



ICSW EUROPE NEWSLETTER
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A Message from the President



Ronald Wiman – the current ICSW Europe President. He was elected a member of ICSW Europe Board by the General Assembly in Prague on May 27th, 2016. As a President of ICSW Europe he has officially started his function since 1st August, 2017.

Think globally, act locally was the slogan of the Rio Conference on sustainable development (1992). Today, *think locally, act globally* is as valid a statement. This holds particularly in the area of social development, social protection and social work services. Many of our societies are characterized by trends that threaten social integration and cohesion. These trends draw people and social groups apart, societies are splitting to ‘A-people’ and ‘B-people’. Risk of poverty and exclusion hits people unevenly, but nobody is safe.

Many of the social challenges are related to demographic changes, technological change and transformations in the labor market. These trends are rather common in all European countries. The impacts are seen in the lives of people and families. But there are also deliberate economic and societal policy choices both at national, regional and global levels that do not, and sometimes are not even intended to benefit everybody equally.

ICSW is a unique organization. It is global and it is regional and it is local. It has a structure that makes it possible to make observations and to draw conclusions from the local level, from people’s lives, from communities, from national level experiences and experiments and channel these to the European level, to the Council of

Europe and to the EU Commission and to the global level forums, such as the UN.

Our organization is also rather unique in its broad, comprehensive mission to advance equality and equity, social justice, and the right for well-being of all people – with special concern for those at highest risks of poverty and exclusion. It is challenging to create and maintain a distinct and high profile with the broad mission that ICSW has adopted.

In this newsletter, there is a number of examples how we do it: ICSW member organizations and the Board Members participate in several European networks through which we can channel our messages to European decision making. By networking we can cover a lot of terrain. By reporting of innovative practices we can spark new dialogues.

The times are actually good for a broad-based organization like ICSW. The global community has agreed on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that address all countries, both rich and poor ones. European governments, business and civil society together have big challenges to guide developments to meet adequate levels in respect of many of the goals. <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/indicators/socioeconomic-development>

EUROSTAT is expected to publish its first EU SDG monitoring report “Sustainable Development in the European Union – Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context” on November 15th.

The particular mission of ICSW Europe in this respect is to make sure that the ethical and social dimensions are kept on board. Actually, the ethical dimension is usually not even mentioned in SDG reports. Sustainable development is, after all, an agenda of equity within and between generations. Sustainability of development is an issue of equal rights and social justice, as reflected in the Vision and Mission of the ICSW.

ICSW is one of the few organizations that advocate comprehensive, systematic social policies towards ethically, socially, environmentally and economically sustainable development with a

vision of “An Inclusive Society for All”. Let us continue working together with this perspective in mind to ensure that the social dimensions, social rights, inclusion and empowerment, equality and equity are included in all policies in Europe.

Note: this message reflects some of the discussions at the Capacity Development Seminar that was held in Berlin on the 5th of October, the preceding day of the ICSW Europe General Assembly.

(by Ronald Wiman, ICSW Europe President)

ICSW Europe General Assembly

ICSW Europe General Assembly took place in Berlin (Germany) in Deutscher Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge (ICSW Germany) premises on **October 6th, 2017**. The Capacity Building Seminar went on a day before, in October 5th, 2017. The program of the General Assembly meeting was as follows:

- 1) Opening and Checking of Voting Rights (*paid up members*)
- 2) Approval of the Minutes of the GA held in Prague on 27th May, 2016
- 3) ICSW Europe New President’s Statement
- 4) ICSW Europe Annual Report 2016 (*to be adopted*)
- 5) Report from the Treasurer (*to be adopted and discharge of responsibility/quitus to be given, after the auditors have made comments*)
- 6) Reminder: Work Program 2016-2020
- 7) Updating of the Budget for 2017 and Budget for 2018
- 8) Report of the Election Committee
- 9) Any Other Matter Arising

The General Assembly was quorate (present or represented members) with 7 A members + 5 C members = 12 out of 22, representing 19 voting rights out of a total of 31 .



Jean-Michel Hote as the President ad Interim before *Ronald Wiman's* executing of the President function of ICSW Europe presented the ICSW Europe Annual Report 2016. He remarked that the presented report was influenced by ICSW Europe late president *Miloslav Hettes*, who passed away on the 12th of January 2017, at age 62.

In the President's Annual Report 2016 *Jean-Michel Hote* highlighted the structure of the ICSW Europe Board working in 2016 (*Miloslav Hettes* – President, *Jean-Michel Hote* – Treasurer, *Angele Cepenaite* – member, *Joaquin Eguren* – member, *Annelise Murakami* – member, *Britta Spilker* – member, *Ronald Wiman* – member and *Gabriela Siantova* – Secretary); moderate cost of Board meetings thanks to Skype (in 2016 there were six of them) and three face to face Board meetings: in Berlin (April 9th), before GA in Prague (May 25th) and Vienna (11-12th November).

In the second section dedicated to ICSW Expert events/conferences *Jean-Michel Hote* underlined Joint World Conference on “*Social Work, Education and Social Development*” in Seoul held on 27-30th June, 2016, and more specifically on the presentations for the

symposium “*Migration and Social Protection Floors in time of crises*” managed by the Europe Region where six members of the region took part: *Miloslav Hettes, Philippe Steck, Elli Aaltonen, Annelise Murakami, Thomas Goldberg* and *Vadim Moldovan*.

A significant event ICSW Europe focused on in 2016 was the preparation of Moscow conference held on May 18-19th, 2017 and hosted by the Russian ICSW member – Moscow “Institute for Additional Professional Education of Workers for Social Services”. The official report of the conference will be available in two languages – English and Russian.

Partnerships and joined activities: ICSW Europe is an active partner in the Social Platform (members work through Task Forces focused on six domains), Council of Europe (ICSW Europe representatives are *Thomas Goldberg* and *Gérard Schaefer*), ENSACT and OECD (in which *Ronald Wiman* is actively involved) and SDG Watch Europe – an important coalition for future cooperation with ICSW Europe.

Report presented by the Treasurer (Jean-Michel Hote) on 2016 budget and accounts was adopted and discharged the Treasurer and the Board of responsibility.

The next point of the GA Program was dedicated to the document Work Program 2016-2020 presented by the current ICSW Europe President, *Ronald Wiman*. Some ideas concerning Work Program 2016-2020 were discussed a day before the GA, during the Capacity Building Seminar. Work Program for 2016-2020 is concentrated on five priority areas: *poverty, migration, segregation (social cohesion), ageing, children and young people*, with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as a crosscutting issue. The outcomes from the debates of the Capacity Building Seminar are as follows: ICSW Europe needs to be **relevant** to its members and

members should be willing to contribute to this relevance. ICSW Europe must be **well connected** with other partners, it must look at the fact that ICSW Europe's work is **efficient** and last but not least to guarantee **sustainability** for finances and its institutional continuity.

ICSW Europe Treasurer – *Jean-Michel Hote* – presented the Budget for 2017 and budget for 2018. This year ICSW Europe decided to support the conference in Moscow (Russian Federation) and German speaking countries seminar on “Poverty in families – Approaches for social mobility”. Other expenses were aimed at financing the common activities (publication, NL, networking, communication, etc.). *Jean-Michel Hote* mentioned that despite lower income from members' fees (due to some members intending to be downgraded from A category to C category) this year and for the future year, ICSW Europe must continue with its regular activities. The upcoming activity financed from ICSW Europe budget will be the next GA in Dublin (Ireland) and costs of some participants (after agreement).

The Report of the Election Committee was presented by *Solveig Askjem*. The tasks of the Election Committee were:

- a) to prepare a proposal concerning the number of members of the next ICSW Europe Board;
- b) to decide about the setting of a post of Vice President within the Board.

Both points were discussed and the GA proceeded to the act of voting with the following results:

- a) The General Assembly approved a total number of the Board members 5 (verbally five) for the next period of ICSW Europe Board.
- b) The General Assembly approved to set a post of Vice President in ICSW Europe Board.

ICSW Europe President *Ronald Wiman* thanked everybody for their presence at the General Assembly and thanked the organiser Deutscher Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge (ICSW Germany) for preparing and organising the GA.

(ICSW Europe Editor)

ICSW Global Conference Dublin 2018



SWSD 2018

“It is with great pleasure that IASSW, ICSW & IFSW welcome all our colleagues to join with us in the **Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development (SWSD) 2018** in Dublin for at least four days of learning from each other and sharing our skills, knowledge and expertise.

The theme of the gathering is the third pillar of The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development, **Environmental and Community Sustainability: Human Solutions in Evolving Societies**. It is a theme that resonates around the world with colleagues working in difficult circumstances of war, climate change and distrust between people. It is a theme that is at the heart of social work principles and values. Working with people to achieve positive change, who are the experts in their own experience, policy makers and providers of care and protection is the foundation on which we build our practice. Additionally we will launch the final theme of the Agenda **Strengthening recognition of the importance of human relationships**.“

This important conference is being organised on behalf of the International Federation of Social Workers, The International Schools of Social Work and the **International Council on Social Welfare**. The conference will take place in **Dublin (Ireland)** from **4th-7th July, 2018**.

All about the conference see on:

<http://www.swsd2018.org/>

(source: SWSD 2018,

<http://www.swsd2018.org/welcomeswswd/welcome/welcome-from-iassw-icsw-ifsw/>)

ICSW Europe Expert Meeting

ICSW Expert Meeting 2017 “Poverty in families – Approaches for social mobility in Germany, Austria and Switzerland”

On **November 16th-17th, 2017** experts from Germany, Austria and Switzerland will come together in **Berlin** and discuss effective approaches of social mobility. Analysis’ and reports on the social situation e.g. in Germany have shown that – despite the good development on the labour market and economy – it is becoming increasingly difficult for poor people to find ways out of poverty. For children and adolescents living in poor households, this very often means limited educational and participation opportunities. Exchange of experiences and about progress made in the neighboring countries Austria, Germany or Switzerland should help to question own offers and strategies and to consider new approaches for social mobility. After the ICSW expert meeting a report will be published in German and English.

If you have any questions on seminar, please, contact Ms. **Cornelia Markowski** (Secretary-General ICSW Germany, c/o German Association for Public and Private Welfare) on markowski@deutscher-verein.de.

Programme of the seminar:

November 16th, 2017

14:00 Opening and welcome – “Tour de Table“
Moderation: *Inge Michels, Michael Löher* (ICSW Germany), *Pfarrer Mag. Michael Chalupka* (ICSW Austria), *Bettina Seebeck* (ICSW Switzerland)

14:30 Introduction – Poverty of families: Prof. Dr. *Gerhard Bäcker* (University Duisburg-Essen)

15:15 Key topic: Social Mobility – Keynotes from Austria, Germany and Switzerland. Austria: *Mag. Martin Schenk* (Diakonie Austria), Germany: Prof. Dr. *Olaf Groh-Samberg* (University Bremen, SOCIUM Research Center on Inequality and Social Policy), Switzerland: *Yann Bochsler* (University of Applied Sciences for Northwestern Switzerland, Doctoral student at University Geneva)

17:00 Discussion. Moderation: *Inge Michels*

November 17th, 2017

9:00 Welcome 2nd day: *Inge Michels*

9:15 Ways out of poverty – Solutions for social permeability in Austria and Germany. Austria: Ass. Prof. Dr. *Christine Stelzer-Orthofer* (Johannes Kepler University, Linz), Germany: *Christina Wieda* (Bertelsmann Foundation, Gütersloh)

10:45 Coffee break

11:00 Ways out of poverty (Cont.) – Solutions for social permeability in Switzerland. Switzerland:

Dr. *Kaspar Burger* (University Geneva, Interfaculty Center for Child Rights Studies)

11:45 Final discussion – Comparison of the perspectives from the three countries and conclusions. Moderation: *Inge Michels*

13:00 End of the meeting

The ICSW expert meeting is organized by the ICSW National Committees of Germany (Deutscher Verein), Austria (ÖKSA) and Switzerland (SKOS). **ICSW Europe** supports the meeting.

ICSW Europe Members

Kela  **The Social Insurance Institution (Kela), Finland**

Basic Income – an Answer to Problems in Social Security?

Everyone in Finland has the right to on adequate material existence. The current social security system, which has been gradually built up, was made up many decades. It has 42 different pensions, benefits and allowances for sickness, pensions, unemployment, childcare, maternity, parental allowances, rehabilitation and social assistance for urgent need. Finland took the decision to start an experiment testing basic income in the beginning of 2017. It will run for two years. It is one of the items on the programme of Finnish Government. The unemployment and especially long-lasting unemployment is rather high and new incentives are needed. Basic income is this kind of new experiment.

The aim of this experiment is:

- Renew the social security system to respond better to changes in working life
- Develop social security towards greater participation and incentives for work
- Reduce bureaucracy
- Simplify the complexity of the social security system

The *main* goal of this Finnish experiment is to see if the mechanism of a basic income (unconditional financial support given regularly to customers) will increase the incentive to take on work. The experiment is, in any case guaranteed to offer a wide range of perspectives that can be used to develop social security systems. The experiment is implemented by Kela (Finnish Social Insurance Institution), which is the main implementing body for social security and responsible for the administration of over 40 basic social security programmes in Finland.

Why basic income?

The problems in the Finnish unemployment benefit system are varied. First of all, it is quite bureaucratic when it comes to accommodating part-time employment. Claimants must renew their status and provide information about their earnings to Kela every four weeks, because the earnings reduce the full unemployment benefit. It takes time for customers to obtain the information in the first place (pay checks) and it takes time for Kela to process the amount of the partial unemployment benefit. This leads to a situation where customers do not know when they can expect to get their benefit payments and how much they can expect to get. The financial uncertainty and the bureaucracy give them feelings of frustration and stress. The result is that some customers stay on the full unemployment benefit rather than take on part-time jobs, preferring the security of a guaranteed monthly payment. Another problem is that in some situations, as a result of taxation and

various supplementary payments, one may fall into a welfare trap where taking on a part-time job leaves one with less money than staying on the full unemployment benefit would.

The mechanism of basic income experiment

The Finnish experiment works on the idea that a partial basic income replaces some of the basic social security benefits, including the basic unemployment benefit, the sickness benefit, as well as some parental benefits and rehabilitation benefits. The idea is that in this experiment the participants get a basic income instead of the abovementioned benefits *even if* their circumstances change. This allows us to see if the described mechanism reduces bureaucracy in situations where individual persons' circumstances change. With 40 different benefits in the Finnish basic social security system, there are often situations where customers are unaware that they may be entitled to a benefit or are entitled to some other benefit, which can lead to problematic situations. As the legislation on the Basic Income Experiment was passed by the Finnish Parliament, it also cleared the parliamentary Constitutional Committee. The legislation guarantees that customers in the target group of 2000 people will get the same amount of euros as they would outside the experiment. Basic income is a new non-permanent piece in the puzzle of the Finnish social security system. Target group (2000) is chosen from the whole group of basic unemployment benefit receivers (175 000 persons) Basic income receivers were picked up according to the unemployment rate of each district. There are female (48 %) and male (52 %). They are receivers from aged 25 – 58 years old. 87 % received labour market subsidy and 13 % basic unemployment allowance.

Lessons learnt from the experiment this for

Even though the experiment has been running for three months, it already has shown benefits

in the form of reduced bureaucracy both for customers and for Kela. The experiment is running smoothly with little input from Kela. BI is paid every month at the same time. Customers have peace of mind and freedom from immediate money concerns, and are able to focus on finding a job, starting a business, etc. And many have done so. Some have reported experiencing significantly less stress. It has also been borne out in practice that this could be a way for customers to, for example, learn a new profession or stay home to take care of elderly relatives. The experiment will provide insight into the problems facing our social security systems and give some answers to tackle them.

Naturally, free money is not the perfect solution for every customer. The important thing to remember is that the basic income experiment is only one of several actions to be taken when tackling the problems of today's and tomorrow's working life and social security. Some people need other kinds of support to cope with life's challenges, for example rehabilitation or medical and social care. We must also invest in such programmes. The basic income is a way forward as we develop further our unemployment benefit and other social security systems in order to eliminate excess bureaucracy. That frees us to take better care of the customers who do not benefit from the unconditional basic income as the sole solution for managing their lives.

Kela is following the changes in the receivers life conditions by its register system and is not interfering their lives during the experiment. Afterwards we will have deep interviews in order to find out receivers feelings, changes in everyday life and also feedback and possible critic.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xPAIEkT0kk>

(Elli Aaltonen, Director General, KELA)

Learn more about the Finnish Basic Income Experiment: the Presentation by Prof. *Olli Kangas*:

<http://bruegel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Basci-Income-.pdf>

There are several experiments of Basic Income going on around the world:

<http://basicincome.org/news/2017/05/basic-income-experiments-and-those-so-called-early-2017-updates/>



Deutscher Verein
für öffentliche
und private Fürsorge e.V.

Opinion of the German Association on the European Solidarity Corps

With its communication the European Commission began with the implementation of an "European Solidarity Corps" aimed at young people under the age of 30. In its opinion the German Association (ICSW Germany) endorses the idea of the Corps. It is important to encourage a European identity among young people, in particular, through the international exchange. The corps must be neutral to the labour market, adapt to the structures of the existing voluntary services in the EU Member states, and be attractive those young people who have not volunteered so far. The full version of the opinion you can find here:

<https://www.deutscher-verein.de/en/uploads/dateien-stab-internationales/dv-05-17-solidarity-corps.pdf>



Project Casa Mare
Moldova

The First Congress of the National Association of Social Workers of Moldova (NASWM)

took place on **October 13th, 2017** in the capital city of **Chisinau**.

It was dedicated to *Social Wellness and Professionalisation of Social Work in Moldova* and aimed at promotion of the National Association of Social Workers in Moldova as the key organization for professionalisation and education of social workers in the country, development of solidarity within the profession as well as the recognition of the value that social workers bring to the health field and demonstrate the dire need for social work professionals in medical institutions, particularly in mental health field, development of the platform for national and international interdisciplinary collaboration in order to facilitate systemic approached to social problems in Moldova and to facilitate the dialogue among the NASWM members.

The event was attended by social work practitioners, educators, representatives from Moldovan ministries, embassies, national and international NGOs, etc.

The Keynote Speakers were represented by Mrs. *Valentina Buliga*, Chair of the Standing "Committee for Social Protection, Health and Family" of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, Mrs. *Svetlana Haraz*, Chair of the Department of Social Work and Sociology from Free International University of Moldova (ULIM) and Mr. *Vadim Tarna*, the President of the NASWM.



Among those who took an active part in the discussions at the event were the representatives of UNICEF, General inspectorate of the Police within the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, American University in Moldova, State Psychiatric Hospital in Chisinau, General Departments of Social Work, Family and Child Protection from the regions of Ialoveni, Floresti and Orhei. The NGO Project Casa Mare associates presented the projects "Social Wellness Improvement", "Vocational Rehabilitation Methodology" and "Community Reconnect Project" as practical models of effective social expert practice in the health and wellness field, community organization and social entrepreneurship.

On the same day in the frame of the First Congress of the National Association of Social Workers in Moldova there was held **the Annual General Assembly of the NASWM**. The assembly discussed and approved the annual activity and financial reports. Among the achievements of the NASWM there were mentioned the Informative activities carried out in the Departments of Social Assistance and Family Protection in several districts in Moldova; Promotion of the Master program in social expertise, created by a consortium of academy and university lecturers from different countries (the USA, the Czech Republic, Poland, Georgia, etc.); organization of the 3rd Congress in the Psychiatric Field which took place in April, 2016, with a large number of attendees from different fields and the Association's activity at the international level, in particular: participation, as a member, in workshops organized by the International Federation of Social Workers in Reykjavik, Island, and in the UNECE Regional Research Forum on Ageing, an event held in September, 2017, in Lisbon, Portugal.

The participants at the event discussed and approved the plan of action for the year of 2018 and identified the strategic priorities for the future.

A group of the most active members and partners of the National Association of Social Workers of Moldova were awarded Diplomas, Certificates and Thank-you letters for their work and contribution in the development of the social assistance and social expertise field.

Both events were organized and held by the National Association of Social Workers of Moldova in close collaboration and partnership with the NGO Project Casa Mare, member of the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), International Federation of Social Work Europe (IFSW Europe), European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW) and International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW).

(Elena Sajina, NGO Project Casa Mare, Associate)



**European Anti Poverty Network
Ireland**

What does the Future of Europe hold for People Experiencing Poverty?

Almost 100 delegates of the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), representing 31 National Networks and 13 European Organisations met in **Dublin**, on **October 21**, at our annual General Assembly.

The meeting started with an exciting opening panel and discussion on “The Future of Europe for people experiencing poverty, and EAPN's role in making this future brighter”.

We wish to thank *Alice-Mary Higgins*, (Independent Senator, Leader of the Civil Engagement Group), *Seanad Eireann*, *Anastasia Crickley*, (Chair UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, CERD),

Salome Mbugua (founder Akidwa; Head of Mission, Wezesha) and *Graciela Malgesini* (European Affairs Policy Officer, EAPN Spain; co-chair, EUISG) for their inspiring and thought-provoking input.

We had the honor to welcome *Regina Doherty*, TD, Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection. The Minister welcomed the delegates to the 2017 General Assembly of the European Anti-Poverty Network. Noting the significant challenges that Ireland in particular has faced over the past decade, the Minister referred to the strong role played by the Irish social protection system in combatting the worst effects of the recession on poverty and income inequality. She reiterated the Government's commitment to a fair society that supports work and enterprise, while creating opportunities and improving the standards of living for all and stated that “The eradication of poverty is still an aspiration for us that inspires us to keep on with steady progress towards the end goal”.

The Director of EAPN, *Leo Williams*, noted that the General Assembly met at a time when Europe, in the opinion of the President of the European Commission *Jean-Claude Juncker*, has the “Wind in its Sails”, as highlighted in the State of the Union address in September. We are cautiously optimistic, recognising the importance and potential impact of the proposed European Pillar of Social Rights, with the upcoming inter-institutional proclamation at the Social Summit in Gothenburg. This must be taken as a crucial opportunity to establish the foundations for upward social convergence on EU social standards, and create more political impetus to meaningfully combat poverty and social exclusion.

<https://eapn.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3f7a32005781bb4c683c8e68e&id=8a05b989a5&e=2baab4c54d>

“Some hope is in the horizon. The discussions about the future of Europe are an opportunity for the EU to show we care about the almost 25% of citizens living at risk of poverty. That’s the scenario that should drive the overall discussions. It is an opportunity to show we recognize our mistakes within the political and economical choices we’ve made and restart the European project towards its original objective: peace and social cohesion.” said *Sérgio Aires*, President of EAPN.

However, even if a slight reduction of the number of EU citizens living at risk of poverty and social exclusion was announced last week by Eurostat, there are a number of developments which temper our optimism, notably: an uncertain European political future, an uncertain European financial future, an EU economic model and governance system which continues to prioritize stability, growth and competitiveness instead of people, the rising inequalities and the ongoing failure to tackle the root causes of poverty and social exclusion.

In response to these concerns, members of EAPN declare that it is imperative for the discussions about the future of Europe to show that Europe, our governments and the European institutions care about the almost 25% of citizens living at risk of poverty, solidarity and the protection of the people living in vulnerable conditions. In the coming months, our leaders must show political determination to make a definitive step forward in this direction by agreeing on a mandatory implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights – and not only for the Eurozone. Tackling poverty is about ensuring we can all participate in society on equal terms and have decent living conditions. To not do so, is a violation of human rights – we call on all people and political institutions to take up their duty to work for the realisation of a world free of poverty and social exclusion.

“I spent 30 years as a rough sleeper, and nobody

said to me where will you lay your head.. In 2007, I got confidence... got a chance as a delegate in EAPN... It was a turning point for me... All poor people want is to be included in decisions which have an impact on their lives” said *Michael Mackey*, Board member of EAPN Ireland.

Read the Final Declaration (<https://eapn.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3f7a32005781bb4c683c8e68e&id=8bab97555f&e=2baab4c54d>)

(source: EAPN Ireland)

EAPN presents its assessment of the 2017 National Reform Programmes in terms of poverty: In how far Member States are pursuing policies which contribute to key social targets of the Europe 2020 strategy (on poverty, employment and education).

Are governments investing in social rights and standards to ensure inclusive and sustainable development and growth?

Are they demonstrating an increased commitment to quality participation of civil society organisations and people experiencing poverty?

This report synthesizes 20 national networks’ answers to a questionnaire and scores in a scoreboard (BE, CY, CZ, DK, EE, FI, FR, DE, IE, IT, LV, LT, LU, NL, PL, PT, RO, ES, SE, UK), as well as inputs from other members in workshops held in June.

The detailed assessment produced 6 key messages:

1. Make macroeconomic policies coherent with social rights
2. Prioritize social rights and an integrated strategy to effectively reduce poverty
3. Make the employment target deliver on poverty reduction and social inclusion
4. Foster equal access to education and lifelong learning
5. Ensure ESF 20% has an impact on poverty!
6. Make the NRPs a true and participatory driver of positive social change

Access the Report here (<http://eapn.us9.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=3f7a32005781bb4c683c8e68e&id=eb9aaf3feb&e=2baab4c54d>).

(source: EAPN Ireland)

Social Platform



Gender Equality Index 2017 Conference

On **11 October 2017**, EIGE released its 3rd edition of the Gender Equality Index.

The event was livestreamed and served as a forum for around 300 decision-makers and practitioners to discuss recent trends and seeked solutions to gender inequalities in the current political and economic context.

The new features of the third edition included a more detailed analysis of the gender equality status for various groups of women and men. This “intersectional” approach looked at factors beyond gender, such as age, disability and education.

What is more, it provided new data for social power and health behaviour, not measured in previous editions due to a lack of suitable indicators.

Learn more about the conference and watch it broadcasted live [here](#)

(source: European Institute for Gender Equality, <http://eige.europa.eu/news-and-events/events-calendar/event/9499>)

Social Platform General Assembly 2017

Social platform (SP) is the largest network of European rights and value-based civil society organisations working in the social sector. On **27th April** SP General Assembly 2017 (GA) was held in Brussels. Among the main issues discussed at the GA were financial results and accounts and election of a new management committee (MC): President, Vice-president, Treasurer and 3 members. Besides, the program of SP GA provided a possibility to discuss the social policy issues with *Ann Mettler*, the head of the European political strategy centre.



During the elections to SP MC the candidates presented their visions how to become more powerful voice of European NGOs, to better mobilise activities in advocacy for social justice and social progress. An elected President in 2015, *Jana Hainsworth*, stressed that over the last 2 years the MC has laid strong foundations for SP future. She adopted an attitude that in the case of her re-election main commitments would lie in increasing of SP visibility and influence, in better harnessing of the collective expertise and influence of its members, and in shaping opinion within EU institutions to be respected as a critical partner among the peers. After election procedures there was formed a new SP MC: re-elected President *Jana Hainsworth* (Eurochild), Vice-president *Maciej Kucharczyk* (Age Platform Europe), Vice-President *Catherine Naughton* (European Disability Forum), Treasurer *Jorge Nuño Mayer* (Caritas Europe), members: *Michele*

LeVoy (PICUM), Patricia Scherer (EASPD), Piotr Sadowski (Volonteuropa).

(Angele Cepenaite, ICSW Europe Board)

ENSACT

Call for good examples of working towards sustainable communities and sustainable development

The call to contribute to the European Observatory of the Global Agenda on Social Work and Social Development is open. Through this Call ENSACT is looking for good examples of working towards sustainable communities and sustainable development.

ICSW Europe is a member of ENSACT, the European Network for Social Action. ENSACT hosts the European Observatory. **We call on** social work practitioners, educators, policy makers and researchers in Europe to send us their experiences and practices on this year's theme "Promoting sustainable communities and sustainable development". ENSACT invites everyone to share thoughts, ideas, views, and good practices on ways to work with specific groups and with communities to contribute to sustainable development and sustainable social work.

Please help to share this information with your members at national and local level. You can find more information on the website www.ensact.com. Here you can read some articles by experts with more detailed information on how social work can promote sustainable communities and sustainable development. ENSACT will write a European

report based on the good examples we receive. This report will be part of the Global observatory report that will be presented during the [joint conference in Dublin next year](#).

On www.ensact.com you can upload your contribution. Submissions can be made with materials in different languages as long as there is an abstract in English. The deadline is **1st December, 2017**. Don't wait and please share your experiences!

(Angele Cepenaite, ICSW Europe Board)

SDG Watch Europe



SDG Watch Europe is a new, EU-level, cross-sectoral CSO alliance of NGOs from development, environment, social, human rights and other sectors.

Its goal is to hold governments to account for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs).

SDG Watch Europe's work is coordinated along the lines of the 4 interlinked Work Strands. Organisation's joining SDG Watch can participate in one or more of these working strands.

1. Strand One: Joint high level advocacy and policy coordination for ambitious and integrated EU SDG implementation;
2. Strand Two: Monitoring, accountability and review of European SDG implementation across all sectors;
3. Strand Three: Engaging CSOs and citizens – at local, national and EU level;

4. Strand Four: Innovating, Reflecting, Experimenting and Learning together.

(source: *SDG Watch Europe*,
<https://www.sdgwatcheurope.org/>)

ICSW Europe applied for membership in SDG Watch Europe and officially became a member in **June 2017**.

Council of Europe



The [Summer session 2017](#) of the Conference of INGOs was held at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg from 26 to 30 of June. On 29 of June, the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Thematic Committees (Education and Culture Committee, Human Rights Committee, Democracy, Social Cohesion and Global Challenges Committee) were elected for three years. On Friday 30 June 2017, two reports were presented: Report of the fact finding visit of the President of the Conference of INGOs in [Hungary](#) (Nov-16) and [Ireland](#) (Apr-17). The Session closed with a Statement held by *Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni*, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Mrs *Battaini-Dragoni* congratulated all members for the 40th anniversary of the Conference of INGOs and underlined the importance of participatory status to develop social rights and Democracy as part and representatives of the European society.

Website of the Conference:
<http://www.coe.int/en/web/ingo>

See also:
Commission communication on the [European Pillar of social rights](#) (26 April 2017)

State of democracy, human rights and the rule of law (2017), Report by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe: [Populism - How strong are Europe's checks and balances?](#)

(*Gérard Schaefer*)

Eurochild



Eurochild is a **network** of organisations and individuals working in and across Europe to promote the rights and well-being of children and young people.

Our **vision** is of a society where children and young people grow up happy, healthy and confident and respected as individuals in their own right.

Our **mission** is to promote the rights and well-being of children in policy and practice through advocacy, membership exchange and research.

Our work is underpinned by the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** (UNCRC). An international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people a comprehensive set of rights.

The network is **co-funded** by the European Union's programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI). A financing instrument at EU level which promotes, amongst others, combating social exclusion & poverty.

Eurochild has **165 members**, of which 123 are full members, 39 associate members and 3 honorary members in 33 countries. **21 national networks** of children's rights organisations have been appointed as National Partner Networks and 3 organisations are candidate members.

More about the network Eurochild:
http://eurochild.org/?utm_source=email&utm_campaign=eNB_July&utm_medium=email

(source: Eurochild, <http://www.eurochild.org/>)

Conference on Ageing

Ministerial Conference on Ageing: A Sustainable Society for All Ages: Realizing the potential of living longer

The UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing took place in **Lisbon**, Portugal, from **21 to 22 September 2017**.

The conference completed the third review and appraisal cycle (2012-2017) of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS). The focus was on “Realizing the potential of living longer”. Conference panels will address this theme through the lens of:

1. Recognizing the potential of older persons;
2. Encouraging longer working life and ability to work;
3. Ensuring ageing with dignity.

The Ministerial Conference on Ageing was organized by UNECE in cooperation with the Government of Portugal, under the coordination of the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity, and Social Security.

A civil society forum and a research forum preceded the Ministerial Conference on 20 September 2017.

The 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration is now available on the website at the following link:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/Ministerial_Conference_Lisbon/Documents/2017_Lisbon_Ministerial_Declaration.pdf

The statements by the NGO Forum and Research Forum are also posted under the respective tabs on the Conference website:

http://www.unece.org/pau/ageing/ministerial_conference_2017.html#/

(source: Ministerial Conference on Ageing, http://www.unece.org/pau/ageing/ministerial_conference_2017.html)

Useful Links

Gender Equality Index 2017: Release in the Council of the EU:

<http://eige.europa.eu/news-and-events/events-calendar/event/9499>

SDG Watch Europe:

<https://www.sdgwatcheurope.org/>

Eurochild:

<http://www.eurochild.org/>

SWSD Conference 2018, Dublin (Ireland):

<http://www.swsd2018.org/>

Experiments of Basic Income going on around the world:

<http://basicincome.org/news/2017/05/basic-income-experiments-and-those-so-called-early-2017-updates/>

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.

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