



Europe

ICSW EUROPE NEWSLETTER
Spring 2015

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A Message from the President

Nowadays we are living in Europe confronted with the question of peaceful coexistence that we have, probably prematurely, considered rather for the problem of our parents. Social differences are growing inside the countries but also between the countries themselves despite the fact that European idea relies on the principle of social and economic cohesion. European Union is not successful in filling a social part of its programme set for the year 2020. Member countries do not meet their aims at fight against poverty and unemployment decrease as a tool for meeting a sustainably respectable life.

That is the reason why it is inevitable to remind European governments their commitment given in Geneva in 2012 in connection with recommendation acceptance ILO N° 202 to Social Protection Floor. It is necessary to realize once again that despite the fact of being different we can not think that the difference is without solidarity. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen accepted by France's National Constituent Assembly in 1789 "accepts and declares at the presence and under the protector of the Highest Being that men are born and remain free and equal in rights and social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good". Market economy, private property and differences yes, but not to the detriment of the whole. We have a number of problems and shame in

our hearts and cities that needed to be solved in favour of the society and respectable life of everybody.

Society exists on a principle of triple solidarity agreement. The first such an "agreement" is a deal between generations. Those ones who are currently working keep older and younger people alive. This obligation forms a huge intergenerational transfer accepted as reality. Further, also a private pension system is dependent on what a new generation will produce. Private pension funds behave themselves exactly as the systems of continuous financing and with the risk of full risk transferring on population economically not active any more which means loss of solidarity. Without existence of intergenerational agreement a cycle will be stopped. Without a new generation the life will discontinue.

The second "contract" has been concluded between classes. Coexistence of various social classes is enabled by transfers from richer to poorer groups of the population. Progressive tax used in Europe is the evidence of it. Why must the richer ones renounce the part of their profit? Should everybody not have an equal tax?

The third "contract" is a regional agreement between individual territories. In every country there are richer and poorer regions but they do not accept it as the state of everlasting and natural situation. There exists Europe-wide consensus of help to poorer countries and regions through financial transfers. Without territorial cohesion Europe stability and unity of its countries will be unthinkable.

The mentioned three contracts represent European way of life. European democracy is the result of a wide agreement between capital and work which lies on economy acceptance that is built on private initiative and social state. The social state is redistributive at all here mentioned contracts. Currently, development in shift of many tasks in the field of redistribution towards Europe-wide institutions within the process of Europe unification is running.

Social welfare is not possible without the existence of human rights. Social protection is their unavoidable part. Sense and nature of life is a theme that can give us the answer to the most difficult but also common problems, challenges and questions of today. Seeking an answer why we are not happy despite the fact that we are striving for it must be in looking for understanding the human rights.

Measure of wealth, fortune and success was and still is understood differently in western cultures. Our gross domestic production increase used as an indicator of prosperity proved to be malign in the course of current financial crisis. Greediness and complete egoism brought crisis into our societies. International financial organisations after crisis outbreak suddenly admitted the necessity of measuring fortune and not only through material wealth. Definition about the fact that "increase" and constant economic increase will solve our ailments proved as a false way. In a new strategy itself *Europe 2020* references to *increase* are counted 82 times but a reference to *sustainably respectable life* is not present at all. Sustainable economic increase is a logical nonsens. Nothing can be eternal, nothing

grows permanently, raw materials are not renewable as we can see it in the case of oil, coal, etc. The Globe has its restricted area and endless number of people will not be able to fit in it. Coal as well as oil and other renewable resources will be once definitively exhausted. Exploitation of merely these resources and the use of existing accesses is not permanently sustainable energetic solution.

Authority and ICSW mission concern the activity of people in interactivity with their environment (surroundings). The environment includes a number of social systems in which the people are involved in the natural geographical environment having fundamental influence on people's life. Participative methodology which is supported at our work is reflected in involving the people and organisations into solving the life problems or life improvement. If possible, ICSW works more *with* people rather than only *for* people.

ICSW is successful at extending of its unique membership. We welcome a new member from the Czech Republic enjoying full rights. The Czech Republic historically belonged to important partakers of ICSW. We support the activities of our members in the form of expert meetings also in the year 2015. We presuppose an important contribution from the meeting dedicated to social issues of migrants in Spain. ICSW is present and active at international European events and continues in its activities within European Union, The European Council, UNO and elsewhere. In summer 2015 we are going to

evaluate our activity to the questions of social investing at a common meeting in Helsinki. ICSW will continue in increasing its

visibility and improving audibility of its voice in the cooperation with its members and in cooperation with all main players.

(Miloslav Hettes, ICSW Europe President)

sphere of: debts, social benefits, family law, housing, social pension.

(Hynek Kalvoda, Association of Citizens Advice Centres, Czech Republic)

New ICSW Europe Member

Association of Citizens Advice Centres is an umbrella organisation for membership organisations, namely particular membership organisations in 13 regions of the Czech Republic (the Czech Republic is divided into fourteen regions) but membership citizens advice centres provide their services in 68 places of the Czech Republic (in former districts of the Czech Republic) because citizens advice centres would like to provide their service to be near people. All membership citizens advice centres (members of ACAC) have unique methodology of work with clients and a common database of law information which can be used with social work with clients. All membership citizens advice centres use a unique system of training citizen advisers and ACAC help them with fundraising and PR. Main ACAC projects are concentrated on debt advising and help to criminal law victims. In these projects some citizens advice centres (about twenty of them) have jointed. All membership citizens advice centres of ACAC network have solved about 43,000 unique clients and about 73,000 unique inquiries. Citizens advice centres have solved most inquiries in the

ICSW Europe Support of Member Activities 2015

ICSW Europe supports specific activities organized by a national committee. These activities are focused on a specific theme related to the Work Program of ICSW Europe 2013-2016 updated in the GA Bratislava in June 2014 and aims to deepen knowledge and create ideas on how to work for changes. The activities can include participants and experts from several European countries.

For getting the support from ICSW Europe its members should have submitted their plans to the President in writing. The plan should have included a description of the theme, dates and place, eventual experts to be invited, the possibilities and costs for participants with a total budget included.

Deadline for applications for 2015 was 25th January, 2015 and the ICSW Europe Board decided within one month after the deadline.

Three applications for 2015 fulfilled the criteria for ICSW Europe support and will be processed.

Denmark

A **conference** is going to be organized at Metropolitan University College in Copenhagen, Denmark in October 2015.

The theme of the conference will be Human rights, Social Protection Floor and Citizenship.

The conference is a follow up on the conference on “Human rights, Citizenship, Radicalization & Working Poor” in Copenhagen March 7th, 2014 and the latest journal on Economic & Social Rights in Europe (*Social Politik* 6, 2014).

The conference will elaborate on how to assure, empower and strengthen the agendas regarding participation, in collaboration with the service users and other stakeholders. Key speakers will be representatives from research, practise service user organisations and The Danish Institute for Human Rights.

Switzerland

(in cooperation with Austria and Germany)

ICSW Switzerland will organize an **expert meeting** in Basel (Switzerland) on November 9th – 10th, 2015. The meeting will be organized by SKOS, Deutscher Verein and ÖKSA.

The theme of the seminar is “Minimum income schemes – development, challenges, consequences. A Comparative Perspective.”

The regional ICSW expert meeting will be focalized first on political, economic and social developments and their impact on the minimum income schemes in the different

countries, and second on the analysis of poverty reduction strategies and the role of minimum income schemes in them.

Georgia

(in cooperation with Lithuania and Slovakia)

An **expert meeting** is planned to be organized in Tbilisi, Georgia in October 2015.

The theme of the seminar will be “Social protection floors as investment in Central and Eastern Europe.”

In the seminar ICSW Europe conclusions on guaranteed social protection in Rennes in reality of the Central, South-Eastern Europe (Balkans) and Caucasus States local development will be followed up. Main speakers from Georgia, Lithuania and Slovakia will introduce and evaluate in plenary and working groups possibilities of the region. Other speakers will have possibilities to take the floor and share with their experience, proposals and amendments.

Experts, lobbyists and advocacy groups from the region will evaluate possibilities and approaches in promotion of the social cohesion and inclusive growth.

Social work according to the new global definition is practice-based profession discipline that promotes social development and social cohesion. Organizers prepare broader scope event not only for social workers. Main stakeholders, activists from NGOs, potential ICSW members, academicians, advocacy groups, and politicians will be invited. International

gathering allows knowledge exchange and examples of good practice.

ICSW Europe experts will meet local members and potential regional members.

ICSW Europe Events

Nordic ICSW meeting in Copenhagen February 6th, 2015

Representatives from the Nordic members of ICSW with the participation of Heikki Parviainen from Finland, Eva Holmberg-Herrström and Leif Öberg from Sweden, Njål Petter Svensson and Solveig Askjem from Norway, Annelise Murakami, Bjørn Christensen and Allan Bærentzen from Denmark took part in a meeting and working seminar on ICSW activities and the ICSW community.

The Nordic ICSW collaboration

The participants discussed previous, current and future Nordic ICSW collaboration.

The discussion brought a broad agreement that the Nordic collaboration and knowledge sharing is of outmost importance to the ICSW work. For the future the Nordic ICSW members will meet once a year to plan and coordinate their mutual activities.

The following activities have been discussed and are taking place throughout 2015:



Norway

- Knowledge Database on Social Work;
- Collaboration between Nordic Trade Unions and Practitioners;
- Nordic seminar on collaboration between Social services and Child welfare protection;
- Care services – an expert seminar (to be held in Norway).



Sweden

- A study of Effects of public procurement on the public sector in collaboration with the other Nordic countries. A seminar is planned to take place in 2015.



Finland

- Heikki Parviainen (Finnish Society for Social and Health) presented the updated information about the event in Finland – an ICSW expert meeting/smaller event will be organized instead of a conference. Finnish ICSW Board suggests that the event could be held in June in association with the General Assembly.



Denmark

Forthcoming activities in ICSW Denmark:

- As a follow up from the Conference (in March 2015) on Human Rights, Social Protection Floor, Citizenship and Radicalization and the Journal on Social and Economic Rights (December issue),

ICSW Denmark is planning a Conference on Citizenship, Human Rights and Social Protection Floor in the autumn 2015.

The four participating Nordic countries agreed to continue the collaboration on ICSW related activities and all of them will see how they could contribute and gain from such an ongoing collaboration.

(Annelise Murakami, ICSW Europe Board Member)

Social Platform

On December 16th, 2014 the Social Platform's steering group adopted the position paper on the financing of social services which can be downloaded [here](#).

As reported in the former ICSW Europe Newsletter Winter 2014, Anke Boeckenhoff (Policy Officer, German Association for Public and Private Welfare, ICSW Germany) participated on behalf of ICSW Europe in the Task Force on Financing of Social Services that developed this position paper.

The paper's three key messages are:

"1. No matter whom the provider is or the source of funding used (public or private), member states must retain responsibility for setting the legislative, regulatory and financial frameworks for social services policy to ensure that a profit-making logic does not prevail over the general interest enshrined in the mission of these services. Provision of services must respect users' human rights and guarantee a high level of quality.

2. Public budgets must ensure adequate financial support for the provision of social services, as this represents an effective investment for and an essential element of cohesive and resilient societies. Sources of private funding can complement public budgets especially in the countries hit hardest by the economic crisis. When private funders are involved, public authorities must ensure that donors and investors act in the general interest and that private financing is subject to high transparency requirements.

3. When funders, institutions, donors or investors request social impact measurement of a specific service from applicants, it should be possible to choose among existing methodologies and tools to find a measurement technique best suited to the specific service to be funded."

(Anke Boeckenhoff, Policy Officer, German Association for Public and Private Welfare, ICSW Germany)

Following the Work Programme for 2015 Social Platform will use various methods to implement their programme. Among them Task forces are one of the methods. Social Platform believes in participatory democracy and ensures that its positions reflect the contributions of its 49 members, which themselves represent more than 3,000 Civil Society Organisations (CSO) at national level in all 28 member states. Social Platform therefore sets up task forces with the following role:

- a) Organising meetings and visible events between EU institutions officials and their members.
- b) Facilitating dialogue among members to develop common positions on the Social Platform-led actions as well as on contributions to EU policies.

c) Providing information and critical analysis of EU policies relevant for the implementation of their work programme.

d) Discussing the dissemination of their joint work to the EU institutions, national CSOs and citizens through their communications tools.

There will be six task forces in 2015: on access to services, on the EU Social Standards, on the EU internal Human Rights Strategy, on Civil Dialogue, on EU Governance, and on EU structural funds.

(from Social Platform Work Programme adopted by the Social Platform Steering Group – October 7th, 2014)

International Free Trade Agreements and Social Services

Since July 2013, the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (USA) have been negotiating a free trade agreement which would include the movement of both goods and services (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, TTIP). The negotiations are aimed to be concluded by the end of 2015. At the same time, the EU is negotiating a multilateral trade agreement for services (Trade in Services Agreement, TiSA) within a group of states outside of the World Trade Organisation (Really Good Friends of Service, RGFS states). The bilateral negotiations between the EU and Canada regarding a free trade agreement (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, CETA) have ended.

The clearance decision regarding the CETA is still pending. The TTIP, TiSA and CETA differ in scope and detail, but the negotiations have to be seen as an interrelated process.

The TTIP, CETA and TiSA should implement growth impulses through the reduction of customs duties as well as non-tariff trade restrictions. A study carried out on behalf of the German Federal Government predicts an additional per capita GDP increase in the EU of 5% within 20 years through the TTIP alone. In the same time period, this should generate up to 400,000 (100,000 in Germany) new jobs in the EU. By creating an economic area with around 800 million people as well as 50% of the global economic performance, in particular the TTIP promises a positive influence on the worldwide trade system. The EU Commission and the German Federal Government emphasise the possibility to define high qualitative standards and to motivate other states to do the same.

However, there is no reliable information to what scope the free trade agreements will have. The negotiations up to this point have been characterised by a lack of transparency. Citizens fear that their interests have not been sufficiently considered. It is unclear which – also indirect – effects the free trade agreements will have.

(from the document: Opinion of the German Association for Public and Private Welfare on International Free Trade Agreements and Social Services, 2014 : http://www.deutscher-verein.de/05-empfehlungen/empfehlungen_archiv/2014/DV-22-14-Free-Trade-Agreements-and-Social-Services_en)

ICSW Germany's position on free trade agreements and social services

ICSW Germany (German Association for Public and Private Welfare) responded to current negotiations on international free trade agreements, notably the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (USA). The

agreements aim at growth impulses for the national economies through the reduction of customs duties as well as non-tariff trade restrictions. ICSW Germany calls for these international free trade agreements to have a full-scale exemption for social services. Legal provisions and regulations regarding the quality of social services must not be interpreted as restrictions on trade. The organisation of the welfare state within the EU Member States and the responsibility of the Member States for social and public services must not be undermined by free trade agreements.

(Britta Spilker, ICSW Europe Board Member)

Conferences/Expert Meetings



International expert seminar:

“Migrants and Social Protection Floors. Facilities and obstacles to access to different Welfare State services in time of crisis.”

Date: April 23rd – April 24th, 2015

Venue: Room García Polavieja, Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Alberto Aguilera, 23, 28015 Madrid (Spain)

Programme:

Thursday April 23rd, 2015

Session I – Social Protection Floors and Migration

Chair: Miguel Angel Cabra de Luna

9:00 – 9:30

Miguel Angel Cabra de Luna, President of ICSW Spain; Miloslav Hettes, President of ICSW Region Europe

Opening words: Mercedes Fernández, Director of University Institute on Migrations Studies, Comillas Pontifical University

9:30 – 10:45

Mr Ioannis Dimitrakopoulos, Head of our Equality and Citizens' Rights Department, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (to be confirmed)

10:45-11:15 Coffee break

11:15 – 13:00

Thomas Bjark, Swedish ICSW; Annelise Murakami, Member of Executive Committee, Denmark; Angelè Cepenaite, Member of Executive Committee, Lithuania; Jean-Michel Hôte, Treasurer, France

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch break

14:00 – 15:30

Ana Lima, President of General Council of Social Work, Spain; Britta Spilker, Member of Executive Committee, Germany; Paolo Boccagni, University of Milan, Italy

15:30-16:00 Coffee break

16:00-17:30

Miloslav Hettes, President of ICSW Region Europe, Slovakia; Sónia Pires y Maria Hortas, MIGRARE, from IGOT, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal; Eva Holmberg-Herrström, ICSW Member of Management Committee, Sweden; Njål Petter Svensson, ICSW Norway

17:30-18:30

Final discussion and *Closing Remarks*

Friday April 24th, 2015

9:00 – 10:45

“Preparing SPF and Migration Research Project” (Migration Experts and ICSW Europe Board)

10:45 – 11:15 Coffee break

11:15- 13:00

ICSW Europe Board Meeting (First Part)

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

15:00 – 17:00

ICSW Europe Board Meeting (Second and final part)

ICSW Helsinki **Expert Seminar** on Social Investments joined with ICSW Europe General Assembly.

Date: **June 9th – 10th, 2015**

Venue: Helsinki (Finland) – to be specified

Programme:

Tuesday June 9th, 2015

9:30 Registration

10:00 – 11:45

Opening Plenaries (Themes/speakers to be specified)

11:45-12:45 Lunch

12:45 -14:00

Plenaries: Social Platform

Discussion

Short Break

14:15-16:00

International Social Policy Afternoon (joint event with Finnish Social Policy Association)

Social Investments

Social Protection

Coffee

16:15-18:00

ICSW Europe Current Workshop

Current themes (1-2 prepared presentations)

Wednesday June 10th, 2015

8:30-11:30 ICSW Europe General Assembly

Conference: “Social Work Education in Europe: towards 2025”

Date: **29th June - 2nd July, 2015**

Venue: Bicocca University **Milan** (Italy)

Miloslav Hettes (President ICSW Europe) will be in the position of a member of the *Honorary Committee* of the EASSW European conference.

more information about the conference on:

<http://www.eassw.org/2015/>

Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe organizes two sessions a year – the next session is planned on **June 22th – 25th, 2015**. Thomas Goldberg (Sweden) will be present on behalf of ICSW Europe.

The conference of INGOs took place on Thursday 29th January, 2015 in Strasbourg. Gérard Schaefer (France) participated in the event.

Useful Links

ICSW Europe Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/icsw.europe>

Social Platform – Position Paper on Financing of Social Services:

http://www.socialplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/20141216_SocialPlatform_PositionPaper_financing-of-social-services.pdf

Opinion of the German Association for Public and Private Welfare on International Free Trade Agreements and Social Services, 2014 – full document:

http://www.deutscher-verein.de/05-empfehlungen/empfehlungen_archiv/2014/DV-22-14-Free-Trade-Agreements-and-Social-Services_en

“Social Work Education in Europe: towards 2025” conference:

<http://www.eassw.org/2015/>

Colophon

The Newsletter of ICSW European Region is published quarterly. Material may be freely reproduced or cited provided the source is acknowledged. Contributions on social welfare from all sectors of the international community are welcome.

Contributions and comments can be sent to:

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