



Europe

ICSW EUROPE NEWSLETTER
Autumn 2014

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Introduction

International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) is a global non-governmental organisation which represents a wide range of national and international member organisations that seek to advance social welfare, social development and social justice. Its mission is to promote forms of social and economic development which aim to reduce poverty, hardship and vulnerability throughout the world, especially amongst disadvantaged people. It was founded in Paris in 1928.

ICSW has the highest level of consultative status within the United Nations' Economic and Social Council and is accredited to the Food and Agriculture Organisation, International Labour Organisation, UNICEF, UNESCO and World Health Organisation.

The ICSW is governed by a committee composed of representatives of the ICSW's nine regions: Central and West Africa, East and Southern Africa, South Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific, North East Asia, **Europe**, the Middle East and North Africa, North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

ICSW Europe is an integral Part of global ICSW and has had an independent legal status since 2007.

The group's president and executive staff are selected from this governing body. The current president of ICSW Europe is Miloslav Hettes (in the post since June 2014).

New ICSW Europe President



Miloslav Hettes (Slovakia), the President of ICSW Europe. He is the Slovak ICSW Committee (Third Sector Organizations Standing Conference) Representative. He works at Social Work Institute of St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social

Sciences in Bratislava, Slovakia. He is a lecturer of Social Work, Social Policy, Unemployed People Issues, The Elderly, Ageing, Social Protection, Social Services, Social Economy, Sustainable Development and International/European Issues. He served as the Chair of the UN working group on ageing (Geneva), the Vice-chair of the UN Committee on Social Development (New York), the Vice-chair UN Committee on Sustainable Development (New York).

M. Hettes worked in Bosnia and Hercegovina in Banja Luka (Social Protection System) and in Macedonia (Labour Law).

He has experience with European Commission (EPSCO) and the ILO. He worked in various senior positions in Slovak social administration for many years and was a founder of local self-government in former Czecho-Slovakia (First president of the National Association of Municipalities).

The new president wishes to use his experience and knowledge in social development and in civic initiatives. His intention is to support the ICSW, as a unique, global, non-governmental association in recognizing its position and to promote its vision. He has motivation to contribute to the balanced local and international development of social

development and social work. His experience and knowledge of social development and life in different societies/cultures could be an added value.

ICSW Europe intention has to be facilitation of social development, social cohesion and solidarity among the people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities have to be central to social work.

He wants to help to create and maintain a dynamic community of social welfare activists. His intention is to support and to facilitate participation in an open mutual cooperation. ICSW Europe has to keep cooperation with its members.

Lots of problems are waiting for ICSW in connection with social welfare destabilization due to the current crisis. Ageing of society and low birth-rate will result in shortage of human capital and especially of social work professionals. Relatively rich but not fair societies are not able to solve hunger and poverty. The right to social security has to be improved by guaranteeing of SPF.

ICSW Europe will be working jointly with global community, educators (IASSW/EASSW), social professionals (IFSW) in creating the sustainable decent life for all.

ICSW Europe Board Members



Jean-Michel Hôte (France), a Treasurer of ICSW Europe. PhD in political sciences; 40 years activity in social protection (French complementary pension scheme from 1974-1985 then he

worked in social gerontology as a Director and a Secretary General from 1986-2013). A member of the Council of AGE Platform

Europe (founded in 2001 representing the interests of elderly people in Europe – the first mandate 2001-2004; the second mandate 2013-2016). He is a member of the French Committee since 1986 when he was “representing” the policies for elderly component of the Committee through the membership of two national organisations in France in the field of gerontology. He is a member of ICSW French Committee since 1986 and a Treasurer since 2007.



Angele Cepenaite (Lithuania), a member of ICSW Europe Board. PhD, is a lecturer at Social Technologies department of Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, Lithuania. She is the president of Lithuanian National Committee of

ICSW Europe, an initiator of many community social service innovations.



Joaquim Eguren (Spain), a member of ICSW Europe Board. He is currently a Secretary of the Spanish Committee on Social Welfare (CEBS); a member of the Permanent Committee (last 5 years) and a member of CEBS (16 years). He has

participated in many seminars on Social Welfare in Spain and in Europe as an expert on Social domains. He is a Senior Researcher and a Professor of the University Institute for Studies on Migrations of Comillas Pontifical University (IUEM-UPCOMILLAS). He has PhD in Social Anthropology and is graduated in Sociology and Theology.



Annelise Murakami (Denmark), a member of ICSW Europe Board. The Chair of the International Committee, ICSW Denmark. A senior Lecturer at the Department of Social

Work, Faculty of Social Science and Pedagogy, Metropolitan University College, Denmark. She worked as a Social worker within Family and Child Protection, Labour Market Services and Minority Issues. Documentation and Advisory Centre against Racial Discrimination: research within the field of gender, ethnicity, diversity management. Municipality of Copenhagen: mapping and development of multiethnic strategies. The Danish Refugee Council: Head of section on national strategy/Integration. Consultant at various NGO's and municipalities: various roles as a Process Consultant to Supervisor.

Britta Spilker (Germany), a member of ICSW Europe Board. She is the Secretary General of the German National Committee of the International Council on Social Welfare acting as a head of department for International Affairs at the German Association for Public and Private Welfare. After having studied law and specializing in Social Security Law, she worked at the German parliament before joining the German Association in 2008. The focus of her current work as a Policy Officer is European Social Policy, e.g. initiatives of the European Union in the field of social inclusion and the fight against poverty.

ICSW Europe General Assembly

ICSW EUROPE General Assembly took place in Bratislava (Slovakia); on Thursday, 19th June, 2014, 9.00-11.00 am in St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Work.

Some members were not able to be present either for schedule, or budget reasons. Nevertheless, in the exchanges of e-mails concerning the preparation of the GA, they expressed the President or the Secretary their interest in continuing their cooperation: e.g. Alexandra Kyriacou from Pan Cyprian Voluntarism Coordinative Council (Cyprus - A member) and Natia Partskhaladze (Georgian Association of Social Workers).

President Christian Rollet intentionally prepared a short document highlighting the key elements of a 2 year activity (from July 2012 to July 2014). It deals with five topics: 1) management; 2) expert seminars and conferences; 3) partnerships (namely: Social platform; Council of Europe; ENSACT; UN Social Work Day); 4) communication; 5) membership.

He underlined three elements as a conclusion of his mandate from July 2012:

- 1) well balanced composition of the Board; this requirement would be identical for the new Board to be elected further on;
- 2) an urgent need of better internal and external communication;
- 3) a sounder opinion of what ICSW Europe could do since we should not underestimate our influence.

As it was mentioned in the President's report, programme experts meetings were held: in Bregenz (Austria) November 19th-20th, 2013 on *Guardianship* related to the UN Convention for people with disabilities; in Rennes (France) March 25th-26th, 2014 on *SPF*. The topic "*Working poor*" was dealt with in a seminar in Copenhagen (Denmark) in 2012 (October 26-27) and the theme "*Social investment*" in a conference organized in Bratislava (Slovakia) on February 24th, 2014.

Two new events were decided on by the Board: a *Seminar on migrants* within the frame of "Poverty reduction - Social protection - Demographic Changes" of the Work Program in Madrid in autumn 2014 and the project of a Conference on a theme to be defined by the Finnish Committee in Finland in 2015.

The main partners for cooperation remain: EU (especially within the Social Platform (European Platform of Social NGOs), the Council of Europe (Conference of International NGOs/INGOs), and ENSACT (European Network for Social Action) whose last meeting took place on May 22nd, 2014 and UN (especially for the celebration of the Social Work Day).

Within the Communication and Cooperation topic, 3 objectives of our work program remain pertinent: 1) *Strengthening relations between members*; 2) *Active membership in European networks*; 3) *Involving new members*.

6 candidatures had been sent to the Global before the deadline of May 3rd: Miloslav Hettes (SK) as the President and Jean-Michel Hôte (FR) as a Treasurer on one hand, Angele Cepenaite (LT), Joaquin Eguren (ES), Annelise Murakami (DK) and Britta Spilker (DE) as Board members on the other.

The result of the pole was given by Sergei Zelenev (June 4th, 2014): according to the election process, Solveig Askjem confirmed that Miloslav Hettes and Jean-Michel Hôte were elected since no one opposed.

There is no special provision about the mandate of the **auditors**. They can be reappointed from a GA to the next one. Solveig Askjem (Norway) and Thea Meinema (Netherlands) accepted to be candidate. They both were elected.

Christian Rollet underlined the fact that the main evolution occurred in the way **Social Platform** is now working: there are no more working groups replaced by thematic "Task Forces" because of the financial reason linked to the EU budget that is dedicated to the European NGOs in the social field. The TF which could be of great interest for us are the following: on Minimum Income; on Social Benefits (especially focused on unemployment); on Social Services; on European Governance; on Migration, on Civil dialogue, etc.

Britta Spilker said she was still on the mailing list of the TF on Minimum Income;

Irene Kohler mentioned Austrian participation to the European Governance TF. Miloslav Hettes underlined that it would be worth finding a member in Brussels to monitor the different TF so we could be kept informed on important topics on the EU agenda.

Balazs Kremer proposed his collaboration to follow some TF. Decision: as the first step, Britta Spilker (DE) will follow the TF on Social Benefits; TF on Financing of Social Services (Anke Boeckenhoff (DE), Task Force on Economic Governance (Katharina Meichenitsch (A). Other TFs will be solved later.

Council of Europe (INGOS): the mandates of Gerard Schaefer (FR) and Thomas Goldberg (SW) were confirmed.

ENSACT: there is a strong connection with ENSACT thanks to Thea Meinema being the President of this Organisation.

Work Programme Update

(The program was changed only to reason of personal replacement and is still open)

1. Mission and key areas of ICSW Europe's work

Our mission as ICSW Europe is – in line with the objectives of ICSW global level – to work for sustainable social and economic development for everyone – a common objective. ICSW stands for an integrated approach of economic, social and socio-cultural strategies and actions to achieve six general objectives. According to our Constitution, Art.2, our six general objectives are to:

1. *Promote forms of social and economic development which aim to reduce poverty, hardship and vulnerability, especially amongst disadvantaged people.*

2. *Strive for recognition and realization of fundamental rights to employment, income, food, shelter, education, health care and security.*
3. *Promote equality of opportunity, freedom of expression, freedom of association, participation and access to human services and oppose discrimination.*
4. *Promote policies and programs which strike an appropriate balance between social and economic goals and which respect cultural diversity.*
5. *Strengthen civil society throughout the world to achieve these objects.*
6. *Seek implementation of these objects by governments, international organizations and non-governmental agencies in cooperation with its network of Member Organizations.*

ICSW Europe provides an arena for international dialogue between practitioners, researchers and policy makers.

2. Structure of the network

ICSW Europe being a region of ICSW global is registered as an association capable of being subject to legal rights and duties under Dutch law (Chamber of commerce, Utrecht). It is an integral part of the global ICSW organisation.

The members of ICSW Europe are national non-governmental organisations (NGO), regional/federal and local authorities, voluntary associations, institutes/researchers and practitioners in the field of social welfare and social development, all legal bodies under the law of their countries established in Europe, Israel and countries that are the part of the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC).

The strength of ICSW Europe lies in the fact that all members are involved in promoting social welfare and civil society and community work in their own countries. There is a number of important forums and

players within Europe that need to be followed closely, such as the European Union and the Council of Europe.

ICSW Europe is a fully democratic, participatory and accountable organisation according to its Statutes. All matters of importance for the association are the subject of annual meetings of General assembly, see Art.10 Statutes.

The association is presented by the President and the Board (Art.7 Statues). The business of ICSW Europe is managed by the Board and the Management committee (President, Secretary and Treasurer).

ICSW Europe activities are funded by membership fees. In the years to come, ICSW Europe aims to develop new European projects that may be funded from other sources. Apparently ICSW Norway runs a program with ICSW Lithuania to train social workers in the Baltic country which is financed by EU funds.

3. Memberships and cooperation of ICSW Europe

ICSW Europe is a full member of European Platform of Social NGOs (www.socialplatform.org) in Brussels and the Conference of International NGOs (INGO) at the Council of Europe (www.coe.int).

In 2008 ICSW Europe was a founding member of European Network for Social Action (ENSACT), which main aim up to now has been organizing biennial Joint European Conferences on Social Work and Social Welfare for its members and for a wider network. Now, ENSACT is to discuss its priorities for its future work and ICSW Europe's partners in the ENSACT network are as follows:

- 1) International Federation of Social Workers – European Region (IFSW Europe)
- 2) European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW)
- 3) European Social Educator Training (FESET)

- 4) International Federation of Educative Communities - Europe (FICE Europe)
- 5) International Association of Social Educators (AIEJI)
- 6) PowerUs, service users in social work learning partnership – www.powerus.info.

4. Priorities and actions of ICSW Europe 2013 – 2016

The General Assembly of ICSW Europe has agreed on the following priorities at its meeting on April 17th, 2013:

- 1) Social protection, e. g. Social protection floors (<http://www.socialprotectionfloor-gateway.org/72.htm>) – country examples, social protection in EU development policy, protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms, social rights and inequities, different target groups (e.g. asylum seekers, people with mental health problems);
- 2) Demographic changes, e. g. elderly care, ageing, solidarity between generations;
- 3) Poverty reduction, e. g. Working poor, support of the poorest, especially Roma, refugees and homeless people, poverty in extreme rural areas, migration;
- 4) Drop outs from school;
- 5) Social investment and social business.

The priorities were/will be implemented by the following actions 2013-16:

- 1) ICSW Expert seminar on guardianship on the UN convention for people with disabilities, on November 19th-20th, 2013 in Bregenz, (Seminar in German language, but with English documentation);
- 2) European Civil Society event on Social Protection Floors, March 25th-26th, 2014, Rennes, France (ICSW France in cooperation with EHESP);
- 3) ICSW Policy paper on the role of Social Protection floors in Europe;
- 4) ICSW Policy paper on the implementation of UN convention for

people with disabilities – Focussing guardianship;

- 5) ICSW Policy paper on working poor;
- 6) ICSW Policy paper on drop outs from school;
- 7) ICSW participation at Social Work Day (at the UN, March 20th, 2014 in Geneva);
- 8) Conference Migration and SPFs, winter 2015, Madrid, ICSW Spain;
- 9) ICSW Conference, 2015, Finland.

5. Regional cooperation

Regional cooperation between members will continue. Inside ICSW membership are groups, e.g. among the Nordic members or in German-speaking sub-region, in order to start common activities like ICSW expert seminars.

North-South cooperation within ICSW

Another main task is the further elaboration of the North-South cooperation between members of ICSW Europe and members in other regions of ICSW, e.g. the Finland-Tanzania project (global level activity), to strengthen civil society and democratic structures in other parts of the world by a bottom-up approach. This North-South cooperation emphasises ICSW's global role and the sense of European responsibility for poverty issues in north and south.

6. Communication and cooperation

Communication, visibility and cooperation are three important pillars of ICSW Europe's work in the coming years. Mission and mandate need to be clear to encourage organisations to act and to work with our association. We have to engage and inform at many different levels, for example European Union, national governments, European and national NGOs.

ICSW Europe wants to become a more close-knit networking organisation, an umbrella organisation, working together on topics in new combinations of states, not necessarily only on region or language-basis, sub-regional groupings but also on shared interest-based cooperation. Furthermore, ICSW Europe intends to reinforce consultancy and shared learning

being ICSW's main strength, instead of lobbying or advocacy in favour of a specific group of people; the lobby function is only one channel to express interests and present expertise and experience.

7. Strengthening relations between ICSW members

Beside the members' activities in the fields of social policy mentioned above ICSW Europe will take action to strengthen the network and the relations between the members and at the same time to increase visibility/to make the profile of ICSW Europe more visible.

ICSW Europe will continue in its capacity building seminars for old and new members started in Copenhagen in 2010 that continued in Istanbul in 2013. Interesting topics may include: how to run an NGO, how to succeed on procedures to make and disseminate position papers, how to build capacity on lobby activities in Brussels and Strasbourg, how to support and activate members (esp. in the south of Europe), reading government budgets, and NGO relations in EU etc.

8. Active membership in European networks

As a member of European networks and organisations like Social Platform and Council of Europe, ICSW Europe will continue in its activities to exchange experience with other international and national organisations and networks and it will present ICSW positions.

The cooperation with these networks includes the permanent participation in working groups of Social Platform for social service matters, social policy and fundamental rights, in General assembly and specific seminars, conferences and study visits of the Platform as well as the attendance of committee meetings on social cohesion and human rights in the Conference of International NGO's at the Council of Europe.

ICSW Europe is also active in a tripartite group consisting of the European branches

of International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and work for the Global Agenda on Social Work and Social Development (<http://www.globalsocialagenda.org>), aiming to promote social and economic equalities, the dignity and worth of peoples and working toward environmental sustainability and recognition of the importance of human relationships as main goals till 2016.

ICSW Europe is member of a NGO Coalition for Social Protection Floor (SPF). The coalition works on the national level to map the situation of access to essential services and income security and country-based activities in different countries to make a joint report. ICSW Europe lobbies for the project in Europe and aims to raise awareness of national governments in Europe for a worldwide Social protection floor.

9. Joint conferences 2014-16

The 3rd Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development took place in Melbourne, Australia on July 9th-12th, 2014. The theme was "Promoting Social and economic quality: Responses from Social Work and Social Development" with the focus on the intersection of the many factors that promote equality for all people within diverse contexts in our societies around the world. ICSW Europe was present at the conference and applied for workshop activities in the following subthemes:

- 1) Strengthening the social and cultural wellbeing of individuals, families and communities – promoting resilience, empowerment, safety and respect;
- 2) Addressing health inequalities and disadvantage for individuals and communities;
- 3) Fostering social and economic initiatives that promote security and protection;
- 4) Creating sustainable and safe physical environments, and
- 5) Educating for change, human rights and equality.

10. Newsletter and Website of ICSW Europe

Cross-border information is a very important base to identify differences and similarities among ICSW members, to find mutual topics and (general) strategies to work on in order to make ICSW position papers and aim for more political influence - on national and international level. Regarding the fact that ICSW Europe has no office on European level, an own newsletter has a vital function for the network.

The President will regularly send an Information letter to the members. This is to inform the members about internal developments and news from ICSW Global and European region, collaboration with IFSW Europe and EASSW, e.g. concerning the Global Agenda etc.

In addition, four times a year a digital newsletter of ICSW Europe will be distributed (issues in March, June, September and December). The Board of ICSW Europe is responsible for the edition of newsletters. The newsletter is to be edited and sent by e-mail to the members of ICSW Europe/all subscribers of the distribution list. This list will be managed and up-dated by Secretary of ICSW Europe President. Ms Gabriela Siantova has been appointed a new Secretary of ICSW Europe President since October 20th, 2014 by the decision of the Board of ICSW Europe (at the regular Board meeting). She is also appointed as an editor of newsletters.

National councils and members are invited to distribute the ICSW Europe Newsletters in their own countries, among their members and national and local actors to keep everyone informed and included in the activities of ICSW Europe. All members are invited to use ICSW network to send around own newsletters or provide a website by their National committee (in English) to all ICSW Europe members to keep each other informed about their activities, products and structures.

In addition ICSW Europe will try to gain more visibility by providing statements from

conferences and expert meetings and position papers with active references to documents on the website.

11. Involving new members

In the years to come we have to expand the number of people and countries involved in promoting social welfare. In order to be a reliable and leading forum for the debate on social policy in Europe it needs more members and active members. We will actively have to search and support new members of ICSW Europe with a focus on the southern and eastern part of Europe.

12. Organisation

Composition and terms of the Board

The Board consists of the following members (mandate of all the members is till *summer 2016*, 1st term):

- 1) Miloslav Hettes (Slovakia) - President
- 2) Jean-Michel Hôte (France) - Treasurer
- 3) Angele Cepenaite (Lithuania) - Board member
- 4) Joaquin Eguren (Spain) - Board member
- 5) Annelise Murakami (Denmark) - Board member
- 6) Britta Spilker (Germany) - Board member

Annual General Assembly

The General Assembly within the European region met in June 2014. It was not combined with the Joint Global conference in Melbourne because of financial burden for the ICSW members.

Secretary

The Secretary has responsibility for the coordination of meetings, presentation of the organisation and communication between members. The Secretariat of ICSW Europe has been led by Bodil Eriksson till 30th November, 2013. It was situated in the office building Department of Social Work at

Stockholm University, Sweden. From 1st December, 2013 the Secretariat moved to France (French Committee, CFADS) and Jean Michel Hôte was a Secretary by Interim. Ms Gabriela Siantova has been selected as a Secretary to ICSW Europe President since October 20th, 2014. The secretariat of ICSW is placed in the office of the ICSW Slovakia.

Active ICSW members representing ICSW Europe in other International organizations (June 2014)

Social Platform

- 1) Steering group: Miloslav Hettes (SK)
- 2) FRAND (Fundamental Rights and Anti-Discrimination) Working Group: Katharina Meichenitsch (AT)
- 3) Task Force on Financing of Social Services: Anke Boeckenhoff (DE).
- 4) Task Force on EU Internal Human Rights Strategy: Katharina Meichenitsch (AT).
- 5) Task Force EU Legislation to Combat Hate Crime and Bias Violence.
- 6) Task Force on Migration and Asylum: Joaquin Eguren (ES).
- 7) Task Force on Public Procurement.
- 8) Task Force on Minimum Wage.
- 9) Task Force on Civil Dialogue.
- 10) Task Force on Economic Governance: Katharina Meichenitsch (AT)
- 11) Task Force on Social Benefits: Britta Spilker (DE)

Representation and activities within Social Platforms depends on its working plan and could be changed.

Council of Europe

Conference of International NGOs (INGO): Thomas Goldberg (SE) and Gerard Schaeffer (FR)

European Network for Social Action (ENSACT)

- 1) President of ENSACT: Thea Meinema (NL)
- 2) Annelise Murakami (DK)

ICSW Europe Expert Meetings. Applications for 2015

ICSW Europe regularly hosts expert meetings. These meetings are usually focused on a specific theme related to the general priorities of ICSW Europe and include participants and experts from several European countries. The subject matter discussed in the expert meeting relates to the thematic issues and priorities of ICSW Europe as presented updated Work Programme 2013-2016. Expert meeting has a clear expected result usually providing outputs in the form of a written report with conclusions and recommendations, a public statement and/or a position paper for ICSW Europe. ICSW Europe can contribute to these expert meetings in several ways:

- 1) Use the ICSW network to identify and/or invite experts;
- 2) Communicate the event to members and others and invite participants;
- 3) Offer financial support to pay for experts' travel and accommodation.

For more information on the conditions, the procedure and the format for applications, please visit the website of ICSW European Region <http://www.icsw.org/region/e.htm>.

The deadline for applications for 2015 is 15 December 2014.

Applications can be sent to: Miloslav Hettes, President ICSW Europe, Sputnikova 37, 82101 Bratislava, Slovakia, Phone +421904192627, e-mail: mhettes@vssvalzbety.sk

Social Protection Floor for Europe

Social Protection Floors: a new approach for social protection in Europe

Rennes, March 25th, 2014

The aim of this seminar was to consider together the use which civil society and social stakeholders in the European Union make of the notion of Social Protection Floors (SPFs). The International Labour Organisation's recommendation 202 has just engaged an innovative action to enable states and citizens to act in order to establish such floors. Agreement still needs to be reached as to the meaning of this concept within the EU, where social protection systems have already reached a certain level of completion.

It is on this basis that we shall first examine the needs met by Recommendation 202 and the background to this recommendation. We will then give a rapid overview of the situation of social protection in Europe. Then we will turn to the gaps between the ILO standard and this situation, before presenting some proposals for actions to be undertaken to remedy this.

The ILO initiative and the international meaning of the social protection floors

In June 2012, in Geneva, the International Labour Conference adopted the Recommendation 202 on Social Protection Floors. This new international standard is the result of a decade of debates and proposals between governments and social partners within the International Labour Organization. The tipping point towards its adoption was the global recession that began in 2008 in the aftermath of the financial crisis and its consequences in terms of widespread social hardship.

Social security as a fundamental human right and an economic asset

Long before, reflexions on the social dimension of globalization (World Commission Report in 2004) had emphasized the inequalities and imbalances of incomes and wealth in the global economic growth and the necessities for an extended social security system for all.

The aims of social security are to provide income security, to secure medical care and to reduce poverty. Social security is also an economic necessity. It also enhances productivity, consumption and economic development.

Despite several fundamental roles and functions, the ILO estimates that approximately 80 per cent of the world population live without adequate income security or access to medical care. Only 49 countries (mainly European) have ratified ILO Convention 102 on Social Security (minimum standards).

Most of developing countries would consider that their economic level could not support the standards of benefits set in the convention 102 and therefore were reticent to ratify it. At the same time, social partners and NGO were reluctant to propose a reduced standard that could have become a new, lower objective for all countries.

The crisis that erupted in 2008 changed this mind-set and the international community focussed its goals on an increased social protection.

The progress of the international community towards a Social Protection Floor policy and recommendation after the 2008 crisis

In April 2009, the board of the Chief executives of international agencies decided on a series of initiatives, one of which was the social protection floor initiative.

The conclusions of the International Labour Conference, in June 2011, provided that the extension of social security coverage should be done not only by ratifying the Social Security Convention 102, but also by

elaborating a new Recommendation which would provide a guide to member States in building social protection floors to provide for basic income security and access to health care to all. It designed a path to closing coverage gaps through the implementation of national strategies respecting national priorities and affordability. These national strategies should aim at achieving universal coverage of the population with at least minimum levels of protection (horizontal dimension) and progressively ensuring higher levels of protection guided by up-to-date ILO social security standards (vertical dimension). The two dimensions of the extension of coverage are consistent with progressing towards compliance with the requirements of the Social Security Convention 102.

In October 2011, the Social Protection Floor (SPF) Advisory Group, set up by the International Labour Office and the World Health Organization in order to enhance global advocacy of these initiatives and chaired by Ms Bachelet, then chief of the UN Women task force, presented its report "Social Protection Floor for a Fair and Inclusive Globalization". The report calls for the implementation of social protection floors in order to stimulate economic growth and increase social cohesion in light of the economic crisis and to accelerate progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

In Cannes, on November 4th, 2011, the leaders of the G20 recognized "the importance of social protection floors in each of our countries, adapted to national situations" and gave their support to the conclusions of the meeting of the Employment Ministers (Sept 2011). The ministers concluded: "We commit to making gradual progress towards implementing national social protection floors.... We also stress the importance of appropriate administrative capacities and adequate human resources for that purpose. We should strive to expand social protection to the whole population, especially vulnerable groups".

This international groundwork led to the adoption of the Recommendation in 2012 establishing the concept of Social Protection Floors.

The concept of social protection floors refers to a strategy for the extension of social security, comprising a basic set of social guarantees for all and the gradual implementation of higher standards. It is up to each Government to determine the nature of its national social protection floor and the pace of its implementation, in accordance with national priorities and wider social, economic and employment strategies. In particular, it is important that the means to implement social protection floors in developing countries be found. National social protection floors should comprise at least the following four social security guarantees, as defined at the national level:

- access to essential health care, including maternity care;
- basic income security for children, providing access to nutrition, education, care and any other necessary goods and services;
- basic income security for persons in active age who are unable to earn sufficient income, in particular in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability;
- basic income security for older persons.

The Recommendation recognizes the primary responsibility of the State in giving effect to SPFs, and refers to a few basic principles to be followed: universality of protection based on solidarity, entitlements to benefits prescribed by Law, adequacy and predictability, non-discrimination, inclusion of persons of the informal sector, respect of the rights already covered by social security guarantees, progressivity of the implementation, solidarity in financing, transparency in management, financial sustainability, coherence with other social policies, quality of services provided, affordability of complaint procedures, regular monitoring, respect for collective bargaining, tripartite participation and consultation with organizations of persons

concerned.

This concept of a 'Social Protection Floor' now needs to be examined in the context of the current situation in the EU in order to understand the challenges of transposing it in a way that does not merely achieve a bare minimum, but rather offers a means of strengthening and enriching our existing systems.

Contemporary trends in Social Europe

To describe the social changes presently operating in Europe, we may underline the following long term trends (according to the Commission staff working document SWD (2013)-38):

- a growing dependency ratio (1.29 in 2010; 1.44 in 2030);
- a more active society with a growing employment rate (especially for women);
- growing regional imbalances (illustrated for instance by an emigration of young and skilled people of Eastern and Southern countries to the richest countries);
- more diversity of populations, working forces and ways of life (in the 5 past years, two thirds of the population growth is due to non EU citizens);
- changing in family structures (more single parents and recomposed families);
- development of ICT (information and communication technologies) bringing new jobs, new facilities and also risks of exclusion.

The transformation of "Welfare states"

There has been extensive comparative research into European social protection systems (like the classic work of Gosta Esping-Andersen). The predominant analysis in the 1990s was that changes reinforced the dominant characteristics of systems. Conversely however, since the 2000s, the different systems appear to have entered into a phase of growing hybridisation, with a marked increase in institutional innovations.

The average level of social expenditures in Europe remains high when compared with other OECD countries: it was increasing from 26.5% of GDP in 2000 to around 30% in 2009 (the two main items being old age pensions for 11% and healthcare for 8%). But there are large gaps between countries. Regarding the financing of social protection expenditures in Europe, Governments contributions have had a bigger role than others over the last 15 years, including during the crisis to a lesser extent.

The different system models are likely to see their paths converge due to the effect of budget constraints and incentives recommended by international organisations, first and foremost the European Union in the outworking of the Stability Pact. Among the trends common to all Member States are the transfer to the market of major areas of social protection. In the former socialist countries, the transition to the market economy has been highly visible in the sphere of health and social welfare. In many countries, including the richest, access to healthcare is becoming harder, especially in remote areas.

It is difficult to assess the record of the European Union as such in terms of welfare without drawing up a thorough legal analysis of the many (and sometimes contradictory) recommendations in this area. Indeed, the progress of "Social Europe", as enshrined for instance in texts derived from the Lisbon Strategy, are essentially confined to incentives; whereas the instruments of liberal policy have acquired compelling force thanks to EU legislation.

The social impact of the economic crisis

The impact of the crisis on the social situation in Europe is characterized by a divergence between member states and a growing inequality in the EU. The following observations are driven from the above quoted document of the Commission.

Over the period 2008 to 2011, the employed population shrank by 2%; the average unemployment rate is now over 10%. By the end of 2012, 25 million Europeans are unemployed. But the unemployment rate of Northern and Western Europe and Eastern and Southern Europe are highly diverging (in 2011 7% versus 14.5%).

A greater social inequality in most countries can be observed through some key facts: the unemployment rate is much higher than before the crisis for specific groups: young people (20% of the 15-24), non-nationals, low skilled workers, men. The recession reinforced the wage polarisation that was already observed (new jobs were either low paid or highly paid between 1998 and 2007).

The increase of poverty is another impact of the crisis. Different indicators are used to document it, as it has many roots. As this table is showing, the percentage of the population at risk of poverty or exclusion (AROPE), the larger concept, was declining before 2009 and is growing due to the economic downturn:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
25.6 %	25.2 %	24.4 %	23.5 %	23.1 %	23.4 %	24.2 %

The percentage of the population at risk of poverty (AROP), fewer than 60% of the median disposable income after social transfer, was stabilized until 2009, and is growing after:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
16.4	16.5	16.5	16.4	16.3	16.4	16.9

And the population "severely materially deprived" has increased from 9% in 2008 to 10% in 2011.

Between 2007 and 2009, automatic stabilizers and stimulus packages contributed to sustaining household incomes in most countries. Between 2009 and 2011, household incomes fell in a number of countries, especially where the recession was prolonged; this can be explained by the phasing out of discretionary measures or by the fact that

people has lost their entitlements.

Making beneficiaries more responsible and increasing contributions

The reforms conducted in the past two decades, particularly in France, Germany and Italy, have led to the promotion of more stringent separation between the beneficiaries of employee solidarity systems and beneficiaries of national solidarity schemes. For the former, particularly in the case of retirement pensions (Sweden) and unemployment benefit (France), the aim is to move closer to the ideal of actuarial neutrality and establish beneficiary rights on the basis of a stock of quasi-savings that beneficiaries may then recover. This has been accompanied by the reduction of "non-earned" rights, which had been a major instrument of social policy (this development has also widened gender inequality, as shown by the decline in of transferable pensions). At the same time, this restriction in the field of social protection for the better-off has opened the way for the development of savings-based solutions.

The second case, that of the beneficiaries of national solidarity, covers situations in which it is difficult for the market to play its role ('low-employability' individuals, the working poor, retirees on minimum pensions, those with chronic diseases). Wherever possible, these individuals are asked to prove their ability to be part of the system by fulfilling duties or by submitting to increased controls to guarantee best use of the funds.

To "make work pay" is one of the leading goals of many social policies in order to fight the risks of a welfare dependency in countries with large social protection schemes. But it explains why there is a growing number of working poor (see ICSW seminar in Copenhagen, October 2012): 8.6% of the employed population was earning less than 60% of the median income. In work poverty significantly increased in many countries of Europe, including the richest as Germany or Netherlands, in recent years, due to labour market reforms and/or economic recession.

The Single Market is resulting in to increased competition, which also affects health and social services, thus leading Europe to practice social dumping. The posting of workers directive 96/71 of the Commission was supposed to solve the problem by giving foreign workers the same work conditions as the workers of the hosting country. Because of a lack of collective agreements in many places and a growing number of illegal situations, the reality has become often unacceptable. The EU Council has recently decided to strongly reinforce inspection means and improve transparency.

It is usually referred to the three roles of Social Protection: protecting people from hardship when some risks occur, being a stabilizing factor of economic cycles, and realizing social investments. The EU leaders are promoting this last important role. According to the Commission, out of the 29% of the EU27 GDP devoted to social expenditures, only 7.5% are "investment oriented". Investing in childhood is one key factor to improve the situation: there is strong evidence of the importance of the pre-school years; and combating child poverty is the best way to break many social inequalities.

How gaps might be challenged

Given the current social situation in Europe, and given what should be achieved according to the Recommendation 202, we may focus on the main gaps to be faced.

The difference between access to guaranteed services for all and the actual situation mainly affects certain social groups. The "AROPE" indicator is higher for women than for men (25.5 versus 23), or in some countries (like Lithuania where the decrease of the household incomes was of 12.5% between 2008 and 2011, or Spain where it was of 8%). And the most severe forms of poverty and social exclusion are focused on three groups: homelessness (see FEANTSA country report for 2012), Roma (indicator at 80%) and migrants (indicator at 37.8% for residents born outside). Migrant workers are the leading group in

this category. There were 35.4 million foreigners in 2010 in the EU; more than one third (12.3 million) are European citizens living in another country of EU, and 20.1 million are non EU citizens. There is an increasing number of migrant EU citizens due to freedom of movement and latterly due to the crisis. Their rights are often neglected due to their unstable situation and exclusion practices: this is particularly the case for Roma. Access to rights for immigrants from non-member states is sometimes impeded by cultural barriers; the case of illegal immigrants poses difficult problems that are both humanitarian and legal in nature. All above mentioned facts exist despite the fact that according to Recommendation 202 all residents should have basic social security cover.

It is worth paying attention to the so called "NEETs" (non-educated, non-employed, and non-trained): they are young people in a "grey" zone between school and work. They were 13% of the population between 15 and 24 years, and this vulnerable group is growing in number. Youth unemployment is especially high (more than 50% of the labour force of the 15/24 in Spain and Greece, 35% in Portugal and Italy) and is responsible for the growth of the "NEETs". But also, the early school dropout which is another matter of concern in Europe (see the position paper of ICSW in the Nordic countries, September 2013) is playing a role. Although an improvement can be observed, Southern countries like Spain and Portugal have a rate above 20%; in 12 countries (Northern and Central Europe), the rate is below 10%. Obviously, this category is likely to lack a social protection floor.

We should consider another category, also living a transitional period, at the end of their working life: too old to be easily employed if they are dismissed, and too young to enjoy a retirement pension.

Lastly, the ageing population in Europe lead to a new source of pauperisation, especially in a context of budgetary difficulties: without minimum pension schemes and social aid services for dependent persons, the "floor" could be beyond the reach of

many. The replacement rate of many pension schemes is declining, and the needs of dependent old persons are far from being met.

While in most EU countries the level of social rights remains high (in spite of the decline noted recently), a worrying phenomenon can nonetheless be widely observed: rights are not being claimed. The difference between statutory theory and actual experience is widening: some people are not aware of their rights and cannot claim them; others know their rights but dare not ask for them for fear of suffering stigma, or sometimes because the financial cost is excessive; others claim them but do not receive them due to defective management of social agencies. The rate of “non-take up” may reach high figures, often in excess of 50% (Marie Pierre Hamel, Philippe Warin, 2010). Equal access to rights therefore exists only on paper. This situation is the result of increasingly complex legislation – mirroring our increasingly complex societies – that seeks to take into account increasingly individualised needs; it is also due to increasingly targeted social schemes, to the detriment of universal cover.

In view of these findings, we are making the following proposals:

1) Three dimensions underpin long-term policy in wellbeing. The spotlight has often been on economic development, but social cohesion and income distribution, as well as environmental protection also need to be taken into account. These economic, social and ecological dimensions need to be considered together if we are to move towards socially sustainable development.

2) The adoption of Recommendation 202 by all delegations (governments and social partners) in EU countries at the International Labour Conference is fully justified by the social situation in Europe, especially since the crisis: not all European citizens benefit from the social protection floor.

3) EU bodies must also be asked to remind member states that they too have a

commitment to keep: the social protection floor is defined nationally, with its content, level and funding depending on the authorities in each country. While social protection is a “shared competency” since the Lisbon Treaty, the impact of the Single Market and the Stability Pact has meant the Council and Commission have acquired greater powers in this area. However, these EU bodies tend to consider SPFs more as safety nets that redress the marginal imbalances of a mainstream market-based approach. This adoption of a lowest common denominator is unacceptable. It should be borne in mind that the Treaty asserts that national, regional, and local authorities have the powers to organise and manage social services in line with their own social policies. The latter may draw on principles of solidarity and non-for-profit organisations, rather than on market principles.

4) The establishment of national SPFs should not be impeded by EU policies dominated by considerations that are too narrowly financial in nature, failing to take into account the major objectives of Agenda 2020 in terms of employment and the fight against poverty. SPFs need to rely on inclusive growth policy. The aim could be achieved by amending existing systems, making financial efforts that do not upset the global economic balance. For some States, this could involve calling on European solidarity via institutional funds.

5) In spite of the crisis, Europe remains an area where social rights, on the whole, have been supported at a high level over the decades. However, the rise of a worrying phenomenon should be noted: rights not being claimed. Social benefit fraud, misuse of the system by service providers, and loss of revenue through non-declared work should be fought by tightly managing the system. However, little is said about services not reaching those who are entitled to them, despite the greater amounts of money involved. Through fear of stigma, discouragement in the face of the procedures or through ignorance, more and more Europeans do not have access to their rights. We need to react! Too much “targeting”, too many conditions, needless

proofs, defective automation, etc. end up corrupting even the best systems. The authorities need to draw closer to citizens and social workers need to remain constantly in touch with them.

6) Universal social cover is an essential element of SPFs. Not all EU citizens have access to this yet and some no longer have access: even the residual cost of treatment delays or prevents people seeking professional help; in addition, there are cultural and language barriers. Certain areas within the EU are still medical deserts. Healthcare provision must form an element of regional development policies. Faced with social healthcare inequality, we must maintain and strengthen solidarity mechanisms, either through services which really are open to all, or through mandatory social cover.

7) The other main components of SPFs relate to guaranteed income mechanisms.

7.1) Employment income no longer allows a large number of Europeans, even in the richest countries, to live decently. The phenomenon of the "working poor" is now well documented. Faced with this situation, there is no option but to advocate the adoption in each EU country of an interprofessional minimum wage, set taking into account local economic factors.

7.2) For persons of working age who cannot work due to disability or unemployment, systems to guarantee a minimum income are also required. Restrictive conditions for unemployment benefit sometimes mean a right may be lost, and benefits are more often provided as income insurance rather than as a minimum living allowance.

7.3) For senior citizens, if retirement systems are no longer sufficient to guarantee decent living standards, each country must establish and maintain an appropriate pension system. In addition, increased life expectancy means it is now necessary to devise new services for the elderly.

7.4) For each Member State, the European Union should set a guaranteed minimum income level that is half of the median income observed in each country.

8.) The imperative of universal services is part of the basic SPF concept. However the quest for social cohesion must be proactive, aimed as a priority at vulnerable populations requiring social support.

8.1) That kind of an example are "NEETs": young people, especially school leavers, who have not found a job yet and who are not receiving training. These citizens need to be assisted when entering the world of work by means of systems which, to some extent, have yet to be devised.

8.2) Preschool education and child healthcare should also be considered as a major social investment.

8.3) Migrants are another example.

8.3.1) It includes EU citizens who benefit from freedom of movement. Care must be taken to ensure that they do not become victims of social dumping, as is too often the case. As to Roma, their situation deserves more than merely financial support.

8.3.2) With respect to non-EU citizens, SPFs must also apply to them as residents. However, they often encounter a large number of barriers before they can really benefit from the social schemes to which they are entitled and such barriers need to be removed. As to illegal immigrants, who as such have no priori rights to national systems, access to social protection relies on humanitarian considerations.

Conferences

Spanish Council on Social Welfare (CEBS) will welcome to the ICSW Region Europe the Seminar "Migration and Social Protection Floors" in Madrid on January 29th, 2015.

The theme of the Seminar is "**Migrants Access to Welfare State in time of crises: Facilities and obstacles of Migrants to access to Social Protection Floors in Europe**".

This meeting could be comprehended as a continuation of the ICSW Seminar of Social Protection Floors achieved in Rennes in March 2014, but in this case specifically focusing on Migrant workers and their families as one of leading groups in the category of the difference in access to guaranteed services.

Colophon

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