



ICSW EUROPE NEWSLETTER **January & February 2011**

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ICW Europe Conference **Brussels, April 10-13 2011**

There are still places available for the ICSW Europe & ENSACT conference which takes place from 10 - 13 April 2011 in Brussels, Belgium. The central theme of the conference is Social Action in Europe: Sustainable Social Development and Economic Challenges. Social sustainability introduces a long term perspective for social action and is a fundamental concept for building social policy in Europe today. Financial and economic crises create new challenges and opportunities for our global society.

The conference subthemes are:

- A. Social policy and social action
- B. Active citizenship and social rights
- C. Professional intuition
- D. Innovation.

More information and registration through the conference website: www.ensact.eu

Social Policy and Poverty Reduction **Views from ICSW Committees in Germany and Finland** *By Kirsi Väättä*

German and Finnish perspectives on the social aspects of the EU 2020-strategy were compared in a seminar that was held on 15 November last year in Helsinki. The seminar entitled "Social Policy and Poverty Reduction Measures in Light of the Europe 2020 Strategy:

Views from Germany and Finland” was organised by ICSW Finland, the Finnish Federation for Social Welfare and Health (STKL) and the Social Policy Association of Finland. German viewpoints, introduced by Cornelia Markowski and Johannes Eisenbarth from the German Association for Public and Private Welfare, were followed by presentations of Finnish experts and a general discussion on the possibilities to develop a more socially oriented EU.

The seminar was linked to a wider exercise, in which the Finnish Federation (STKL) and the German Association have agreed to further develop their co-operation. In a separate meeting, the two organizations exchanged their views on the impact of the EU policies on the social services in their respective countries. In both countries, NGOs have been instrumental in responding to emerging needs by developing social services (which may or may not have been subsequently included by the Governments in their own responsibilities). For many reasons, however, the evolution of the services structure and, consequently, the current state of affairs, differs in many ways. Besides the sheer difference in scale, the services structure in Germany is more established in terms of application of the EU internal market rules, whereas the Finnish system is in a state of transition. In both countries, NGOs continue to play an important role, but they need to struggle to find their way through the jungle of rules that have originally been designed with neither non-profit actors nor the social sector in mind. Joint points of interest were found, for instance, regarding the application and development of the rules on State aid and public procurement. Means of future co-operation will include for example continued exchange of expertise on various forums as well as work towards common positions.

For more information, please feel free to contact [Kirsi Väättämoinen](#)

European Platform Against Poverty Social Platform conditions for delivery

Last December, the Commission proposed its 7th Flagship initiative “European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion” as the main tool to deliver on the EU target aiming at taking at least 20 million people out of poverty by 2020. Social Platform welcomes the Commission’s Communications on the European Platform Against Poverty, but has four proposals to ensure that the Poverty Platform delivers solid results.

1. Work in partnership with Social Platform and its members on the European Platform Against Poverty, in line with the Europe 2020 integrated guidelines.

This could be achieved by including Social Platform in a regular structured dialogue, for example in the “high-level steering committee” providing advice and guidance on developing EU actions in the field of social innovation. It could also be achieved by involving national and European members of the Social Platform closely in concrete initiatives and in the National Reform Programmes.

2. Ensure that the next multi-annual framework and resulting EU financial instruments, back up and support the actions of the European Platform Against Poverty with strong financial support as “an indispensable part of the EU approach” and to support the active participation of NGO stakeholders and people directly experiencing poverty as recommended by the EU budget review last October.

3. Ensure a broad perspective to tackling poverty and social exclusion. Employment alone does not guarantee a route out of poverty, as evidenced by the fact that 8% of employees in the EU are classified as ‘working poor’. Ensuring social inclusion also entails more than ensuring labour market access. A broad and effective approach to foster social inclusion needs to implement the integrated active inclusion approach but to also take into account policy initiatives to support access to rights, resources and services for example in key areas such as housing and health, and needs to happen in a context of reducing inequalities in income and wealth, fighting gender inequalities, and combating discrimination in access to rights, services and jobs. The defence of the Social OMC is crucial if a stronger guarantee is to be provided for this broader approach, and in particular through national strategies on

social protection and social inclusion based on active stakeholder engagement. Social NGOs wish to see a clear road map involving EU and national NGOs in agreeing the key role of these integrated national strategies in the context of Europe 2020, as proposed.

4. Ensure Europe 2020 monitoring and governance takes into account “inclusive growth” and the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

For more information visit the Social Platform [website](#)

Comparing Policies Against Poverty in Switzerland, Germany and Austria ICSW Expert meeting Switzerland

By Dorothee Guggisberg

The second regional expert meeting within the scope of ICSW Europe took place on 30 September and 1 October 2010 in Lucerne, Switzerland. Twenty-two experts from the areas of science, public authorities and NGOs in Germany, Austria and Switzerland were invited by the “Schweizerische Konferenz für Sozialhilfe” (Swiss Conference for Social Welfare).

As this was the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, the aim of the meeting was to discuss the different approaches and measures for combating poverty and to compare the social welfare and basic subsistence income models in the three countries. Although they may at first sight appear to be similar, and the challenges posed by the rising threat of poverty and the looming dismantling of welfare-state social security may seem similar too, the strategies for combating poverty and securing livelihoods differ considerably in the three countries. The complexity of the political systems, the distinctness of the federalist structures and the historically evolved peculiarities resulted in an extremely lively and highly interesting exchange.

The report of this Expert meeting can be found on the ICSW [website](#). There is an [English language version](#) as well as a [German language version](#).

EU Multiannual Financial Framework

Social Platform proposals to ensure balanced allocation of resources

Next June, the Commission will propose a regulation laying down the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MAFF) covering the period after 2013. The EU 2020 Strategy outlines the delivery of “smart, sustainable and inclusive” objectives and as such one third of the budgets should go towards EU inclusive priorities, Social Platform and its members agree.

According to the Eurobarometer of June 2010, Poverty, Health, Education and training, and equal opportunities are in the first six EU priorities for all Europeans. The Commission stated in its last budget Review that: “the weight of spending should mirror the EU's core policy priorities”.

In order to ensure the inclusivity and balance in spending, Social Platform and members proposed the following:

- Ensure that one third of the EU financial resources are allocated to inclusive policies. Inclusive policies work to ensure that all people living in the EU are included in society, and ensure that EU policies are framed to allow all people to benefit from their outcomes, including those at risk of exclusion and poverty.
- Include the Lisbon treaty transversal clauses 8, 9 and 10 in the general principles of the MAFF and the subsequent legal instruments, such as structural funds, cohesion funds and ERDF, in order to ensure that all EU policies and programmes reflect the inclusive dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy.
- Ensure that all of the new legal financial instruments that will be published between July and December reflect the inclusive pillar of the Europe 2020 strategy. This includes agricultural, education, research, innovation and cohesion programmes which can be

developed in an inclusive manner and can work to combat poverty and social exclusion, in addition to purely social EU programmes which should also be reinforced and adequately financed.

- Ensure the financial support for the participation of citizens and civil society organisations in the implementation, evaluation and monitoring of EU funds.

For more information, check the Social Platform [website](#)

Triplet Project ICSW Committee Spain

The Spanish ICSW member Comite Español Para el Bienestar Social (CEBS) cooperates in the Triplet Project, a contribution of the Hungarian, Spanish and Belgian civil society to the presidential European Union. It is a transnational project funded by the European Commission and developed by the European House of Hungary, the ONCE Foundation of Spain and Pour la Solidarité from Belgium.

The Triplet Project gives an insight into the challenges of both the Spanish civil society and the current EU Presidency troika (Hungary, Spain, Belgium), while offering recommendations for future presidential trios. Among the challenges that the civil society faces, the following are highlighted: the social needs increase, budget reduction of the Public Administration, lower economic activity in the productive sector, difficulties in credit access or donation income reduction.

For this reason, according to the study, Spanish organizations should renovate their message and leadership in order to create a appropriate context for a new sustainable welfare cycle and innovating in the social needs attention, raising changes of mind and removing structural barriers. In the same way, alliances have to be created and a network has to be promoted in order to interchange and spread good practices, taking advantage of the new technologies. And all that, seeking to channel citizens solidarity when involved in the collective action and developing legal, financial and management tools that facilitate civil society in strengthening and participation in social development.

The project formulated the following recommendations:

- The organizations of civil society have to participate in the development of the priorities and the EU presidency programmes. Governments need to be open to this as an important condition and necessary for a successful presidential work.
- Civil society organisations' opinions and proposals may be displayed and enforced more effectively, if decided after previous consultation and coordination, because this will mean they have more social support. Both formal and informal civil collaboration, in the trio programs context and/or within each country may be a good solution.
- We consider of great interest and support the multi-level and continuous cooperation between the civil society organizations of the trio countries, in various and innovative forms, which can promote the European ideal to spread and help reduce the distance, and the citizens, in terms of results. Such cooperation goes beyond the 18 month Presidential Trio term.
- The active participation in the programme implementation of a EU presidency offers the opportunity to strengthen the compromise between society and the EU, to put into practice participatory democracy, and finally, to assimilate the idea of an active European citizenship.
- We support the organization of civil society events with high visibility in the countries that hold the presidency. The European Civic Working Days program in Malaga is a good example, as well as the organization of a similar event in Budapest during the Hungary EU presidency in the first half of the year 2011.
- We suggest that priorities and programmes expected by the Presidential Trio are taken into account and supported by European Commission calls for the civil society organizations.

- We consider that encouraging the coordination and cooperation between Economic and Social Committee, the institutional expression of the European organized civil society, and the civil society organizations of the trio countries, is useful and justified.

For more information please contact the [CEBS secretariat](#).

Hungarian EU Presidency Priorities for the start of 2011

Hungary started its EU Presidency on 1 January 2011, as the last member of the Spanish-Belgian-Hungarian trio. Its programme fits into the trio programme and the priorities are built on the results delivered by the Spanish and Belgian Presidencies. The Presidency Programme is built on four main priorities. These are listed below with a specific look at their social dimensions.

Growth, jobs and social inclusion

The consolidation of the European economic recovery is a common aim. The strengthening of the European economic co-ordination and the introduction of new instruments are a necessity. The Europe 2020 Strategy aims to boost employment, enhance competitiveness and social inclusion – three closely interrelated and mutually supporting objectives. The targets have been agreed upon. The Hungarian Presidency will start the implementation both at national and at European level. Discussions on the flagship initiatives will continue: the Innovation Union will be elaborated and the implementation will start; the agenda for new skills and jobs will be discussed with special focus on job creation; Council conclusions are planned to be adopted on the Digital Agenda, on the Youth on the Move and on the Resource Efficient Europe initiatives. In the framework of the European platform against poverty, the Hungarian Presidency will focus on child poverty and the social integration of the Roma population.

Stronger Europe – building on the foundations and saving the future

The economic, social and territorial cohesion is one of the main pillars of the EU. An internally unified Europe is more competitive globally and more efficient in external actions. We need to ensure that the cohesion policy keeps this objective and also the means to reach it. Responsibility towards future generations is a common feature in many European policies. Ensuring environmental sustainability and combating climate change are key concerns for European citizens. The EU has to keep its leading role in the global fight against climate change. Based on the future outcome of the Cancún Summit in December 2010, the Hungarian Presidency is committed to the implementation of the Cancún decisions in the EU and to further advance negotiations with a view to the next negotiation rounds.

A Union close to its citizens

The Presidency will work on bringing Europe closer to its citizens. Tangible results have to be achieved in the field of freedom, security and justice which influence the everyday life of the citizens. The better management of migration flows and the integration of migrants are still topical issues. Work on the adoption of the proposals aiming at the creation of a common European asylum system will continue.

With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the Charter of Fundamental Rights has ushered in a new era in guaranteeing protecting human rights in Europe. The first assessment of the implementation of the Charter will be an important contribution to the process.

The Lisbon Treaty has also introduced the European Citizens' Initiative. The speedy adoption of the implementing provisions is a highly significant issue for the Hungarian Presidency.

Enlarging responsibly and engaging globally

The Hungarian Presidency promotes the continuation of the enlargement process. Europe has to remain open towards those countries that fulfil the criteria: are ready and willing to

strengthen the rule of law, democracy and human rights, to adopt and implement the *acquis*. The renewal of the EU's neighbourhood policy is of utmost importance. Based on its geographical location, the Hungarian Presidency can bring added value to the EU's policy towards its Eastern neighbours. Budapest will host the second Eastern Partnership Summit in May 2011 with a view to strengthening the relations between the Union and the six Eastern Partners. The EU's development cooperation policy is also an integral part of the EU's external relations. As the world's greatest donor the Union plays a major role in the global fight against poverty. The Commission's proposal on the renewal of the common development cooperation policy will be an important milestone.

More information on the Hungarian Presidency can be found on the Presidency [website](#).

EU research and innovation funding: Consultation on the Green Paper by the Commission

The consultation on EU research and innovation invites stakeholders to provide views to help the Commission develop its proposal in this area. In line with the Innovation Union, the Green Paper proposes an approach focused more directly on tackling today's most pressing societal challenges and therefore the concerns of Europe's citizens. Successful research and innovation are prerequisites for improving quality of life, enhancing social welfare and boosting economic competitiveness. Indeed, using research and innovation to tackle key challenges such as climate change and health not only has intrinsic value, it can also give Europe a technological lead in the world markets of the future and create growth and jobs in Europe.

EU funding for research and innovation will have more impact if procedures are simplified and access widened. This will make things easier for participants, attract new applicants and drive up the already high quality of projects and of results. That in turn will help create new products and services – including better public services – that people want and will help Europe to create sustainable growth and jobs and be more resilient against crises.

These positive effects will be all the stronger if another aspect of the Green Paper – better cooperation between Member States themselves – is also realised.

Current EU funding for research and innovation

Over the previous multi-annual financial frameworks, EU funding for research and innovation has increased steadily. In 2013, the last year of the current financial framework, research and innovation will constitute more than 7 % of the total EU Budget.

The current budgetary period 2007-2013 covers the following programmes and initiatives that support research and innovation:

- The [Seventh Framework Programme](#) (FP7)
- The [Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme](#) (CIP)
- The [European Institute of Innovation and Technology](#) (EIT)
- Under the [Cohesion policy](#), around 86 billion euro (almost 25% of the total Structural Funds budget) is allocated to enhance the capacity of regional economies to change and innovate, focusing on four key elements: R&D and innovation, entrepreneurship, ICT and human capital development.

Future funding

The Commission needs to prepare its proposals for supporting research and innovation by mid-2011. The EU Budget Review published last autumn called for the future EU Budget to be closely linked to the EU's policy priorities, as set out in the Europe 2020 strategy. Research and innovation are central elements of this strategy: if Europe wants to live up to its ambitions and tackle today's major challenges, it needs breakthroughs that only research and innovation can deliver. Therefore, a credible, modern and forward looking EU Budget needs to have research and innovation as a core component.

The Green Paper sets out for consultation how the Common Strategic Framework could take further steps towards simplification - for example, by developing more standardised rules and procedures for all beneficiaries of EU research and innovation funding. The Green Paper also raises the possibility of a wider use of lump sums and the general acceptance of beneficiaries' own accounting practices: rather than forcing them to implement parallel accounting systems simply to be able to take part in EU projects, as is sometimes currently the case.

The consultation

A public consultation [website](#) has been set up where stakeholders can express their views. The website includes an online questionnaire, and an entry point for the submission of position papers. The consultation will close on 20 May 2011. On 10 June 2011, the Commission will invite a wide range of stakeholder representatives to a conference in Brussels to discuss the consultation outcome.

In addition, the Commission announces a competition for a new name. The nature of EU funding for research and innovation will be changed, with coherent focus right along the innovation chain. Second, despite their major success, the existing instruments involved are not necessarily widely known beyond participants and stakeholders. A new name - including the competition to find one - is hoped to help boost wider public awareness. The competition will be announced in the next few weeks and the details will be posted on the Research and Innovation [website](#).

Statute of European Association

The European Alliance for the Statute of the European Association has been campaigning for a long period of time for the setting up of a European Statute for the European Association, giving institutional recognition to the engagement and to the activism of millions of citizens, freely and voluntarily joining together in associations across Europe. The freedom of association at European level is both a fundamental right of the European citizens and an active component in the emergence of a European public sphere.

Along with the deepening of the European single market, the removal of remaining obstacles to the free movement of goods and services and the adoption of European statutes for companies and co-operatives has been contributing to create a certain sense of belonging to a community of goods, capital and services.

The Treaty of Lisbon brings Europe forward towards a community of values and people, reinforcing the social and political citizenship by granting the Charter of Fundamental Rights with binding legal force and by creating the conditions for citizens and representative associations to better voice their opinions "in all areas of Union act". Therefore, a genuine and longstanding commitment of all EU institutions to engage in "an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society", as stated in article 11 of the Lisbon Treaty, is of outmost importance.

In the Commission "Towards a single Market Act" associations are not clearly included in the sphere of social economy, along with foundations, cooperatives and mutual societies. The Commission undertakes for 2011 "to ensure that the rights guaranteed in the Charter, including the right to take collective action, are taken into account."

The European Parliament has launched a [written declaration](#) calling on the European Commission to table three proposals for European statutes for foundations, associations and mutuals respectively. A group of European associations (EASEA) promoting the adoption of a European Statute of European Association have decided to join their forces with the mutuals and foundations in order to support this declaration and to help to collect a majority of MEP signatures.

More information on the Declaration and the campaign can be found on the [EASEA website](#).

Publications

Gender mainstreaming active inclusion policies

Final synthesis report

The aim of this report is to inform and help develop gender mainstreaming in active inclusion policies. It looks at gender mainstreaming in each of the three pillars of active inclusion, i.e. income support, labour inclusion and access to services. This final synthesis report gathers the information provided by the Expert Group in Gender Equality, Social Inclusion, Health and Long-Term Care (EGGSI) and covers 30 European countries. Eurostat indicators provide some hints regarding gender inequalities in poverty and social inclusion, but the report warns that these indicators may underestimate the magnitude of women's greater risk of poverty because they assume that household resources are pooled and shared equally, whereas in practice women in low-income households tend to manage the domestic budget and reduce their own consumption to maintain the living standards of their male partners and children. In addition to women's greater exposure to poverty and their low income, there are additional differences in the impact of the stress and social isolation that they experience.

Very few countries within the EU-27 have designed and implemented gender-specific measures that take into account the specific needs of women and men respectively in promoting the inclusion of vulnerable groups such as migrants, the disabled and the long-term unemployed.

European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Unit G.1
ISBN 978-92-79-15708-0

Conference Report

Volunteering in the European Union

The European Conference "Volunteering in the European Union: Creating a supportive environment and attracting volunteers" took place in Berlin on 11 and 12 November 2010. The conference report is now available for downloading from the [website](#) of the Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe.

Volunteering – a force for change

Eurofound resource pack

More than one in five people are involved in volunteering, according to new analysis from Eurofound, the Dublin-based EU Agency. The findings show that a person involved in volunteering is most likely a middle-aged, well-educated male with a higher income – and is most likely to volunteer in sport activities. The resource pack entitled 'Volunteering – a force for change' looks at the phenomenon of volunteering across the European Union, and provides insights into differences between countries, how companies encourage volunteering, and makes a case for using volunteering as a measure to include elderly people in society.

Eurofound's new resource pack on volunteering in the EU is available [here](#).

Conferences

06 - 07 April 2011

Brighton, United Kingdom

Resilience - Why bother?

University of Brighton with community partners, Amaze and BoingBoing.

E-Mail: b.heaver@brighton.ac.uk

Website:

http://www.boingboing.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=45&Itemid=38

A conference for those who are passionate about the field of resilience: Researchers, practitioners, parents and carers, policy makers, service users and young adults. The programme will include keynotes from leading international academics, parents, young people and practitioners. Expect workshops, panel debate, posters and networking.

08 - 09 April 2011 Klaipėda, Lithuania
Volunteerism and Philanthropy: Ideal or Ideology
LCC International University

E-Mail: lccaac@lcc.lt

Website: <http://www.lcc.lt/academic-conference/contact.php>

The conference will address volunteering and philanthropy from the academic point of view. Do the social democracies of Europe need the concepts of philanthropy and volunteerism? What are the benefits of spreading the ideals in central and Eastern Europe and what is and should be the role of politics, the Church, and artists in this endeavour? How can volunteerism and philanthropy help solve social problems without emphasizing social differences?

10 - 13 April 2011 Brussels, Belgium
Social Action in Europe: Sustainable Social Development and Economic Challenges
Ensact & ICSW

E-Mail: jan.agten@khk.be

Website: www.ensact.eu

Social sustainability introduces a long term perspective for social action and is a fundamental concept for building social policy in Europe today. Financial and economic crises create new challenges and opportunities for our global society.

Sub themes:

- A. Social policy and social action
- B. Active citizenship and social rights
- C. Professional intuition
- D. Innovation.

04 - 06 May 2011 Tallinn, Estonia
CEV Symposium - "The future of volunteering: Profiles, Dimensions, Trends"
CEV

E-Mail: cev@cev.be

Website: <http://www.cev.be/136-2011-may-%28tallinn-estonia%29-the-future-of-volunteering-concepts-trend%20s-visions-EN.html>

The objects of the conference are:

- To provide an overview of the current trends in volunteering;
- To facilitate a space for debate on controversies that have developed over time;
- To identify the core concepts and inviolable values of volunteering we adhere to and that we want to safeguard;
- To develop a vision for the decades to come of how volunteering will continue to serve as a central cornerstone in all European countries.

29 May - 1 June 2011 Montreal, Canada
Violence Against Women: Complex Realities and New Issues in a Changing World

CRI-VIFF (the Interdisciplinary Research Center on Family Violence and Violence Against Women)

E-Mail: conferenceviolence@esersoc.umontreal.ca

Website: <http://www.conferenceviolence.com/english/home/introduction-word/>

Like many other social problems, violence against women has become more complex in recent years. Everyone working to diminish violence against women therefore faces increasingly numerous and diverse challenges, challenges that oblige us to question our ways of seeing the problem, understanding its causes and consequences, and imagining potential social responses.

05 - 08 June 2011

Toronto, Canada

Festival of International Conferences on Caregiving, Disability, Aging and Technology - FICCDAT 2011

FICCDAT

E-Mail: info@ficcdat.ca

Website: <https://www.confmanager.com/main.cfm?cid=1559>

The main goal of the Caregiving in the 21st Century conference is to improve the lives of caregivers through: the generation and mobilization of new knowledge; the exchange of knowledge on the status of caregiver policy and practice; and the formation of new partnerships around four main themes:

1. A Care Work Force in Crisis
2. The Future of Families and Caregiving
3. Poverty and Caregiving
4. Technology and Connectedness

17 June 2011

Brussels, Belgium

6th European seminar on local homeless strategies

FEANTSA, the EU Committee of the Regions and HABITACT

E-Mail: suzannah.young@feantsa.org

Website: http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/pg.asp?Page=25&id_events=399

"Governance of homeless service provision at local level: One-size-fits-all or diversity of models across Europe?". This will be a one-day seminar from 9.00-16.00.

The objectives of the seminar are: to reflect on the different forms of organisation and provision of homeless services across the EU and the impact of European legislation on their work; to give examples of different models used to provide homeless services, with concrete/practical information for local organisations attending the seminar, looking at the advantages/disadvantages of each model, as well as the financing of these different service provision models.

22 - 24 June 2011

Arlington (VA), United States

Strengthening Families Leadership Summit

E-Mail: gina.chaney@cssp.org

Website: <http://www.cvent.com/EVENTS/Info/Summary.aspx?i=dba41aff-100d-4c89-8f68-85d743e47205>

Originally focused on early care and education, Strengthening Families has evolved into many new arenas:

- Federal agencies, local jurisdictions, and collaborative state leadership teams are applying the Strengthening Families protective factor framework in their cross-disciplinary efforts.
- Academicians and evaluators continue to build the research base.
- Faith-based and community organizations are discovering the power of the Strengthening Families approach and protective factor framework to increase their impact and reshape partnerships.
- Parent partnerships are producing changes in practices and policies.

As a result, the lives of families and children across many cultures are changing for the better.

Colophon

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

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