



## **ICSW EUROPE NEWSLETTER** **November & December 2012**

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### **FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL**

Dear readers,

We are now approaching Christmas and the end of 2012. This year has been full of activities in ICSW Europe both regarding expert seminars and participation in the world conference *Social Work and Social Development* in Stockholm. These occasions offered good opportunities to exchange experiences between our members.

All over Europe we now experience the financial crisis and we can see its impact on social welfare in different countries. It seems to be the right time now to emphasize the Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPFI) as a base for our activities inside and outside of the EU.

Since the last newsletter, there has been an expert seminar on Working Poor arranged by the board of ICSW Europe and the Danish National Committee. In this seminar there were representatives with experiences from eight countries of people working for such low wages that they did not have possibilities for a decent life. Formal and informal work, social protection and unemployment were factors that influence the situation.

The countries in Southern and Eastern Europe pointed at a decrease of pensions and collective spending for instance in the field of education. These developments decrease the short-term and long-term opportunities for people to raise their standard of living and even to find a future in their country. The participants also discussed the growing migration flows between different countries, both migration away from and into countries. In Southern and

Eastern Europe the participants experience both emigration of the working population to other European countries and immigration of people from outside Europe.

Money transfers from emigrants were of high importance to relatives staying back home, but it also formed a considerable part of GDP of those countries. On the other hand the immigration to the countries of Western and Northern Europe was discussed regarding possibilities to find a work, risks of dumping wages and how to counteract that immigrants were exploited by temping agencies and had to work for low wages and without the security which was seen as normal for native workers. A policy paper on working poor based on lectures and discussions from the seminar will be presented in January 2013.

This expert seminar pointed at many important issues for ICSW Europe to follow up on. We will have a continued discussion in Istanbul in the ENSACT Conference, 16-19 April 2013, *Social Actions in Europe - Towards Inclusive Policies and Practice in Europe*. In the Istanbul conference ICSW will organise a symposium on Migration and Integration, where we will discuss conditions for emigration, immigration and integration. Hopefully many ICSW-members will be taking part in this conference and we will be able to develop our joint work for fair conditions in Europe!

There will be more information about our capacity building day on 16 April before the conference starts. In connection with the conference we will have our General Assembly on 17 April in the afternoon.

We wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

*Bodil Eriksson*  
Secretary General

## **NORTH-SOUTH COOPERATION FINLAND-TANZANIA NGOs concerned about environment**

*Text and photos by Uwe Ottka*

The CISUNET-project of development cooperation between two national committees of ICSW, TACOSODE of Tanzania and SOSTE of Finland, has been running since 2008. This year, the project has focused strongly on environmental issues which threaten Tanzanian rural communities. TACOSODE (Tanzania Council for Social Development) is the national umbrella organization of local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and has more than 250 member organisations around the country. Since 2008, TACOSODE is working together with its Finnish sister organization: first STKL, and now since 2012 with SOSTE, the Finnish Society for Social and Health. The name of the project is CISUNET: Citizens Support Network for Welfare and Poverty Reduction. Project partners are also ICSW and the Universities of Jyväskylä, Finland, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

### **Environmental impact**

The project team often travels to the different parts of Tanzania, as an intensive cooperation with the local NGOs is important for the work. The last field trip was in October 2012, and led to the Southern areas of Tanzania, including Lindi, Mtwara, Newala, Masasi and Liwale districts. The areas are among the poorest in Tanzania, and poverty has many dimensions. Poverty does not mean only lack of possessions or income – it also means low levels of education, high unemployment, lack of food especially in the dry season, inequality and problems for women, lack of clean water, and lack of health care. Apart from these, recently another concern has grown momentum around the country: the concern for the situation of the environment, especially the forests.



*Forests are increasingly cut down to make way for farms. Here: in the Rufiji river valley.*

The alarming increase of deforestation can be clearly seen when travelling around Tanzania. Everywhere there are large areas where trees have been cut down or are being cut. The main reasons are two: the increase in demand for farmland, for which forest is cleared to make way for farms, and the production of charcoal. Hundreds, probably thousands of young men have joined in the charcoal business. The population of Tanzania is growing at a high rate: it is now

at around 45 million, up from 35 million in the year 2000. In every home, food is cooked, and charcoal is by far the largest source of energy for the households. In charcoal production, hardly any dry wood is used, but rather trees are cut down, piled into a pile, covered with sand, and then set on fire. The charcoal is ready when the fire under the sand cover has burned for about two weeks. And charcoal production is a profitable business for the young men, especially as other types of work are hard to find. Trees are cut down also as building material and for export. 'Even mango trees are being cut down nowadays. The trunks of mango trees are in high demand, and are used e.g. in the production of matches.' states Kilwa NGO network representative Omar Kmuwili. Although the government has policies aimed at reducing deforestation, these often are not sufficiently implemented.

### **NGO action**

The NGOs in Tanzania have awakened to the seriousness of this issue. In October, TACOSODE and the CISUNET project held a national seminar on environmental challenges, where local NGOs from various parts of the country told about the situation of the environment in their own areas. The seminar brought together government officials and decision-makers, researchers, and NGO representatives.



*The representatives of Newala NGO network, Asha Maguta and Gothard Mwangi, tell about the development challenges of their area, including the challenges facing women. The painting describes the hard workload performed by Tanzanian women in the household.*

The main concerns raised were the diminishing of forest area due to deforestation and the impact of mining activities on the environment. Tanzania has a lot of natural resources, and e.g. in gold mining, the use of dangerous substances like mercury is widespread. 'In our area, the most important water source is the Mhwenkuku river, from which our women fetch water for their homes. Recently, reports by women on skin diseases have increased. When we investigated the matter, we found out that further upstream, mining activities have started. Gold miners use mercury for the processing of gold, which then is washed into the river. We suspect that the mercury is responsible for the reports of skin diseases, as the women handle the water e.g. when washing clothes' reports Edward Njombe from the Nachingwea Agriculture and Environment Organisation.

## **Government and NGO cooperation**

The government mostly has good political programmes also with regards to environmental protection, but their implementation often is insufficient. Also the government has realized that NGOs have an important role to play. 'We need both, and we want to be good cooperating partners: our government is ruling the country with laws, policies and political programmes, and we try to get the voices of local people heard on issues concerning them. We find important that local people are empowered and educated to be in a better position concerning demanding their own rights and preserving the wellbeing of their own people and environment. We need the government to make good policies and laws, and we have to demand that they are also implemented. And we also need own actions of every village community e.g. with regards to protection of the forest.' states Theofrida Kapinga, the Executive Secretary of TACOSODE.

The best result of the seminar was that participants started to think about how they themselves can take actions to protect the environment and the forest. The representatives of the NGOs participating in the seminar decided to take action: to take up measures of tree-planting, protection of forest and trees, and educating people on environmental issues. At least these are small steps ahead, and the project needs to continue the awareness-raising and advocacy work on this issue.

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## **RECENT ACTIVITIES IN BRUSSELS' SOCIAL PLATFORM OF NGO'S**

*Cornelia Markowski*

The main topics of Social platform's work in Brussels were the up-coming Annual Growth survey 2013, the draft directive on basic bank accounts and the work program 2013.

Meanwhile the Annual Growth survey 2013 has been published by the EU Commission. Social Platform has sent a contribution to the Commission in advance. The network insists on more social dimension and right based equality of the survey. As we have to realize now the crisis has increased unemployment rates and has consequently promoted poverty and social exclusion in many European countries. This clearly shows the need to invest more energy to tackle unemployment and the social consequences of the financial crisis. 24 % of EU citizens were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2011 as new statistics of Eurostat prove. Eurostat has published [new figures and statistics](#) on income, social inclusion and living conditions. The data gathered bases on the EU-Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) instrument and are used to monitor the Europe 2020 strategy in particular through its poverty reduction headline target.

In order to find good and sustainable solutions the governance of the next European semester (Jan – July 2013) should be changed through the definition of clear guidelines including the dialogue with civil society organizations to implement the Europe2020 targets of inclusive and sustainable growth (esp. combating poverty and school-drop outs, promote education and employment).

Another key topic was the preparation of recommendations to promote financial inclusion in the EU, which means to safeguard legally access to a basic bank account for everyone. In many countries like Germany we have self-regulatory commitments in the bank sector on a voluntary basis to ensure access to bank accounts to everyone, but nevertheless about half a million people in Germany are discriminated by not having a basic bank account. Further key questions in this context are how to get access to insurance and credit for people that need them and how to tackle over-indebtedness. At the beginning of next year the European

Commission has announced the publication of a draft directive following a broad consultation of stakeholders in 2009.

Beside this Social Platform has adopted its work programme for 2013. In its main five pillars the programme will continue the activities from 2012 such as social inclusion and lifting people out of poverty, access to quality employment, investment in quality services, strengthen fundamental rights and ensure an effective civil dialogue. Two new EU policy trends have been integrated in the programme 2013: Social innovation and workability. First of all, the stakeholders wait for the Social Investment Package as a Commission's first broad initiative in the social sector for 2013. It is considered that such an initiative should comprise services and infrastructure, and it should focus more broadly on investing in people's well-being.

*Cornelia Markowski is head of the Department for International Affairs of the Deutscher Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge e.V. and a board member of ICSW Europe*

## **SOCIAL PLATFORM**

### **Annual Growth Survey lacks social and poverty focus**

On November 28 the European Commission launched the third European Semester with the presentation of the Annual Growth Survey (AGS) for 2013. However, whereas the European semester should be the main tool for implementing the Europe 2020 Strategy, these seem to become more and more disconnected from each other with the new AGS. It hardly refers to the Europe 2020 targets - the education and poverty target in particular and contrary to last year, there is no progress report on the implementation of the strategy. The idea behind the AGS is to identify the priorities for the EU for the next year. Within the European semester it should constitute the basis for the development of the National Reform Programmes by the member states and of the Country-Specific Recommendations by the Commission. For next year, no new key priorities were formulated, as the Commission considers the priorities of last year to "remain broadly valid". The main focus is clearly on economic growth, with three of the five targets formulated in light of this. When looking at growth-friendly fiscal consolidation, the recommendations on the expenditure side of government budgets is all about efficiency and effectiveness. This seems to imply that member states have to cut their spending on social protection while only preserving essential social safety nets and trying to guarantee access to high quality services such as healthcare.

While the purpose of the AGS is described as "to set out the economic and social priorities for the EU in 2013" only one of the five priorities is looking at "tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis". The Social Platform welcomes the inclusion of this social priority in the AGS, but the section dedicated to "promoting social inclusion and tackling poverty" is even shorter than last year. Poverty has gone up to almost 116 million people in the EU, and the AGS acknowledges that it is increasing in many member states. At the same time, the EU and its member states are not making any progress in achieving their Europe 2020 poverty target of 20 million as the sum of the national poverty targets accounts for less than 11 million. However, no concrete proposals or guidelines were formulated to address the on-going increase in inequality and poverty.

Considering education, it is positive to see the AGS stating that investment in this field should be preserved, but it is only referred to in function of increasing employment for growth and not as a goal in itself. What is missing are concrete recommendations on how to reduce early drop-out rates as linked to education as a fundamental right for everyone and on how to improve the access to and quality of education. The AGS furthermore fails to acknowledge that austerity measures promoted by many governments and encouraged by EU economic governance, are resulting in increased inequalities, poverty and social exclusion.



For more information, see the [speech Social Platform president Conny Reuter](#) addressed to the Annual Convention Against Poverty and Social Exclusion in Brussels on 5 December.

### **3<sup>RD</sup> ENSACT/ICSW EUROPEAN CONFERENCE**

#### **Social Action in Europe: Towards inclusive policies and practices**



The third ENSACT European Conference will take place from 17 to 19 April 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey. The theme will be "Social Action in Europe: Towards inclusive policies and practices..." The ENSACT conference is organised by the six organisations united in ENSACT, one of which is ICSW Europe, together with the Turkish Association of Social Workers.

The following seven subthemes have been selected:

**1. Inclusive Policies and Practices**, promoting equal rights and efforts to eliminate injustice for everyone. Special focus within this sub-theme will be on women who are exposed to violence and oppression in various contexts; vulnerable children and their rights to education, care and to have their voice heard, oppression and persecution due to sexual orientation; the right to religious freedom and inclusive faith-based practice.

**2. Human Rights, Ethics and Dilemmas in Social action**

Social work is a human rights-based profession. Social workers accept the universal UN-Convention on Human Rights and rely on the professional code of ethics in which the solidarity and dignity of all people play a crucial role. This sub-theme aims to examine and explore examples of how this is put into practice, as well as those issues and practices that challenge the code of ethics and create dilemmas in the implementation of human rights based and ethical social professional work.

**3. Migration and Discrimination**

Migration is a global phenomenon and states are affected by both emigration and immigration. The economic crisis in European Union member states has raised the risk of unemployment, poverty and marginalization of minority ethnic groups. Transnational relations imply a new kind of internationalism but tendencies towards discrimination and segregation are visible all over Europe. We aim in this sub-theme to reflect on strategies that avoid the exclusion of immigrants and minority groups and on how to promote their rights and inclusion in society.

**4. Elderly people**

There are a growing number of elderly people in our European populations. Elders can be conceptualised either as a resource or a burden upon their communities and society and we need to seek ways to utilize the resources that elderly citizens provide. Under this sub-theme we seek examples and discussion on how to further develop innovative methods and services to enable elders to live an active life through participation in society and to support participation in society when elderly people also have additional care needs.

**5. Disability and inclusion**

The Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is drawing increasing attention to the situation of disabled persons and their right to fundamental freedom. People with disabilities must be enabled to participate in education, employment and social life. Inclusive policy and social action are often confronted with attitudes and approaches that need to change. Under this sub-theme we will look at how inclusive policy and practice has been developed and implemented in different countries and how barriers can and must be challenged.

**6. Social Professional Work in health Care Settings and promoting Well-Being.**

Social work professionals have developed different approaches concerning physical and mental health and well-being in different social policy contexts. There are various practices that contribute to user's well-being and respect patient's rights in medical settings such as hospitals and health care centres. Under this sub-theme we will be examining examples of innovative practice, preventative and interdisciplinary work between social professionals, managers, medical staff and volunteers.

### **7. Sustainable development and social action**

Environmental issues, such as global warming, fuelled by unscrupulous economic forces do not only affect the physical but also the social environment. Socio-economic and environmental problems in one country are connected to worldwide patterns of cause and effect. Social workers are gaining increasing awareness that they urgently need to develop new knowledge and strategies in order to respond to these disastrous trends. Social policy and social practice must contribute to sustainable social development and the protection of the physical and social environment.

The organisers are calling for abstracts related to these seven subthemes. The deadline for submitting abstracts is 7 January 2013. For more information contact the organisers [by e-mail](#) or visit the [conference website](#).

### **EU QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR LONG-TERM CARE SERVICES**

The EU Quality framework for Long-term care was officially presented at the European Parliament on 14 November, at the closing event of the WeDo project.

In the last few years the fight against elder abuse and the improvement of the life and care quality of older people have gained importance at international and European level. With the rapid growth of long-term care demand at home or elsewhere, an increasing number of stakeholders are involved in the provision of long-term care services. Providing a common analysis, vision and values, the European Quality framework for Long-term care services is an invitation to all relevant stakeholders at all levels (EU, national, regional and local) to build on what already exists in their country and to improve their system, getting inspiration from each other, in order to guarantee quality long-term care services within the EU and prevent elder abuse.

The 'EU Quality framework for Long-term care services: Principles and areas of action for the wellbeing and dignity of older people in need of care and assistance' is the result of the two-year WeDO project, coordinated by AGE Platform Europe with the help of 18 partner organisations. It aims to improve the quality of life for older people in need of care and assistance with a set of 11 quality principles and 7 areas of action, recommendations for policy makers and a methodology on how to implement them with a participatory approach. It is inspired by the 'European Charter of the rights and responsibilities of older people in need of care and assistance' launched in 2010.

The WeDO project led also to the creation of an EU-wide partnership of stakeholders committed to the objectives of the Quality framework and composed of 12 national coalitions led by the project partners. The partnership will continue after the project ends with the aim of monitoring the implementation of the Quality framework in the different countries involved and promote it in other EU countries.

The Quality framework and a 4-pages summary can be downloaded in 10 languages on the [WeDO project's website](#).

### **FUND FOR EUROPEAN AID TO THE MOST DEPRIVED**

The European Commission has proposed to set up a Fund to help the most deprived persons in the EU. The Fund would support Member State schemes providing food to the most deprived people and clothing and other essential goods to homeless people and materially-

deprived children. The proposal now goes to the European Parliament and the European Union's Council of Ministers for approval.

Under the proposed Fund Member States can apply for funding to support operational programmes covering the period 2014 to 2020 for schemes providing, through partner organisations, food to the most deprived persons and clothing and other essential goods (such as shoes, soap and shampoo) to the homeless and to materially-deprived children.

The proposal would give considerable flexibility to national authorities to plan and deliver the assistance in line with their national schemes. Detailed criteria to allocate assistance would be the responsibility of Member States, or even partner organisations, as they are best placed to target assistance to local needs. Partner organisations, often non-governmental, would be responsible for delivering the food or goods to the most deprived persons. To meet the Fund's social cohesion objectives, partner organisations would not only have to provide material assistance to the most deprived persons but also undertake basic activities aimed at their social integration. The Fund would also be able to support such accompanying measures. National authorities would be able to use the Fund to either purchase food or goods and make them available to the partner organisations or provide the partner organisations themselves with funding to do so. The proposal also foresees the possibility to use food stored in intervention stocks, if there are any.

For more information visit the [European Commission website](#).

## **EUROPEAN YEAR 2014**

### **Reconciling Work and Family Life**

There is a strong possibility that 2014 will become the European Year for Reconciling Work and Family Life. COFACE and the EY2014 Alliance are currently running a European campaign. 168 MEPs already committed to designate 2014 to be the EU Year for Reconciling Work and Family Life.

The original idea of having 2014 designated as the European Year for Reconciling Work and Family Life comes from COFACE, the Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union.

COFACE is currently coordinating a European Year 2014 Alliance (EY2014). This Alliance is an open, informal co-operation of interested stakeholders that work in the realm of reconciliation issues and are committed to work as well as advocate together for 2014 to be the European Year for Reconciling Work and Family Life.

The European Year of Reconciling Work and Family Life 2014 should seek to achieve the following objectives:

- Raise awareness of reconciliation policies in European and EU Member States level.
- Urging efforts and get new political commitment to respond to current problems affecting families, especially the knock-on effects of the economic and social crises.
- Triggering discourse and disseminate good practices on family and work life reconciliation policies in EU Member States level.
- Assess and promote comprehensive family friendly policies and their subsequent implementation.

A better Work Life balance will make a difference in the quality of life for everyone in our society, including people living with disabilities, elderly and family carers. It will also realise gender equality in practice, create a more motivated and productive workforce, prevent poverty and have a positive impact on child well-being.

For more information visit the [EYF2014 website](#).



## **EUROPEAN YEAR FOR ACTIVE AGEING AND SOLIDARITY BETWEEN GENERATIONS**

At the occasion of the Closing Conference of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012, in Cyprus on 10 December 2012, AGE Platform looked back on the results of the year. They conclude that the European Year has been a key opportunity to raise awareness of the challenges and opportunities beyond the demographic change. The EY2012 Stakeholders Coalition, an informal group of more than 65 partners coordinated by AGE, has been actively campaigning for a better recognition of the contribution of older people in society and for the adoption of measures which enhance their participation, support independent living in old age and promote age diversity in all aspects of society. It has also helped to mobilise a wide range of stakeholders on the need for a comprehensive approach involving actors in many different areas and at all levels.

As the recent Eurobarometer on discrimination in the EU in 2012 reveals, old age is seen a common ground of discrimination by a majority of Europeans, in particular in access to employment (aggravated in times of crisis) and to goods and services. The EY2012 Coalition has been campaigning for the creation of age-friendly environments to support the active contribution of all generations to society, according to their capacities, and allow everyone to develop their full potential. Adapting our environments to our ageing population is essential to avoid wasting our human capital and turn the current demographic ageing into an opportunity for all generations. This requires coordinated governance between the EU, national, regional and local levels around a same vision of a society for all ages.

The EY2012 Coalition calls on the EU to set up an EU Covenant on Demographic Change to provide the necessary political framework to bring together local and regional authorities who want to find smart and innovative solutions to support active and healthy ageing. Now that the European Year is officially coming to an end, the campaign for an EU Covenant on Demographic Change will be carried on using the momentum of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP AHA). On the framework of this Partnership, the EY2012 Coalition Members and an increasing group of partners have committed to keeping on running the campaign to convince the European Commission to launch the proposed Covenant. AGE has also committed to setting up and moderating an EU virtual forum on Age-Friendly Environments (AFE) to link stakeholders (public authorities, NGOs, service providers, industry, researchers) interested in the promotion of AFE at local, regional, national and EU level. This confirms that EY2012 has not just been an awareness raising initiative. The work that has started in 2012 will continue in the years to come with all the interested parties who got mobilized during the EY2012.

For more information, visit the following websites:

[EY2012 Stakeholders Coalition](#), [Eurobarometer on discrimination in the EU in 2012](#), EU [Covenant on Demographic Change](#), [European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing \(EIP AHA\)](#) or [EU virtual forum on Age-Friendly Environments \(AFE\)](#)



### **2012 EESC CIVIL SOCIETY PRIZE**

#### **Rewarding excellence in civil society initiatives**

The Jury of the EESC Civil Society Prize has announced the winners of the 2012 edition, under the theme *'Innovate for a sustainable Europe!'*:

1. [Transition Network](#) (United Kingdom)
2. [CAIS Association](#) (Portugal)

3. [Livstykett](#) (Sweden)

The overall objective of the civil society prize is to reward excellence in civil society initiatives and to celebrate the achievements of civil society organisations which have had the ingenuity to develop projects that have had a positive impact on Europeans' lives, and have significantly contributed to promoting European identity and a sense of citizenship, embodying the common values underpinning the European venture.

The 2012 edition aims to reward innovative initiatives and projects, also on the regional and local level, in the field of sustainable production and/or consumption, and in the social sector. See the [EESC website](#) for more information.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **Newsletter of the Observatory for Social-political Developments in Europe**

The new issue deals with the special topic of support and household service in the European Union. The newsletter contains an introduction about support services and migration of care workers in the EU, the situation of support services all over Europe seen from the perspective of EU Commission, the role of support and household service in the context of job creation in Austria, the consequences of crisis to the Italian system of long term care. The newsletter is available at: <http://www.sociopolitical-observatory.eu/en/newsletter.html>

### **Ageing in the Twenty-First Century: A Celebration and A Challenge**

This report, published jointly by UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and HelpAge International, makes the case for urgent attention to be focused on ageing in developing and emerging economies. After years of being seen only as a concern for developed economies, ageing is on the point of going global. By 2050, nearly 80% of the world's older people will live in emerging and developing economies. The social and economic implications of this phenomenon are profound. The publication calls for new approaches to the way we structure our societies, our workforces and our social and intergenerational relations. It lays out a compelling rationale for investing in healthier, more active and more productive ageing. As countries prepare to chart a course post the 2015 Millennium Development Goals, population ageing and policy responses to the concerns of older people should be at the heart of the process.

The full report and executive summary can be downloaded [here](#).

### **Public Private Partnerships and the economic crisis EPC Issue Paper No.71**

To overcome Europe's deep economic crisis, investment is crucial. But with public finances under severe strain and a limited EU budget, private-sector investment will have to be a key driving force. This report produced by the European Policy Centre – with input from the European Investment Bank and other stakeholders – focuses on analysing stakeholders' perceptions of the role that Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and the just-launched Project Bonds Initiative (PBI) could play in responding to Europe's current challenges.

It shows that there is additional scope to develop PPPs but a number of barriers will have to be overcome, including the need for EU leaders to show leadership if the PBI is to move from the status of an experimental pilot to a sustainable part of the financing mix for Europe's infrastructure needs. But PPPs and the PBI are clearly not the silver bullet that can deliver all the investment needed. This EPC report also calls for the development of new instruments to encourage public-private cooperation and to leverage private investment in order to achieve European objectives.

The Issue Paper can be downloaded from the [EPC website](#).

## **Boosting employment can address demographic change and public deficits EPC Issue Paper No.72**

This Issue Paper confirms that improving employment rates is the best strategy with which countries can prepare for population ageing. Against a background of a fast-increasing number of older people and a shrinking number of people of working age, decisive action to ensure the long-term sustainability of social security systems – and especially pensions – cannot be postponed.

But the results presented in this paper go further: Europe's budgetary situation would be significantly improved by achieving the employment target of the Europe 2020 strategy. The estimates presented in this paper suggest that a staggering €1000 billion by 2020 is at stake.

Of course, raising employment rates is not an easy process, especially in the current economic climate. Frequently, short-term investment from the public purse is required, with labour-market improvements only happening further down the line. But this paper suggests that the short-term public finance argument should not be over-emphasised. The scale of the positive mid-term impact of higher employment on both public budgets and the ageing challenge implies that finance ministries should look at labour-market policy differently: not as a social outlay, but as an investment in the future which will provide significant returns.

The Issue Paper can be downloaded from the [EPC website](#).

## **CONFERENCES**

### **Conferences (February and March 2013)**

Looking for international conferences before or after the months presented in this Newsletter?

Visit [http://www.movisie.nl/119530/eng/home/movisie\\_international/general/calendar/](http://www.movisie.nl/119530/eng/home/movisie_international/general/calendar/) for a complete overview.

#### **04 - 05 February 2013** Dublin, Ireland **Vulnerable families. What can Europe do?**

##### **COFACE**

**E-Mail:** [secretariat@coface-eu.org](mailto:secretariat@coface-eu.org)

**Website:** <http://www.coface-eu.org/en/Events/Vulnerable-families/>

It is not easy to define what makes a family vulnerable, or at risk. In order to focus the conference, three dimensions of vulnerability have been selected. For these three, the conference will explore the causes, the current situation, and most importantly, what needs to be done in the immediate future to prevent further impoverishment and families and children living in unacceptable circumstances:

1. Vulnerability due to ill health, disability and care
2. Extreme vulnerability, families outside of the reach of services
3. Vulnerability due to joblessness and lack of skills

#### **05 - 06 February 2013** Linköping, Sweden **Nordic Conference on Implementation of Evidence-Based Practice** **Linköping University**

**E-Mail:** [kerstin.robäck@liu.se](mailto:kerstin.robäck@liu.se)

**Website:** <http://www.imh.liu.se/implementering-och-larande/nordic-conference?l=sv>

Implementation of scientific knowledge is seen as a response to growing demands for enhanced quality of professional practice in several fields. Translating evidence and research

findings into practice, however, often presents considerable challenges which has led to increasing interest in implementation research. Hopefully different research traditions and disciplines – implementation science, improvement science, policy implementation and evidence-based health care, mental care, social care and education – will unite and that discussions will stimulate creative thinking and learning on the implementation of evidence-based practice.

**06 - 08 February 2013** Dublin, Ireland

**Making diversity work for cities**

**Council of Europe**

**Website:** [http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en/events/details.cfm?ID\\_ITEMS=30463](http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en/events/details.cfm?ID_ITEMS=30463)

Over 60 cities in Europe and beyond have joined the Intercultural cities programme and pursue the diversity advantage. At the Dublin event these cities will share their experience and learning:

- What does diversity advantage mean in practice and how can different kinds of urban policies be shaped through the intercultural lens?
- What intercultural strategies have cities adopted? How have they managed to build broad local partnerships to ensure grassroots involvement, transversality and sustainability? What challenges are they facing and how are they dealing with them?
- How can cities demonstrate the reality of diversity advantage? Is the concept supported by research evidence? How can the results be assessed?

**14 - 15 February 2013** Dublin, Ireland

**Foundation Forum 2013 - Social and employment policies for a fair and competitive Europe**

**Eurofound**

**Website:** <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/events/2013/forum2013/index.htm>

The Foundation Forum, which takes place every four years in Dublin, is Eurofound's 'flagship' event. It is designed to provide a high-level forum for debate and discussion of key social policy issues facing Member States. The Forum brings together leading decision-makers and opinion-formers, together with academic experts, in a neutral setting to promote the exchange of new ideas and experiences on subjects of policy relevance and within the Foundation's competence.

The fifth edition of the Forum will be dedicated to the theme of 'Social and employment policies for a fair and competitive Europe'.

**20 - 21 February 2013** Dublin, Ireland

**8th Forum of the World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty**

**World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty (WACAP)**

**E-Mail:** [2013@conferencepartners.ie](mailto:2013@conferencepartners.ie)

**Website:** <http://www.dublin2013.com/>

Global Stories will form an integral part of the Forum. A Global Story constitutes any action that has been undertaken on a local, regional or global scale that illustrate how an organisation has used technology in the urban setting to tackle issues of poverty, safety and sustainability. These Global Stories (case studies) will allow planners, amongst others, to showcase products, programmes, projects, policies and partnerships which demonstrate the role of technology in responding to the urban challenges of poverty, safety and sustainability. Once submitted, the Global Story will be published on the Forum's website.

**21 - 22 February 2013** Strasbourg, France

**Poverty and Inequality in Societies of Human Rights: the paradox of democracies - Proposals for an inclusive society**

**Council of Europe**

**E-Mail:** [Thomas.PAVAN-WOOLFE@coe.int](mailto:Thomas.PAVAN-WOOLFE@coe.int)

**Website:** <http://rights-poverty.eu/conference/>

The Conference aims to analyse phenomena through the prism of Human Rights and Democracy. It will also explore paths for a renewed strategy to fight poverty and inequalities based on Common Goods and the sharing of social responsibilities, whilst avoiding waste. Participants are expected to analyze the current situation and identify problems / obstacles to combating poverty and inequalities (limits of legal and democratic mechanisms to ensure the voices of people living in poverty are taken into account, changes in redistribution policies, etc.); to formulate concrete proposals to progress in the fight against poverty, taking into account the need to include the voice of each person, to better utilize and share resources in order to avoid waste and ensure a more equal access to them, in a perspective of well-being for all; and to exchange and share experiences, knowledge and practices to implement innovative actions to fight against poverty and inequalities, based on the concepts of common goods, shared responsibility and avoiding wasted resources.

**20 - 22 March 2013** Jyväskylä, Finland

**ECSWR 2013 - 3rd European Conference for Social Work Research**

**University of Jyväskylä**

**E-Mail:** [ecswr2013@jyu.fi](mailto:ecswr2013@jyu.fi)

**Website:** [www.jyu.fi/ecswr2013](http://www.jyu.fi/ecswr2013)

The main theme of the conference is transforming welfare policies, social work and social care practices with the aim to analyse both ongoing changes in welfare policies and their societal and human consequences on all levels in various parts of Europe and elsewhere. Welfare states are going through substantial processes of change all over the world. Retrenchment, privatization and outsourcing have characterized the development of the last two decades, transforming the institutional design of welfare policies and leading to reduced public responsibility over well-being of individuals and families. The changes have had considerable effects on professional practices as well as on everyday lives and social rights of citizens, bringing increased wealth, but also inequality, marginalization and poverty.

## COLOPHON

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Contributions on social welfare from all sectors of the international community are welcome:

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