



**ICSW EUROPE NEWSLETTER**  
**Spring 2019**

ISSN 2411-9709

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## A Message from the President

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of May I attended the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Council of Europe (CoE) at the Finlandia Hall, in Helsinki. The President of Finland, Mr *Sauli Niinisto*, opened the event and reminded us all of the pan-European core values: Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law. These were, are, and will be the foundations of the European identity and societies. CoE membership covers 47 countries, together 830 million people. Unfortunately, these foundations seem to be questioned by some Member States and some new political movements. One reason might be that there are people and groups that feel that they have been “left behind”.

These core values are the corner stones of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the European Social Charter (ESC) both of which are CoE legal treaties. The ECHR guarantees civil and political rights and the ESC guarantees fundamental social and economic rights. They constitute also the reference point of EU legislation that applies in 28 countries of Europe. However, the big difference is that the CoE, unlike the EU, has also juridical mechanisms to enforce the human and social rights.

The European (Union) Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) is much narrower than the Social Charter. It is also only a recommendation. ICSW has been supporting the idea that EU Social Pillar should broaden its scope beyond the current, largely labor market focused-approach. However, many EU member states do not want deep EU level regulation in social affairs because the social policy systems are so different around the EU.

So, the European Pillar of Social Rights cannot be implemented by a legal approach. Therefore we need a political approach. This is where the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) such as ICSW are key players.

Next, there is one example:

In a few month's time, on 16-17 September the EU's NGO coalition, Social Platform (SP) will have its second Flagship “Social Europe” Conference to monitor the European Pillar of Social Rights in Helsinki, Finland.



It takes place during the Finnish EU Presidency. ICSW has been instrumental in facilitating the partnership between Social Platform and the Finnish Government. The result has been that the Social Europe conference

takes place just before some high level EU meetings and some joint activities (CSO and government representatives) are planned. The Finnish partner in organizing this “Social Europe” Conference with SP is Finnish Federation for Social Sector and Health (SOSTE) that is the Finnish ICSW Europe member and host of the Finnish ICSW Committee.

Furthermore, we helped to build bridges between the Social Platform agenda and the main (social) theme of the Finnish Government: “Well-being economy – making the economy work for people”. Finland wants to concretize the social dimension of the EU but, at the same time, “respecting Member States’ competence in social policy”.

Comprehensive social policies – the core of ICSW – are the instruments to make human and social rights real for all people. We are needed in ‘putting people first’ and putting economy to its servant position, not the other way around, as it tends to be in many contexts.

Furthermore, climate change and other environmental concerns are part and parcel of policies based on social values. New risks are there but “leave no one behind”. ICSW is needed to promote the balance of social and economic considerations in the context of environmental constraints – while ensuring that the anchor, the *ethical values*, hold. A “sustainable future report” should have four main chapters: First ethical sustainability, then the social, then the environmental and last (but not insignificant) the economic. This order would certainly result in a different report than those that start with the economy.

On Friday the 14<sup>th</sup> of June we have our General Assembly in Chisinau, Moldova at the kind invitation of our Moldavian member, the Project Casa Mare and partners. On **Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup> of June** we will have

Seminar. There we will discuss our strategic orientation and build the base for the next work program until 2024.

Looking forward to meeting in **Chisinau, Moldova**, a member of the Council of Europe since 13 July 1995.

*(Ronald Wiman, ICSW Europe President)*

## ICSW Europe Events in Moldova



These days ICSW Europe is concentrating on preparations of important annual events – the **General Assembly** and a **Strategic Seminar** (Capacity Building Seminar). ICSW Europe members and Board members will gather in the **Republic of Moldova** in its capital city **Chisinau**. The General Assembly meeting will take place at the Free International University of Moldova (ULIM) (<http://cci.ulim.md/about-ulim-515>).

A time plan for different meetings is as follows:

**June 12 (Wednesday):** A substantive event

**June 13 (Thursday):** Strategic Seminar

**June 14 (Friday):** ICSW Europe General Assembly

**June 15 (Saturday):** Social program

The events will be organised in the cooperation with ICSW Europe member Project Casa Mare.



*(ICSW Europe Editor)*

## ICSW Europe Members



Europe Information  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

### Future of Europe Publication Stimulates Debate on Social and Health Issues at EU Level

The European Union is faced with an exceptional year: in addition to the European Parliament elections and the start of a new Commission, Great Britain, one of the biggest member states, might leave the Union in near future. For Finland, this year is particularly interesting, as from July till the end of the year, Finland will be the President of the Union, only a few months after the Finnish Parliamentary Election and under the leadership of the new government.

SOSTE Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health and Finnish Anti-Poverty Network EAPN-Fin have published online publication [Future of Europe – Reforming the policies of the European Union](#). The purpose of this collection of articles is to stimulate debate on social and health issues at EU level and activate advocacy activities.

Social and health NGOs wish to put the wellbeing economy in the centre of the EU discussion. The actions of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health during this year's Presidency fall under the wellbeing economy theme. Social and health NGOs hope that the discussion on social Europe and the wellbeing economy will continue and grow.

"The wellbeing economy should be the starting point of the future strategy. It means that increase in individual resources and participation of people will be emphasised; fortifying the basic elements of wellbeing and good life. The civil society is a major player in the wellbeing economy, and the strengthening thereof should hold a key place in the strategy", says SOSTE's Chief Economist *Jussi Ahokas*.

*(source: <https://www.soste.fi/uutinen/future-of-europe-publication-stimulate-debate-on-social-and-health-issues-at-eu-level/>)*

Read the online publication [Future of Europe](#).

## ICSW Sweden

ICSW Sweden's annual meeting, which was held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2019 started with a presentation by Axel Ågren, who is a PhD student at Linköping University. Information about the event (in Swedish): <http://www.icsw.se/2019/04/arsmote-2019/>



In the presentation Ågren focused on his findings from studying how loneliness among older people is constructed in the Swedish news-press. In one study focus has been on how loneliness is described, given meaning, which societal contexts are related to loneliness and types of media contexts which writes about loneliness. The timeframe studied was 2013-2014.

Ågren has reached the following conclusions:

- Focus in the news articles were on elder care and the need for more resources and political change to improve this sector.
- Volunteer work was also addressed in Swedish newspapers. However, focus was mainly on the volunteer and the volunteer organisations, and not older people participating in the activities.
- Loneliness was primarily written about in local newspapers where the author was a local politician, person from the civil-society or journalists.
- There was, seemingly, taken-for-granted understandings of loneliness as a *problem that needs to be solved*. Thus, little space was used to elaborate what loneliness is, as focus was on how to reduce loneliness.

In another study by Ågren and Cedersund has analysed how responsibility to reduce loneliness is designated in the Swedish news-press. The study had a detailed focus on articles from October 2016.

The main findings were the following:

- The designation of responsibility, in Swedish newspapers, was mainly addressed within the contexts of politics and the welfare state, where politicians, municipalities and care-units both admitted to not doing enough and simultaneously emphasising on all efforts done to reduce loneliness.
- Several in-depth articles focused on how societal and evolutionary leads to loneliness. Both these types of developments were considered to be beyond the control of older people. However, when the need to reduce loneliness was discussed, it was “we” in “society” who should perform activities to reduce loneliness. Thus, a “us” and “them” was created, where older people are the recipients of activities carried out by “us”.
- In one article senior-organisations efforts was addressed. In the article, an old woman described that she participated in activities in order to “get out” and reduce her own loneliness. Thus, both the senior-organisation and the old woman were described actors with abilities to reduce loneliness among old people.

Axel Ågren has published a licentiate thesis and two articles published in international scientific journals. Links:

Ågren, A (2018). Loneliness among older people in the Swedish media: Constructions, discourses and the designation of responsibility. Licentiate thesis. Linköping University. Link: <http://liu.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1270421&dswid=-4978>

Ågren, Axel. (2017). What are we talking about? Constructions of loneliness among older people in the Swedish news-press. *Journal of Aging Studies*, vol 41, April 2017, pp.18-27. Link: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S089040651630408X> (not open access. May be sent personally upon request to Axel Ågren).

Ågren, A., Cedersund, E. (2018). Reducing loneliness among older people – who is responsible?. *Ageing & Society*. Firstview. Link: <http://liu.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1270417&dswid=-2753>

(source: Axel Ågren – ICSW Sweden;  
photo: <http://www.icsw.se/2019/04/arsmote-2019/>)

## Social Platform's General Assembly

At its annual **General Assembly** meeting on **4<sup>th</sup> April 2019**, Social Platform members gathered to network and think collectively on the development of political priorities in Europe. Members also held a series of important votes, including the election of new member – the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) and the appointment of its new Management Committee.

The Social Platform new Management Committee will lead the 49-member network during the 2019-2021 period:

- President – Piotr Sadowski** (Volonteuropé)  
**Vice-President – Catherine Naughton** (European Disability Forum)  
**Vice-President – Maciej Kucharczyk** (AGE Platform Europe)  
**Treasurer – Heather Roy** (Eurodiaconia)  
**Ordinary Member – Michele LeVoy** (Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants)  
**Ordinary Member – Shannon Pfohman** (Caritas Europa)  
**Ordinary Member – Leo Williams** (European Anti-Poverty Network)

The elections marked the end of mandate for former President *Jana Hainsworth* (Eurochild) and former Treasurer *Jorge Nuño Mayer* (Caritas Europa), who oversaw the adoption of Social Platform's 2018 accounts.

Director *Kélig Puyet* conveyed the General Assembly's thanks to Ms *Hainsworth*, remarking on her perseverance being instrumental in advancing the EU's social agenda and securing Social Platform's place among high-profile EU influencers.

(source: Social Platform: <https://www.socialplatform.org/news/strong-leadership-in-uncertain-times-social-platform-general-assembly-elects-new-management-committee/>)

## General Survey concerning the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)



The Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations has just published its annual General Survey on member States' national law and practice concerning social protection floors.

The Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations publishes annually an in-depth General Survey on member States' national law and practice, on a subject chosen by the Governing Body. This year the **General Survey focuses on social protection floors**.

General surveys are established mainly on the basis of reports received from member States and information transmitted by employers' and workers' organizations. They allow the Committee of Experts to examine the impact of Conventions and Recommendations, to analyse the difficulties indicated by governments as impeding their application or their ratification, and to identify means of overcoming these obstacles.

A complete document is available for downloading at: [https://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/108/reports/reports-to-the-conference/WCMS\\_673680/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/108/reports/reports-to-the-conference/WCMS_673680/lang--en/index.htm)

(source: International Labour Organization [https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/WCMS\\_673942/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/WCMS_673942/lang--en/index.htm))

## Age Platform Europe



### Age Platform Europe and the “Open Ended Working Group on Ageing” (OEWG-A): **Older People’s Human Rights at United Nations**

The UN OEWG-A was created by a Resolution of the UN General Assembly on 21 December 2010.

It is a **consultative instrument**. Its mandate is to “consider the existing international framework of the human rights of older persons and identify gaps and how to address them, including by considering as appropriate the feasibility of further instruments and measures” such as a new International Convention on the human rights of older people in the manner of the already existing “UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability” (UNCRPD), passed on the 13 December 2006 by the UN GA (with effect on May 2008).

It meets once a year in New York and it gathers Member States’ representatives, UN agencies (such as WHO, ILO in the social sector), national human rights Institutions (NHRIs) and accredited civil society organizations.

The **10 th Session** took place from **15 to 18 April**. This year’s session focused on **Social Protection and Social Security** on the one hand and on **Education, training and life-long learning** on the other hand, and how older people can experience obstacles in accessing those fundamental rights because of their age.

Reminder :

The two chosen topics for **2017** were: equality and non-discrimination; freedom from violence, abuse and neglect; and for **2018**: autonomy and independence; long term care and palliative care.

In 2019, **Age Platform Europe** organized a **side event** jointly with the European Union, Help Age International and WHO.

The day before, a preparatory meeting was managed by **GAROP**, “the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older people”. GAROP has been established in 2011 as a network of over 200 members worldwide thanks to the collaboration of **nine international organizations**: The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse; ILC Global Alliance (International Longevity Centers); IFA (International Federation on Ageing); IAHSA (International Association of Homes and Services for the Ageing); IAGG (International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics); Help Age International; Age Platform Europe; AGE UK (member of AGE Platform Europe); AARP (initially, American Association of Retired Persons).

In its final statement, Age Platform Europe considers that a common feeling was shared by participants of “*hope and frustration, progress and stalemate*”, “*something is moving but stronger political commitment is now urgent*”.

From an EU point of view, Age Platform Europe underlines that the 28 EU Members remain divided. That division is related to the appropriateness of a specific Convention as a new “international binding instrument”. Some member states, as a prerequisite, are asking for clarification about the effectiveness of the existing Conventions.

The question remains open on the adequacy of the “UNCRPD” to the situation of older persons when they become disabled.

The UNCRPD has been ratified by the EU in 2011 while all EU Members were progressively doing so.

The “Special Rapporteur” of the UNCRPD has recently launched a consultation on the specific topic of the **rights of older persons with disabilities** in view of a report to be submitted to the UN GA in September 2019.

You will find useful materials such as preparatory documents of the 10<sup>th</sup> session, contribution to the 2019 consultation and statements and analyses of AGE on: <https://www.age-platform.eu/> and interesting inputs from many UN Member States and Civil Society Organizations on the website of the UN: <https://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/> where is the access to the 10<sup>th</sup> session and to the previous ones. Some videos are also available.

(Jean-Michel Hôte, ICSW Europe Vice-President)

## Council of Europe



CONFERENCE OF INGOs  
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

The Conference of INGOs is the representative body of the INGOs holding participatory status.

The sessions of the Conference of INGOs last a week and are held twice a year in Strasbourg.



This year's **Spring session** of the Conference of INGOS was held on **April 10<sup>th</sup> 2019** with the following agenda (*abridged*):

1. Opening of the meeting by *Anna Rurka*, President of the Conference of INGOs;
2. Designation of the rapporteur of the meeting;
3. Agenda: for adoption;
4. Synopsis of the meeting of 29 June 2018: for adoption;
5. Presentation of the 2018 Annual Activity Report of the Conference of INGOs;
6. Presentation of the new Code of Conduct of the Conference of INGOs;
7. Recommendation of the Conference of INGOs on the Right to decent housing for all, presented by the Human Rights Committee;
8. Recommendation of the Conference of INGOs on student poverty, presented by the Education and Culture Committee;
9. Presentation of the Youth Delegates of the Conference of INGOs, selected for the year 2019;
10. Discussion on the role and position of NGOs in the Council of Europe, follow-up of the Warsaw Conference;
11. Information on the work led by the Drafting group in charge of proposals regarding the Rules of Procedure or other statutory provisions of the Conference of INGOs;
12. Presentation of the project of the Conference of INGOs and the Directorate General of Democracy on the strengthening of the freedom of association in the member States of the Council of Europe;
13. Information on the Recommendation CM/Rec (2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on

preventing and combating sexism; 14. Information by INGO Service; 15. Date of the next meeting – Friday 12 April 2019 .

The second meeting of the Conference of INGOS took place in Strasbourg on **April 12<sup>th</sup> 2019**.

*Gérard Schaefer* (representative of ICSW Europe to the Council of Europe) took part in the Conference.

For the agenda of April 12<sup>th</sup> see: <https://rm.coe.int/conf-ple-2019-oj2-en/168093c42a>

The Autumn session is planned for **October 28<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> 2019**.

(source: Council of Europe: [https://www.coe.int/en/web/ingo/conference#%2210850802%22:\[0\]](https://www.coe.int/en/web/ingo/conference#%2210850802%22:[0]))

## United Nations



**Inclusive Social Development**  
Department of Economic and Social  
Affairs

### 57th Session of the Commission for Social Development

The fifty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development was held on 7 February 2018 and from 11 to 21 February 2019, with the priority theme of “Addressing inequalities and challenges to social inclusion through fiscal, wage and social protection policies”. The Commission also reviewed relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups, the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development and the emerging issue: “The empowerment of people affected by natural and manmade disasters to reduce inequality: addressing the differential impact on persons with disabilities, older persons and youth.” The Commission held a high-level panel discussion on the priority theme, a ministerial forum on social protection, an interactive dialogue with senior officials of the United Nations system on the priority theme and a panel discussion on the emerging issue.

The **final complete report** can be read on: <https://undocs.org/E/CN.5/2019/10>.

# SOCIEUX+

## SOCIEUX+

### Expertise to Facilitate Equitable Social Protection, Labour and Employment Initiatives

Conceived as a flexible and highly targeted instrument of technical cooperation, SOCIEUX+ offers expert assistance to more than 150 countries for the design and improvement of equitable social and employment systems.

Since launching in 2013, SOCIEUX and its successor SOCIEUX+ have implemented 201 activities across 40 countries, for a total of 4,795 days of expertise sharing.

sociEUX+

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SOCIEUX+ is established and co-funded by the European Union through the European Commission Directorate for Development and Cooperation (EuropeAid) and the governments of France, Spain, and Belgium. It is implemented by four partners: Expertise France, the implementation partnership lead; the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies (FIIAPP); Belgian International Cooperation on Social Protection (BELINCOSOC); and Enabel, the Belgium development agency.

### From peers, to peers

SOCIEUX+ uses a peer-to-peer approach to share best practices, experiences, and knowledge. Drawing on expertise available in public or mandated institutions and social partners of EU member states, SOCIEUX+ connects practitioners and institutions by mobilising

EU expertise for technical cooperation activities with peers outside the EU.

SOCIEUX+ also collaborates with specialised international agencies and academic institutions in joint actions, and promotes triangular cooperation by mobilising teams of public experts from both EU and partner countries. Private consultants may also complement expert mission teams in SOCIEUX+ actions.



### On demand

Individual SOCIEUX+ actions support policies and measures in social protection, labour and employment that are aimed at alleviating poverty, reducing vulnerability, and providing income security and access to essential services and job opportunities. This support includes, but is not limited to, the following areas:

#### *Social Protection:*

- Social insurance, contributory pensions, health, accident, and unemployment protection.
- Social assistance, cash transfer programmes, income guarantee schemes, elderly benefits, child and disability grants, public works, social services.

#### *Employment and Labour:*

- Employment policy, security and services, vocational education and training and skills development.
- Labour policy and law, active labour markets, information systems, decent work, informal economy workers, working conditions, labour relations, labour standards, and social dialogue.

More about SOCIEUX+



The [SOCIEUX+ website](#) offers complete information about the facility and its activities all over the world, as well as the available [opportunities for experts](#) and [institutions to join in](#).



(source: Begoña Rodríguez, SOCIEUX+)

## Conferences/Expert Meetings



### Social Platform Flagship Conference "Building Social Europe"

The **Flagship Conference "Building Social Europe"** organised by Social Platform in cooperation with the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health will take place on **16-18 September 2019** in **Helsinki** (Finland). The registration has been opened.

The event will take place during a crucial time: European leaders will be preparing the next EU legislature following the European elections results. on how the EU can prevent further decay in social justice, democracy and trust in the coming five years.

It will be an opportunity for Social Platform members and actors from a wider European social movement to debate with national and EU level decision-makers.

### Registration

Registration will remain open until the **beginning of September**. Please register as soon as possible or let [Juris Lavrikovs](#) (Communications & Campaigns Coordinator) know your intentions.

Provisional Conference Programme:

<https://www.socialplatform.org/what-we-do/flagship-conference/>

[Register here.](#)

### Promoting Human Relationships : Bridging the Future Joint World Conference on Social Work Education and Social Development

*Rimini, Italy 28 June/1 July 2020*



Key dates for SWSD 2020:

**Call for abstract: June 2019**

Scientific programme: September 2019

Registration online: October 2019

Hotel booking: October 2019

Deadline for abstracts submission: December 2019

Acceptance for abstracts: February 2020

Early registration deadline: March 2020

Late registration deadline: April 2020

Final programme: May 2020

SWESD conference: June 28th – July 1st, 2020

For scientific programme see:

<http://www.swesd2020.org/Web/39/Scientific->

## Useful Links

SOSTE Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health and Finnish Anti-Poverty Network EAPN-Fin online publication:

<https://www.soste.fi/future-of-europe/>

General Survey concerning the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) – a document:

[https://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/108/reports/reports-to-the-conference/WCMS\\_673680/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/108/reports/reports-to-the-conference/WCMS_673680/lang--en/index.htm)

AGE Platform Europe:

<https://www.age-platform.eu/>

United Nations:

<https://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/>

The Conference of INGOs:

[https://www.coe.int/en/web/ingo/conference#%2210850802%22:\[0\]](https://www.coe.int/en/web/ingo/conference#%2210850802%22:[0])

United Nations Report on The 57th Session of the Commission for Social Development:

<https://undocs.org/E/CN.5/2019/10>

SOCIEUX+

[www.socieux.eu](http://www.socieux.eu)

Social Platform Flagship Conference "Building Social Europe" – Programme:

<https://www.socialplatform.org/what-we-do/flagship-conference/>

– Registration:

<https://form.jotformeu.com/82604005066347>

Promoting Human Relationships : Bridging the Future Joint World Conference on Social Work Education and Social Development – Programme:

<http://www.swesd2020.org/Web/39/Scientific-Program/>

## Colophon

ICSW Europe registered office is located at the municipality of Utrecht (The Netherlands).

The name of the Association is: International Council on Social Welfare Europe, abbreviated to: ICSW Europe.

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.

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