large numbers of refugees arriving from the earthquake and the war areas had to be re-housed. The country suffered fuel and food shortages due to economic blockages. Power shortages lasted for a number of years. Trees were cut for firewood, and children and adults went hungry. Many adult males were lost in fighting, and war disabled needed treatment and care.

Mira started her social work career as the first social worker at a Red Cross run hospital in Yerevan. This had been established through foreign aid to treat the earthquake victims. It soon became the main hospital for treating the war wounded. At the time, Mira's husband, the only male wage earner in the wider family was working abroad. Male members of her family, including teenage nephews, were fighting in Karabagh. Mira was responsible for caring for 18 people in her small flat. In addition to her own three young children, her nephews and nieces had been evacuated from Karabagh. She said that without the support of a good neighbour she could not have coped. Listening to Mira's recollections of her early social work career puts being a working mother into perspective.

Many countries in Europe and wider afield provided emergency support, especially medical support. Our hosts in Armenia were keen to emphasise the important role that other countries had played then, and at earlier times.

For discussion on the early stages of the war and the earthquake refer to: Rost, J (1990) *Armenian Tragedy. An eye-witness account of Human Conflict and Natural Disaster in Armenia and Azerbaijan*, George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd.

For information on Nagorno Karabagh refer to: Nicholas Holding with Deidre Holding: *Armenia with Nagorno Karabagh*, Bradt Travel Guides, 3rd edition.

Social work conference

Before the delegates meeting we had the privilege to attend a conference, organised by the association jointly with UNICEF-Armenia, World Vision, FAR (Fund for Armenian Relief), and the Yerevan State University. This was supported by the EU, USAID, and Ministry of Labour and Social Issues. The conference titled '*Social work in the context of current social reforms: reality and perspective*', was attended by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Labour and Social Issues, along with IFSW Global President, IFSW Europe Vice President, and a number of IFSW Europe delegates. It was the second social work conference organised by the association, and clearly an important venue for development of social work. Simultaneous translation allowed us to learn about the issues facing social workers in the country.

I was impressed by the importance given to the conference. The Prime Minister was well informed about the subject; he and the minister responsible for social work both spoke without notes. Participants, those employed by the state in administrative social work posts and those working in services provided by NGOs, questioned their politicians in front of the local and international audience.

Social work in the context of social reforms

The reform is being driven by a need to demonstrate to the World Bank, as part of next loan conditions, the Government's drive to cut down on administrative costs. There is a lot of bureaucracy, some duplication and convoluted processes. State services, including programmes aimed at serving the needy as well as those distributing social insurance benefits are provided in over 180 offices. Easier access to services, improved information sharing, and extending the range of services are among the goals of service integration. Sounds familiar!

As a pilot project, a one-stop centre has been introduced in the city of Vanadzor. Citizens have one location where they can apply for pensions and benefits, register as unemployed, and enquire about other social services. A case management model developed and piloted by UNICEF-Armenia forms the core aspect of integrated services piloted in Vanadzor. World Vision has run a one-year programme of training for social workers to be based in the community, though the state system has been slow to employ these new workers. The conference acted as a venue for discussion of the proposed reforms.

At the time, the Association was preparing their submission in response to the proposals. The question about how best to organise social work services without a universal social insurance system, pose challenges. Social protection is delivered largely on employment based benefits such as pensions, industrial injuries compensation, and some support for the disabled. In addition to private insurance schemes, new pension and social security systems are being brought in for particular groups, such as those employed in civil the service and universities.

Current services are structured at three levels. At the *state level* the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has four departments and two smaller agencies to determine policy, and plan and coordinate services.

Administrative social workers are employed at the *regional level* to assess level of family poverty and to decide eligibility for assistance and support. Their role involves checking documents and information, and carrying out a home visit. They are not involved in assessing other needs.

There are problems within the pension system as employment records are no longer available for all. In practice, the onus is on individuals to provide evidence of their work record - for some this may involve extensive searches. Both processes - the assessment of eligibility for family benefits, and for pensions present an opportunity for corrupt practices at the present time. This has been recognised by the Government.

The state and regional structures employ most staff and accrue most of the costs. At the *community level* there are few services in rural areas. NGOs provide some services on fixed term contracts through specialist projects in Yerevan and other larger cities.

Next steps

One of the key issues for the profession appears to be the role and tasks of a social worker. These could be potentially contentious. There are cultural issues that need attention, including how best to prevent corruption, and achieve changes in practice while redeploying existing staff in new roles. The proposed new model of case management does not address administrative processes. There is a need for clarity regarding roles and tasks of a case manager vs. social worker. Social services are at an early stage of reform, and nothing as yet is finalised for implementation.

Whilst there are some encouraging developments in children's services, for example *the Children's Support Centre* in Yerevan, there is a pressing need to replace large institutions with family based care. One of Mira's daughters-in-law works as a social worker in a residential facility catering for 300 children with disabilities. It is difficult to see how such changes can be implemented without substantial additional funding.

Armenian social workers earn on average 90 Euros a month yet I was impressed by the dedication and professionalism shown by Mira and her colleagues in their efforts to develop social work and social services in their country. I was left in no doubt that we have much to learn from our colleagues in Armenia, and I look forward to hearing more about the next steps.

Marjut Kosonen

British Association of Social Workers (BASW)

11 July 2012

MEMORIES OF ARMENIA



Our Armenian hosts arranged a fantastic evening meal for us.

The cake and the dancing were particular highlights.



MIRA ANTONYAN REPORTS FROM ARMENIA

Historical overview in the Armenian social work history

26-29 April of 2012 are memorable days, which will likely remain in the history of Armenian social work. For the first time IFSW European Delegates Meeting was organized in Armenia, Yerevan based on the invitation of the Armenian Association of Social Workers.

The decision on organizing the next DM in Armenia adopted earlier in 2011, during the Delegates Meeting in Brussels aroused a great enthusiasm among the members of the "Harmonic Society" Armenian Association of Social Workers, in particular, taking into consideration the fact that the social work is newly developing in Armenia. Therefore, the meeting with the representatives of European Associations of Social Work would stimulate local social workers.



That gave an opportunity to promote social work profession in Armenia: share advanced international experiences, to aware of current developments in the field of social work, and, lastly, become an organic part of all the processes taking place in the professional development, advocacy and all other issues to achieve its main mission which are basically related to the human rights protection and dissemination of social work ideas.

Everything was planned in the way, that the delegates arrive one day before the DM to attend the third international conference on social work in Armenia (the first one was launched in 2004 and the second- in 2008). This international conference was special in terms of the guests and the representation.

Therefore, the "Harmonic Society" Armenian Association of Social Workers launched an international conference on social work main issues in close cooperation with the Yerevan State University (YSU) and the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues (MoLSI). The conference was about "Social work in the context of current social reforms: reality and perspective". Over 200 social specialists from state and non-state structures attended the conference as well as over 30 delegates from European and neighboring countries including delegates from European Associations of Social Work.

The conference was attended and welcomed by Mr. Tigran Sargsyan (RA Prime Minister) Mr. Arthur Grigoryan (Minister of Labor and Social Issues), Mr. Ruben Markosyan (YSU pro-rector on public relations). We were privileged to have honorable guests at the Conference. Among them were Dr. Rory Truell (IFSW President), Nicolai Paulsen (President of IFSW) and Executive members Ian Johnston, Barbara Molderings, Klaus Kuhne, Maria Moritz and others.

Speaking about social injustice, the Prime Minister mentioned a number of reasons causing to it: "First of all it is caused by the fact that we still couldn't manage to include social justice into all spheres of public life and the second- due to the absence of job. In both cases, the role of social workers is of great importance", thinks Tigran Sargsyan.

Mr. Arthur Grigoryan, the Minister of Social Issues informed the participants that 15 centers of integrated social services will be established aiming to realize reforms in this sphere. This means that all centers providing social services will be gathered in one centre and consequently, the demand of new specialists will arise. "Social work as it is newly developing in our country, therefore it is worth to contribute to its development," said the Minister.

Mr. Nicolai Paulsen welcomed the Armenian social workers and outlined in his speech how the Association of Social Workers may contribute to the development of the profession. He also expressed his readiness to broaden and contribute to the development of cooperation.

Rory Truell mentioned in his speech, that the concerns about social justice raised by the Armenian social workers, social welfare and delivery of social work values is true not only for Armenia, but in the whole world. He also spoke noted that it is extremely important that the local specialists raise this issue and that the joint efforts of social workers can help to make changes in the lives of people.

Another concern raised throughout the conference was about the variety of specialists coming from different fields and working as social workers without any relevant educational background, despite the fact that the Armenian social work is already 20 years old. Therefore, the graduates of social work face difficulties in finding relevant job in the labor market.

Thus, on one hand the profession is in its developmental stage and the protection issues of specialists is an actual issue on the other hand which is on the focus of the association.

The delegations representation from various European associations and the comments and answers given by Ian Johnston, Marjut Kosonen, Maria Moritz, Klaus Kuhne and others were quite encouraging for the conference participants. They were impressed by the answers to their questions and happy to share with experiences and contacts. In parallel with the conference, an exhibition of social services was organized which allowed both the representatives of local and international society to get familiar with the existing social services in Armenia.

Right after the conference, on 27-29 April Delegates Meeting with the attendance of around 50 participants from 20 countries was held in "Moscow House" of Yerevan. The Armenian delegation was impressed by the chance to get to know about the developments in social sphere, the issues raised by the European colleagues, about similarities and differences of concerns raised by different countries and the items that are being agreed by all associations. Particularly, this is about the study on social work profession, lobbying on human rights in European structures, etc.

The practitioners got to know about the achievements of "social work community", as the vast majority of professionals in Armenia have no chances to attend international meetings. Another impressive phenomenon, which would never be forgotten, is the visit of all delegates to the Memorial and Genocide Museum in honor of victims of Ottoman Empire in Turkey in 1915. The Armenian Association conveys its deepest gratitude to all associations who visited the Memorial.

The professional discussions were unforgettable too which allowed to know more about each other's country and culture and to have the feeling of One Big Family. This meeting in Yerevan was a huge impulse and lifting up opportunity for such a developing country as us, to understand the delicate specifics of professionalization in order to analyze and evaluate our possibilities to develop our profession in the globalized world.

On behalf of the Armenian Association, I would like to extend my deep-deep thankfulness to all IFSW members for this extraordinary event. It was a great a pleasure to meet professionals from all over the Europe, to learn from them wealth of experience, to feel the warmth and the passion that has come to characterize the IFSW family.

The Armenian Association is impatiently waiting for further meetings and hopes to happen it soon.

MEMORIES OF ARMENIA



INTERVIEWS IN ESW

What were your impressions of the Delegates Meeting?

At Dubrovnik's Delegates Meeting in 2009 the communication team started to get some feedback from the delegates attending the Delegates meeting.

The aim was to evaluate the executive work to try to organise and produce a more effective meeting.

Cristina Martins talked to participants asking about their impressions of the Meeting.

Delegates from several member organisations of IFSW Europe e. V. and some from organisations not members, but attending as observers, have expressed their thoughts in past editions of the European Social Worker.

We thank the delegates from the following countries (24) that have shared their impressions during the last 4 years:

Armenia, Finland, Kosovo, Portugal, Serbia, Turkey, Austria, Faroe Island France, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Sweden, UK, Denmark, Macedonia, Malta, Norway, Russia and Switzerland.

A special thanks also to the members of IFSW global executive that expressed their thoughts after attending Delegates Meetings: David Jones, Gary Bailey and Rory Truell.

The communication team also implemented recently the realization of special interviews. The first was done to our former President Nicolai Paulsen and in this edition you can read the interview of Barbara Molderings, our former treasurer.

We will keep doing interviews hoping to capture the interest of our readers.

Thanks!

Cristina Martins

Communication team

Regional President of IFSW Europe e.V.

MEMORIES OF ARMENIA



Anny Skarstein

Norwegian Union of Social Educators and Social Workers

A newcomer's eye at the Delegates Meeting.

I was asked to give a newcomers eye at the IFSW Europe's Delegates meeting. I am a real newcomer, as I have been working at the Norwegian Union of Social Educators and Social Workers (FO) for less than a year, and have my degree in sociology, not social work, and therefore have been member of another union.

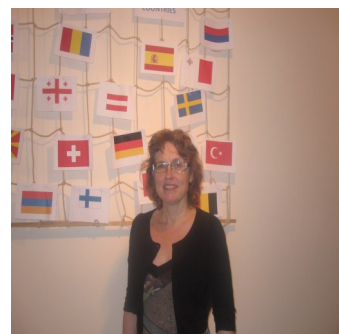
A very good reason to attend is the knowledge of an organization you get from a meeting. I learned more about IFSW these three days than I could have learned from reading about the organization.

Of the topics discussed at the meeting, I found the ones on definition of social work and on mobility most interesting. The first in a theoretical perspective: if the definition is difficult to use or implement in certain conditions - why? Is it the definition, or a western contextual reading? The second in a labour market perspective, concerning the importance of recognizing and using the competence of migrating social workers. The report on education presented at the meeting is a useful tool to recognize skills and clarify what needs to be added to work within national regulatory framework and systems. I think it might be a good idea to encourage students to write their thesis on comparison of educational systems and competence requirements to get further knowledge in this area.

The discussions at times reminded me of the Beatles: "the long and winding road..." Luckily, they all ended where all could agree on the statements. I was impressed by the relaxed attitude, where returning time after breaks seemed to be looked upon as indicative rather than fixed. The prolonged breaks gave room for informal discussions concerning the subjects of the day, and exchange of ideas on organizational and professional areas. Still, for a Norwegian, this casual attitude to time schedules can be hard to accept.

Most of all, I was struck by the hospitality of our hosts: Mira, Manane and their colleagues and volunteers during our stay. The effort they made to make us feel welcome and have an enjoyable stay both at the conference and social events is an example to be followed. Traditional meals, visits to the old Yerevan Ararat Brandy Company, to Echmiadzin and the Museum "Gandzaran", and the Tsitsernakaberd memorial and genocide museum. Different parts of Armenian history and culture, presented in a way that made me want to come back.

Coming from a Nordic country, I am used to see our systems being set as an example. It is important to be reminded of the fact that others can do better. A very nice example was the visit to FAR Children's Support Centre



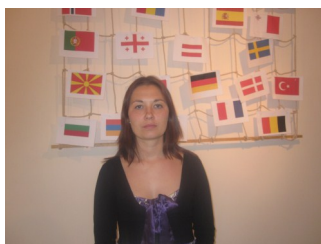
Vladimir ilievski

Association of Social Workers of Macedonia



It was great pleasure to participate on the General Meeting in Yerevan. It was excellent meeting, with rich program agenda, active participants, where I could as representative of the Association of social workers in Macedonia actively to participate to share our perceptions in relation to the actual situation with the social workers, problems, challenges and possibilities for their greater influence in the national and international frames. This was great opportunity to get

introduced with my new colleges, to exchange experiences with them, to establish cooperation and to create directions for future inter-action.

**Evgeniya Pankova****Russian Union of Social Workers and Social Pedagogues**

I was glad to have an opportunity to take part in the Delegates meeting 2012 in Armenia. It was my first time when I participated in a event of this level, and I consider it as valuable experience.

1. It became meaningful for me that our Union is a part of the International association.
2. It gave me ideas of our Union development, setting new goals and tasks.
3. There were very interesting topics to discuss, and it was fascinating to find out how some processes go in different countries (financial crises consequences, migration of social workers and issues of supporting them, various standards of social work in different European countries, human rights, etc.)
4. It was very important to learn about European associations - IFSW Europe members.
5. Unforgettable socialising event in the best Armenian restaurant with the warmest, welcoming atmosphere.
6. Last but not least - I was so pleased to meet very nice and like-minded people from different countries - social workers. And the only thing I regret is missing the opportunities (or lack of time) to have a talk to everyone.

Stéphane Beuchat**Avenir Social, Switzerland**

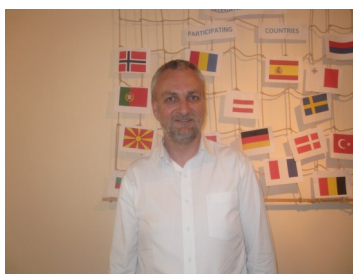
Being part of the social workers community at the Delegates Meeting in Yerevan was a great experience for me. First I want to say thank you for the warm welcome to my colleagues from the other representing countries. I felt affiliated very quick.

It was my first Delegates Meeting and so I came with the claim to get informed about the wide field of the IFSW Europe activities. I was given many inputs and ideas to bring home to the Swiss association. My intention is to be more attentive to inform our members regularly about the activities of IFSW Europe. On the one hand, I'm impressed about the professional work the executive committee is doing. On the other hand, I'm convinced that IFSW Europe has to build up more structures to get an even stronger voice in the future within and outside of the social workers community. I'm proud to be part of the process and I'm looking forward to assist the development of IFSW Europe with my knowledge.

I want to give a huge compliment to the Armenian association for the organisation of the Delegates Meeting and especially for the interesting and impressive side events. Hope to see you next year in Istanbul!

**Reflections on the Delegates Meeting**

by Dr Rory Truell Secretary General IFSW



It was a pleasure to attend my first European Delegates Meeting in Armenia. It is impressive to see such diversity in unity in achieving social work ideals. Of particular interest to me in the European Region is the support of established members for new and emergent members to join them in working collaboratively in perusing social work outcomes. This is indeed is also a worldwide phenomenon as countries and regions with

previously unrecognized social work histories are gaining support and recognition for their social work identities and consequently IFSW is now embracing a wider range voices that bring new understandings and insights to our profession. I wholeheartedly commend our European colleagues for embracing such diversity that brings with it new definitions of social work, new ways of describing the impact of our work, but voices that remain true to our principles and core values that define us as a global profession.

David Castillo

Maltese Association of Social Workers

The annual IFSW Europe Delegates Meeting this year was held in Yerevan, Armenia. This was my second delegates meeting I attended. It is of great satisfaction that our 'little country' Malta was welcomed and supported to attend such meetings. Initially, I do feel overwhelmed by the presence of some of the larger and more influential European countries, but soon I notice that, all in all, common ground can be easily noticed.



Despite that Anthea and I had quite some travelling to do to reach our destination Yerevan, I think the imprint this city has left on me was worth the journey. Yerevan is witness to major transformations and change, and what better way to apply this to the social work profession! Despite social work being quite a young profession undoubtedly it is fast developing.

My fascination about these meetings firmly remains about the concoction of countries that come together with their own cultures, ideas, attitudes and perspectives, coupled with different accents, gesticulations and temperaments, to discuss arising social matters in Europe. I question at times; "How will we manage to find agreement"? The discussions during the meetings occasionally heat up but never lose focus or validity. The Delegates Meeting was certainly constructive, directional and empowering.

I must admit that at times we rush through certain items on the agenda and at the end of the Delegates Meeting I am mentally exhausted. However, at the same time I am satisfied with the outcome.

Certainly, I will remember this Delegates Meeting for the spirit the hosts attached to it. I am sure that most of us would agree that our colleagues from Yerevan did a good job in making this meeting successful. I appreciated so much their warmth, friendliness, resilience, disposition and liberty to bring to the Delegates Meeting a gentle Armenian touch. With great gratitude I would like to thank you for your fantastic organisation.

MEMORIES OF ARMENIA





A Farewell from Barbara

-Hit the road Barbara but come back more and more...

Hello I am proud to be a social worker, even when I am retired I will never forget it.

Social workers have the chance to work with people, to be involved in political and international affairs. Social workers have the chance to change things and engage in ethics and human rights.

I am married with a social worker and my daughter is a social pedagogue. You can see we are a very social family. Therefore it is necessary to have hobbies which have nothing to do with social work to load your batteries.

For me the best to relax is the music. I am singing in a choir over 50 years and the weekly rehearsal is one of my favourites. I like classical music and modern music. I like to sing folksongs and art songs.

Those who know me know that I love travelling. As often as possible I am on the road together with my husband or friends. I cannot say where the best to travel is. Each continent and each country has its own atmosphere and landscape. To experience the difference of people is often an adventure. I like to explore a country by driving with a car or by hiking.

Another hobby is reading. Before or after my journeys I read book about the country not only guidebooks but those written by the authors of the country where I am going or where I was. When I am visiting a country I try to eat the traditional food.

In 1989 was my first connection to IFSW in Basel. There I met Ellen Apostol Mourawief. That impressed me so, that from this time on I only missed one Conference. First I presented my papers and discussed them with colleagues from all over the world, than I became representative of my German Association and attended the Delegates Meetings. In 2006 I was elected as member at large. As member of the regional executive and of the global level I had the chance together with the other executive members to develop the work of IFSW. In 2010 I resigned from my role as member at large and in 2012 from the European Executive.

It was not easy for me to resign because I loved my work. But so is live, if you are getting older you have to think about the right time to hand over to younger people.

Now I am sitting in the background, read the blog and the webpage because I want to be informed what is going on.

My last Delegates Meeting was in Armenia. I must say that was the best farewell for me, to experience such a great hospitality and to be together with friends. To prepare the visit in this country I read " the 40 Days of the Musa Dagh" by Franz Werfel. He describes the genocide of the Armenian People by the Turkish People. Standing in the Genocide Monument in Yerevan was a special experience and very touching.

Now I say good bye to all of you. I will never forget the time in IFSW and I hope that IFSW will become stronger so that it will be heard all over the world.

We as social workers are making the difference.

Good luck

Barbara Molderings

Interview for IFSW Europe by

Cristina Martins



The New Member at Large for Europe: Maria Moritz



Hello to you all!

Introducing oneself is kind of a strange thing, but I will try.

My name is Maria, I have already lived 62 years in this fascinating but also challenging world. I was born and raised in Vienna, Austria, Europe. When I was 17, I spent one year in the USA as an exchange-student, graduated from highschool there and lived with a wonderful family near San Francisco. This international experience determined my view about people's diversity a lot but also showed how much people's needs and hopes are alike.

As a student of psychology I made a lot of practical experience, doing an internship in the psychiatric clinic for children. To finance my studies I worked parttime as sales-assistent in a large stationery-store. Unfortunately I didn't finish my studies because of family-reasons, but lucky for the social work profession - I didn't become a psychologist. When I met my husband, who is a physicist, I got trained to always find explanations for the fundamental things of life and of this world.

But I stayed grounded and experienced my talents of managing practical life: I raised 3 sons. One became a social worker, one is a doctor and the youngest is a physicist like his father. Having now 2 grandchildren who live far away in Seattle. This a result of bringing up one's children open-minded, interested in different cultures, languages, foreign countries and people. Globalization is something that happens within my family, you always have to adjust to new situations, to use all kinds of new media, stay flexible and critical but also tolerant and curious.

Many years I engaged in the parent-teacher associations in the schools of my kids, applied for functions and learned how to negotiate and work on legislative provisions in the Austrian education-system. Later on I was elected to the regional parliament of my hometown, engaging in safety measures for the kids on their way to school, promoting several initiatives for children, youth, families, elderly in my neighborhood. The fact is I did a lot of community-work, but non-professional and as honorary activity.

After 10 years I decided to go back to school and become a professional social worker. 1995 I graduated and started to work right away as a social worker in the child-protection department of the city of Vienna. Additionally I served as representative of the workers union and joined the Austrian association of social workers. My experiences led the way to be elected into functions and get familiar with international work, attending international conferences since 2001, the „Danube conference Vienna-Bratislava“ my first experience. 2008 I was elected president of the Austrian association OBDS, reelected twice now. 2010 in Hong Kong I tried to be elected for Member at Large but lost competing with Anthea Agius - no wonder!

In 2011 I was elected to the Executive Committee of IFSW-Europe and had enormous benefit from working with so many experienced colleagues, sadly it lasted only one year. Major changes have taken place within the European Executive, Anthea has resigned because of family-reasons - seems to be a gender-topic still - we have a new president now and two new executive members.

Considering my age I assure to try my best and give the proof, you can have wrinkles and still do a good job!

On the agenda for my work as Member at Large for Europe I want to intensify the communication between the global level and the regions, engaging in the implementation of the Global Agenda, promoting comparable professional standards and quality working conditions for social workers, representing practical social workers. Another concern is to raise more conscience and start activities on the political level to stop the expansion of negative impacts of globalization for service users and social workers as well. Money has to be invested in people, not only in banks and financial profits denying peoples needs and rights.

„Only after the last tree has been cut down / Only after the last river has been poisoned / Only after the last fish has been caught / Then will you find that money cannot be eaten.“ (Prophecy of the Cree-peoples)

The present global situation seems to be very close to this saying. As social workers we have to raise our voices untiringly for people's needs and human rights.

WHEN SOCIAL WORK CAME TO STOCKHOLM



8-12 of July there was a world conference in Stockholm on Social Work, www.swsd-Stockholm-2012.org. About 2500 social workers from 110 countries participated! It is a good feeling to participate in conferences with many colleagues, because then you realize that you are not alone. We are many around the world working with social work; the professor who is now doing research on the elderly and social context, or the new qualified social worker who is heading for his first job. We are all needed to move social work forward.

A social worker of today spent a lot of time working with the computer, writing reports and notes. We would really need to spend more time with the clients/users. It is in the meeting with one other person you build relationships, start the social work. It is time for the social workers to take control over their working hours.

Politicians would be wise to listen to social workers. Social workers have the visions, solutions and knowledge needed to develop the welfare system, especially for the most vulnerable. The knowledge and experience of social work must influence the political agenda.

Social workers are doing a fantastic job, contributing to making life better for many people who find themselves in difficult situations. For those in need of society support, social workers can have a vital and life-changing effect. Social workers come into contact with the most vulnerable in society, and they have an important role in speaking out about the shortcomings of the welfare system.

Imagine if the social workers around the world could say one thing, say the same thing, will we be heard? For sure, it is time that social workers take more place and begin to tell the world what we see and hear. We must raise the voice of our clients/users.



Yvonne Ahlström
Vision

Together we can make a difference!



Annica Skoglund
IFSW Europe Executive

Our Honorary Secretary will be working with Titti Frankel (Sweden) and Klaus Kuhne (Switzerland) to consider how we can bring more of a practitioner focus to future conferences. We are currently gathering information from practitioners who attended the Conference in Stockholm. If you have any ideas to share please contact Siobhan. We will be reporting back on our findings and our ideas in future editions of ESW.

In every society, social workers are agents of social change, in providing social welfare for the population, in providing social security to its citizens.

Education of social workers in Macedonia began in 1957 with the establishment of secondary school for social workers. In 1960, became a higher school for social workers and on 21 June 1984 grew into Institute of Social Work and Social Policy "Mother Theresa" within the Faculty of Philosophy, Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje.

Today many of the undergraduate students on the studies in social work and social policy continue the education to specific studies of social work in health, postgraduate and doctoral studies in social work and social policy within the Institute.

Social workers in Macedonia are most common in the social security system as follows: Centers for Social Work, Institutions for Social Protection, Day Care Centers, Department for Social Affairs and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. As expert profile they are trained to take certain measures, activities to prevent and overcome the basic social risks to which the citizen is exposed throughout life, to reduce poverty and social exclusion in the implementation of measures, to promote social work and social care in planning and managing social services in communities. According to the Law on Social Protection for the first time since 2012 it was began to implement licensing for the social workers working in the system of social protection.

Besides social security, about 90 social workers are involved in the health sector, in secondary and tertiary health care. Often is accented the importance of the practical social work in prevention of certain types of diseases, in protection and promotion of mental health of the population, individual treatment of clients during their hospitalization in the process of their rehabilitation, resettlement and reintegration into the community. As medical assistants, social workers through their activities within the Association of Social Workers of Skopje, the support they receive from the Institute of Social Work and Social Policy "Mother Theresa" at the Faculty of Philosophy Skopje, are very active in terms of ensuring their legal rights in front of competent institutions indicating their need that they have in the health system in circumstances where the state is reformed.

As part of the expert multi-professional team in primary schools, total 7 social workers through their professional work implement specific measures and interventions in setting up mechanisms for preventing and solving social problems of pupils in primary education through continuous reduction of its dimensions, discovering the causes and better coping with the consequences, connecting students to school with family and local community that contributes to their successful functioning and social integration in the environment. The number of social workers is minimal in terms of real needs that have the primary schools in the state for this kind of professional profile.

With the introduction of pluralization of the system for social protection, many social workers work in the civil sector where through their professional work manage to successfully assist certain vulnerable social groups to overcome their social problems and to develop social programs in the community.

Private sector and units of local governments are the next imperative in terms of employment of social workers, which will contribute in providing social services to different categories of beneficiaries in the field of social protection, in exercise of their rights and improving and strengthening the implementation system of social protection in the local community.

With the development of market economy, the work of the large companies require the need for inclusion of social workers in particular sectors of human resources.

In Republic of Macedonia the social workers are united in two associations of social workers, the Union of Social Workers of Macedonia which currently is more passive organization in terms of activities and the Association of Social Workers of Skopje which, through its project activities helps certain social vulnerable groups to overcome their social problems, organize continuing education for social workers in different thematic areas and fight for the rights of social workers in the state.

It is about time to implement what we need, what is legally allowed, but currently unavailable due to several reasons, in order to step in right direction and fully justify the need and importance of social workers in a society and that is: SOCIAL WORKER IN EACH PRIMARY SCHOOL, SOCIAL WORKER IN EVERY MUNICIPALITY, SOCIAL WORKER IN EVERY KINDERGARTEN and MORE SOCIAL WORKERS IN HEALTH SYSTEM.

Asst. Vladimir Ilievski, MA

Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje

Faculty of Philosophy

Institute of Social Work and Social Policy "Mother Theresa

IFSW EUROPE JOINS EUROPEAN ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK

Following consideration of the final report of the project on the Impact of the Financial Crisis on Social Services at the DM in Armenia an application was submitted to the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) for organisational membership.

EAPN is one of the founder members of the Social Platform and has a long history of successful campaigning and lobbying on behalf of impoverished and excluded individuals and groups.

A high proportion of the difficulties that social work service users arise directly from poverty or give rise to it and our profession needs to be formally linked to networks of individuals and organisations committed to securing a more equal society.

It was therefore a great privilege to represent IFSW Europe at EAPN's General Assembly in Oslo from 7th - 9th July 2012 to present our application. The theme of the General Assembly 2012 was **Time of Crisis - Time for Change** and delegates approved a declaration to the effect that "Austerity is not working and the time has come for a social investment pact".

It was not all plain sailing as perhaps understandably our application met with some resistance from delegates who perceive social workers as be part of the system they are fighting rather than allies committed to the elimination of poverty and disadvantage. However following a healthy debate our application was approved by an over-whelming majority of those present which included a significant number of social workers.

This is an exciting development for IFSW Europe and I would encourage member organisations to establish local links with EAPN networks in their own countries and to support EAPN's campaigns.

<http://www.eapn.eu>



Ian Johnston
IFSW Europe Executive



During the next few months the IFSW Europe website will be updated. Siobhan our Honorary Secretary will be contacting member organisations to ask for information and links for the site—please start to gather whatever information you would like to see on the site. Also please visit regularly and let us know what you think.

Note from the Editors

The IFSW Europe Executive Committee wants to keep improving communication with national member organisations.

The aim is to have regular/direct communication between the Executive and members.

We want to encourage members organisations to become more involved in the work of IFSW.

In the first week of September 2012 you will be receiving an email from the Honorary Secretary asking you to share your views about some specific items and to propose subjects you want the executive approach and discuss in the next executive meeting.

The executive will meet in Vienna from 14 to 16 September 2012.

Thanks!

Cristina Martins and Siobhan Maclean

DVD for Sale

The European Region of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) is pleased to announce the launch of the DVD "Social Work is" as a hard copy ready to be distributed to all members organisations from Europe and to be sold to general public.

The DVD which can be found at: www.ifsw.org/europe highlights the contribution that social workers make to the well-being of individuals and groups who require support and assistance to overcome the very difficult situations that many citizens face at some time in their life.

Get your own copy for only 8,00Euros!

Help promoting Social Work and IFSW Europe e.V.!

Further information can be obtained from:

Siobhan Maclean

IFSW Europe Honorary Secretary

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www.ifsw.org/europe

