

Bulletin

April 2004



President's Address

by Christine Labonté-Roset

Dear Members of EASSW,

Some of you contacted me in the last weeks, asking why they didn't receive in the second half of the year 2003 news and materials from our association.

We apologize for this long silence, but I want to say something in our defence:

From Aarhus to Berlin

In the last years our membership administration was situated on the Sociale Hojskole in Aarhus, Denmark and smoothly running. To our surprise the new board of directors of this school decided last summer not to continue with the (paid) administrative work for EASSW, because of personnel and administrative re-organisations. For this reason we were forced to find very soon another institution, willing to take over the EASSW membership administration, which proved to be not easy.

Finally my university with some persuasiveness from my side agreed to take over, but it still took a rather long time to receive and understand the files from Aarhus and to change them to our administration and bookkeeping system. What proved to be the most difficult was to get a new bank account for EASSW because of the laws against money laundering! I can't describe all details but as the association was becoming a

legal body after 1995, when we had a Dutch president, EASSW is registered in the Dutch commercial register. Another delay was related to receiving an officially certified statement from the Netherlands, which needed (together with our constitution, the last general assembly minutes etc.) to be translated for the bank from a certified translator.

In short: we were very busy. Now we started with the new administration and are now changing our specimen letter, our invoices etc. You will have received them together with this bulletin.

With the change of the EASSW administration, we decided together with IASSW that the administration also of their European members will be done from this year on by Washington. For this reason all of you, who are members of both associations will receive from now on two

invoices, one from EASSW and one from IASSW. Please pay this invoices also separately.

A last word on administration: We want to thank very much the Aarhus staff, involved in the membership administration, especially Christen Christensen, Kirsten Sundberg, Birger Jensen and Holger Nielsen for the excellent work, they have done for us in the last years!

Besides this long story, we have had our very successful joint congress in May last year in Copenhagen, together with IFSW Europe and FESET with over 700 participants and I was glad to meet a lot of you during these days. We decided already together with IFSW Europe to continue this fruitful cooperation (see the joint Press Release in this bulletin) and we hope that also FESET will join us again for the congress in 2005 in Cyprus, where the first schools of social work are now existing.

Another example of good cooperation of our European organisations was the official founding of ENQASP, the European accreditation agency, in the frame of the Copenhagen congress (see the article on ENQASP in this bulletin).

We have had EASSW-Regional Seminars in October 2003 in Paris, in November 2003 in Barcelona in the frame of the 50 anniversary of the Barcelona school and in February 2004 in Parma (see the report on the Parma meeting in this bulletin).

Another main area of the members of the Executive Committee was doing consultation for the establishment of new schools or concerning the question of the Bologna process with higher education responsible, including ministers of education in Kosovo and Russia.

We offer all EASSW members our expertise in the field of social work education in Europe and of the fast on-going process of Bologna, including joint study programs or curricula.

This can be done in the form of Regional Seminars for a bigger group of schools or as more individual consultation.

Please contact us, if you want to get further information.

During the General Assembly in May 2003 in Copenhagen we have had elections for some parts of the Executive Committee and for the officers.

Re-elected for another period of four years were myself, Nol Reverda, Isidor Wallimann, Answin Weissenborn and myself

As new members were elected Jan Agten, Belgium, Annamaria Campanini, Italy, Ann Davis, United Kingdom and Anna Metteri, Finland.

As officers were (re-)elected:

Nol Reverda as secretary, Isidor Wallimann as treasurer and myself as president.

We all want to thank you for your trust in our work.

In order to facilitate this work and to be able to serve the EASSW members better, we decided on our Executive Committee meeting in October 2003 in Paris to divide the tasks. If you have special questions please contact the following persons:

Website: Jan Agten, jan.agten@khk.be
and Ann Davis, a.davis@bham.ac.uk

If you want to have published congress announces, recent publications, job offers or other interesting news on our website, please send it to Jan Agten.

Bulletin: Christine Labonté-Roset,
labonte@asfh-berlin.de
and Anna Metteri,
anna.metteri@uta.fi

We would very much request you to participate more actively in the production and designing of the EASSW Bulletin. Even if we are 13 Executive Committee members from 13 different European countries, we can't cover all interesting new developments. The bulletin gives you the possibility to inform other EASSW members about important changes in your country or school or to portray your institution.

Council of Europe – EASSW representative:
Answin Weissenborn,
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The consultative status on the CoE gives us the possibility to bring important social policy or higher education questions to the attention of this body.

Again our apologies for our long silence, we hope with the new tasks devision and the new administration to serve you best in the future.

Prof. Dr. Christine Labonté-Roset
For the Executive Committee

IASSW Elections

This year, the International Association we will **hold** elections for the post of the president, **the** secretary and **for 2 board** members at large. The ballots will **have to be sent** to the IASSW **probably by June 04, much before** the General Assembly in **October (Adelaide)**. The **election** results will be announced **at the general assembly in Adelaide, where the IASSW congress will also be held.**

Gavin Rennie from New Zealand and Abye Tasse from France **are candidates for the IASSW presidency.**

Lynne Healy, USA and Lincoln Williams, Jamaica **are candidates for the position of the secretary.**

Five candidates are running for the board at large.

The EASSW Executive Committee's electoral position

As already stated in our last bulletin, the EASSW Executive Committee believes, that it is **very important for the IASSW to adhere** to the rotation principle. For the last eight years (two terms) the presidency has been in Europe. Before, IASSW had a North-American/Canadian presidency. For this reason we strongly **recommend** that the next president **elected** should **come from** from an area other than Europe.

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF



SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK

INTERNATIONAL



FEDERATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

JOINT MEETING – ALICANTE
6TH March 2004

DEVELOPING STRONGER EUROPEAN SOCIAL WORK PARTNERSHIPS



At historic meetings of European social work bodies in early March, EASSW¹ and IFSWⁱ agreed with AIEJIⁱⁱ and FESETⁱⁱⁱ that the 4 associations will work towards signing a formal memorandum of partnership within the next 12 months. The meetings were held in Alicante, Spain. After the meetings, Christine Labonte-Roset, President of EASSW, David N Jones, European President of

IFSW, and representatives of FESET and AIEJI agreed that:

“The development of a more inclusive and social Europe affects everybody in Europe. This has big implications for the social professions, who help those in difficulty, and therefore their education and training. Our organisations have much in common. We must work together to pool resources and increase our impact at a European

¹ European Association of Schools of Social Work includes universities and other higher education social work institutions from 27 European countries, including Israel.

level. The memorandum of partnership will send a strong signal to European institutions and to social workers across Europe.”

WORKING TOGETHER TO ENSURE SUCCESSFUL EUROPEAN NETWORKING

EASSW and IFSW reaffirmed their decision to hold a joint conference in Cyprus in 2005^{iv} and to plan future biennial European social work symposia on joint basis.

EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE OF SOCIAL PROFESSIONS

EASSW, FESET, AEIJI and CESSNET^v signed an agreement to launch a formal quality assurance scheme for social work programmes in higher education institutions with an international dimension in a European context and created a legal body in the form of ENQASP^{vi} to carry out this work. FICE^{vii} will join this agreement. IFSW will assist in some formal procedures.

DIVERS PROJECT – WORKING TOGETHER ON ACTION AND RESEARCH

EASSW has been successful in the first stage of a strong bid, supported by IFSW, for European funding for a pan-European action research programme on social and ethnic diversity in Europe. The programme involves partners from 15 countries.

9 NOVEMBER 2004 - WORKING TOGETHER ON EUROPEAN SOCIAL WORK ACTION DAY

IFSW has organised Social Work Action Day every November for the last 4 years. EASSW will be joint sponsors in 2004. National member organisations organise a wide variety of events across Europe on that day, including conferences, meetings with government and media events. EASSW agreed to publicize the day and to encourage national groups, universities and higher education institutions to arrange events and to involve students.

WORKING TOGETHER WITH EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

EASSW and IFSW discussed practical arrangements to support more effective lobbying of the Council of Europe, European Union and European Parliament. “It is essential for the health of social services and for the future of the profession that there is a strong social work voice in Brussels and Strasbourg, the Presidents agreed. IFSW and EASSW are already co-operating in work with the Council of Europe on human rights, education policy and social inclusion. Both bodies have consultative status with the Council of Europe and are using their joint resources to ensure a more co-ordinated and consistent approach to lobbying^{viii} [see below].

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

EASSW

Nol Reverda - Secretary – a.reverda@hszuyd.nl

Professor Christine Labonté-Roset – President – labonte@asfh-berlin.de

IFSW

Ana Radulescu – Honorary Secretary –

Europe@ifsw.org

David N Jones – European President – vpeur@ifsw.org

AEIJI

International Association of Social Educators

FESET Formations d' Educateurs Sociaux

Européens/European Social Educator Training

ⁱ International Federation of Social Workers brings together the social work associations from 35 countries in Europe – stretching from Portugal to Russia and from Iceland to Italy.

ⁱⁱ International Association of Social Educators

ⁱⁱⁱ Formations d' Educateurs Sociaux Européens/European Social Educator Training

^{iv} see www.socialwork2005.org

^v Comparative European Social Studies Network

^{vi} European Network for Quality Assurance in Study Programmes in Social Professions

^{vii} Fédération Internationale des Communautés Educatives/International Federation of Educative Communities

^{viii} The Council of Europe approved a statement on social work in the Council of Ministers in January 2001. IFSW had

observer status on the Expert Group which drafted the statement. This statement can be found at www.coe.int

European Network for Quality Assurance for Social Professions (ENQASP) – Legal Body created

The process of a stronger harmonization of the European higher education area starting seriously with the Bologna declaration of 1999 is gaining more and more speed. Already 80 % of the now - 40 signatory states created the legal possibility for a two-tiers system of undergraduate and post-graduate studies or are introducing this in the new future.

The Bologna Declaration emphasizes among other things that study programs should lead to employability for the national and even more the European labour market. For this a system of easy readable and comparable degrees should be created, which should guarantee, that these degrees will be accepted by employers and by all European universities.

Another demand of the Bologna declaration is to include in study programs a European orientation.

The Prague Communiqué of 2001, re-enforced by the Berlin Communiqué of 2003, demands the development of a common system of quality assurance for the European institutions of higher education and the study programs offered by them in order to guarantee comparable quality standards.

Already several years before the Bologna Declaration different universities in Europe started to develop together joint curricula and/or joint study programs. One of the oldest programs in the field of social professions is MACESS (Master of Arts in Comparative European Social Studies),

which started 10 years ago and brings today together 32 European universities and institutions of higher education, the Council of Europe and the European Commission. In 2002 this program was selected from the EUA (European University Association) as one of 11 European joint master programs of good and best practice examples.

The experiences gained in this program and other joined programs showed that, despite the growing unification in Europe, the problem of bilateral let alone multilateral recognition of gained degrees is not resolved at all. Also the Lisbon Convention of the Council of Europe from 1998 does not really overcome this problem, because it is based on an individual recognition. This means that a student wanting to work or to continue his studies in another country than the country he gained his degree must apply individually in the host country to have recognized this degree. The Lisbon Convention only describes the conditions for this recognition (duration and level of the study program, the kind of institutions etc.).

Experiencing that under these conditions also students of a study program already recognized in another country must re-apply and re-exercise the long administrative process of individual recognition in the same country, the EASSW with other European associations in the field of social professions develop together the idea of a European agency for evaluation or accreditation of European joint study programs or study programs with a strong European focus in the field of social professions.

In Europe we have in higher education policy often a confusion of terms, in some countries the term evaluation in others the term accreditation means the same, namely a quality assurance instrument for the evaluation of a higher education

institution or a study program in other countries again both terms cover different fields. Evaluation means there to confer after a standardized procedure – a quality label for an institution and accreditation is only referred to study programs. In other countries again you can find other terms for the same procedure like validation etc. For this reason we decided to name this agency ENQASP, such covering the different meanings and to clarify in our **Mission Statement** the goals of this agency:

“I. MISSION STATEMENT

Graduate in the field of social profession should no longer need to individually seek acceptance of their degrees for further study and work abroad. Additionally, graduates should have guarantees that their degrees will be accepted by employers and universities outside their own countries.

To reach these goals, ENQASP sees itself as a body to evaluate and recognise curricula (quality label) for social professions beyond their already obtained national recognition. By doing so, ENQASP intends to **promote mobility, exchange, compatibility and comparability in Europe.**

ENQASP

- develop a frame of reference and standards for study programs in the European field of social professions
- establish European procedures to evaluate existing programs on a regular basis
- grant a quality label
- consult and monitor new programs

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- organize public conferences on quality assurance”

As we want to represent in such an agency all fields of social professions, the education and practice side we brought together representatives from the higher education institutions, from students organisations, from employers and employees. The following associations are founding members of ENQASP, representing all mentioned groups:

AIEJI = International Association of Social Educators

CESSNET = Comparative European Social Studies Network

EASSW = European Association of Schools of Social Work

FESET = Formation d’Educateurs Sociaux Européens/European Social Educator Training

FICE = International Federation of Educative Communities

In March 2004 in Alicante these association signed the contract for the legal body of ENQASP as an European interest group and finished the frame of reference and (minimum) standards, which must be fulfilled for a successful accreditation. The general criteria, including clear description of expected goals and competences, scientific and professional orientation, learning schemes, faculty, teaching evaluation, organisation and academic level of the delivering institution are orientated on the upcoming quality assurance instruments of the different national agencies in Europe.

The main criteria specific to our European quality label includes:

- Comparison and compatibility with other study programs in the same field, referring to structure, length, content, modularisation, ECTS credit point system
- European/International and intercultural orientation (the curriculum has international components and/or includes international comparisons, etc.)
- Labour market orientation
- Training in research methods and practice
- European Social Charter orientation

We will now also apply to the German Accreditation Council, an institution accrediting accreditation and evaluation agencies, in order to have a proof of our own quality.

We are inviting all interested European study programs in the field of social professions, which are interested in proving their quality through a European quality label and to facilitate the recognition of their degrees, to contact us for further informations.

The e-mail address of myself is: labonte@asfh-berlin.de, soon we will have also our own ENQASP website, which will be published and linked with the websites of all partner organisations.



Report from the 20th Nordic Conference with Schools of Social Work.

Between 16 - 18 August in Helsinki it was held the 20th Nordic Conference with Schools of Social Work. The about 120 participating teachers came from Finland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland and even from Greenland. The conference languages was mostly Scandinavian (swedish, danish, norwegian)

The theme for the Conference was "Social Work and engagement for the Society- discourse and lokal practice".

One of the key note speakers was Karen Healey from the University of Sydney, Australia. The title for her speech was "Participatory Knowledge Creation in Social Work: Recognizing Diversity, Promoting Collaboration". Other key note speakers was Pirkko-Liisa Rauhala from Finland: "Social Work and tension generating processes in the Society", Tapio Salonen from Sweden: "Neither technics nor art - challenges in the developement of knowledge of Social Work", Sigrun Juliusdottir from Iceland: Theorizing practice - target and tools in the transformation process.

Sissel Seim from Norway was talking about "Collective action and users of Public service - to fight for living conditions, identity and collaboration."

Morten Ejrnaes from Denmark was talking about "The Danish Integration Law - a case illustrating the uncertain citizenship status of ethnic minorities in Denmark.

There was also about 30 workshops and 12 poster sessions. I think it was a very inspiring Conference for all participants. But it was not only work. Except for a visit in Helsinki at the Swedish School of Social Work, one evening we had to bath Finnish Sauna and after that we had a Nordic get-together party. At the finishing Conference Dinner we were served very delicate special Finnish dishes and after that we were taught how to dance real Finnish tango.

At the biannual meeting with the Nordic Committee of Schools of Social Work Helle Strauss from Copenhagen, Denmark was elected for President after Jan Peterson from Sweden. Helle also invited the Nordic Schools to the Nordic Conference that will take place in

Copenhagen 2005.

Sören Björkman

The Netherlands Promotes Research in Higher Professional Education

An initiative of the Hogeschool Zuyd and the "Stichting Kennisontwikkeling HBO" to promote applied research in higher professional education has provided a timely opportunity to establish an expertise centre on Comparative European Social Research and Theory (CESRT). In particular, CESRT is designed to deepen current social work education programmes, to professionalise

teachers and to enhance social professional practice.

In CESRT, the development and application of research and theory in social work education and practice is approached from a comparative and European context. This approach is based on the conviction that globalisation affects both the education and the profession of social work.

The processes of social exclusion and inclusion are central in CESRT. They encompass notions of participation and accessibility to society's main institutions and traditions, e.g., education, health care, work, leisure, social services, public services and human rights. They echo the consequences of the shifts in responsibilities between the state, the market and civil society. They symbolize the risks of insecurity and uncertainty for many people in today's society. On the whole, the processes of social exclusion and inclusion contain challenges shared throughout Europe and have a direct impact on social work educators and practitioners.

CESRT objectives

- To conduct comparative European research that enables social work educators and practitioners to master their profession in a learning and information society;
- To improve the theoretical basis of education programmes through the application of research and theoretical models in curricula;
- To promote an integrative approach to social work education and practice through cooperation with relevant local, regional, national and international stakeholders, i.e., working field organisations, government entities, private enterprises, etc.
- To disseminate skills and knowledge by organising and contributing to events, publications and projects.

CESRT is a research department of the Hogeschool Zuyd. The school has 47 different study programmes and has approximately 12,000 students. The departments of social work and their undergraduate education programmes provide CESRT with a substantial foundation, as does the unique postgraduate programme MACESS (MA in Comparative European Social Studies). CESRT's core team is attracted from both the school's departments of social work and MACESS. The international and multi-disciplinary character of the team embraces significant experience in curricula development, teaching, research and consultancy.

The incorporation of different departments of social work and social policy in CESRT leads to an environment of mutual added value; one that focuses on (future) social professionals and European comparative research in the related domains. Together this provides a sound basis for

skills development and knowledge building. We kindly invite you to join us.

More information about CESRT and its current research projects: please contact m.j.freitas@hszuyd.nl or a.reverda@hszuyd.nl

No! Reverda

THE CZECH ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS IN SOCIAL WORK (ASVSP)

ASVSP was established in 1993 by Masaryk University in Brno and the Ostrava University. Now it brings together 25 schools: academies and universities (18 regular members after the meeting of General Assembly in November 2003).

The main goal of ASVSP is to improve the quality of education in social work in the Czech republic by applying and asserting of the Minimal Standard of education in social work. Minimal Standard is meant to guarantee a good standard of education while at the same time doesn't limit the specific orientation to social policy, pedagogy, psychology,

sociology, theology, health etc. of the individual school. The Standard consists of guidelines and demands put on the content and aim of 11 basic subjects in social work: Philosophy and Ethics, Theory and Methods in Social Work, Social Policy, Practice in Organizations Providing Social Work Services, Sociology, Research, Law, Social Problems, Minorities, Health and Disease). Attention is paid to the technical equipment of schools (classrooms, library, computers etc.) and to the qualification of the staff members as well. The Minimal standard had been preparing by the consult group of Czech and foreign educators and representatives of employers in social work during the 1991 and 1992. It is not a rigid document and it is still open to changes.

SVSP provides consultation for schools to help them to put Standard into the practice. Schools are also given a methodology teaching service by the consultation group.

A discussion forum for the members is provided by ASVSP – members discuss and reveal problems and try to offer an alternative point of view and alternative solutions.

Nowadays ASVSP members focus on the problem of theoretical development of social work – there has been indicated a demand to write textbooks and make research on the problems in the field of social work.

The next aim is to start and to continue the communication with the employers in social work to be able to reach a consensus concerning the good practice and the attributes of high quality in social work.

ASVSP serves as a consult body for the Ministry of Education and partly for the Ministry of Social

Work and Social Affairs. The ASVSP regular membership has a high prestige and these members obviously do not have problems in the accreditation process held by the Ministry of Education.

The General Assembly takes place twice a year and every three years are voted members of the Executive Committee. Every three years one of the 5 members of the Executive Committee is changed. The members of ASVSP work either together (as one body) or in two sections - academies and universities – depending on the problem and target.

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EUSW- European Social Work Thematic Network

At the dawn of the 21st century, the new Europe has to face many problems of a different nature. Some of these arise from the integration of people from non-European Countries with different cultures, habits and backgrounds and other problems are the result of economic poverty appearing in new forms. Social change has brought new pressure experienced personally and in different ways: substance abuse, depression, eating disorder, alienation and relationship breakdowns may be the outcome for some individuals. Further problems may simply arise for families and individuals in their life cycle in relation to a post-modern complex society.

"Social work addresses the barriers, inequities and injustices that exist in society. It responds to crises and emergencies as well as to everyday

personal and social problems." This definition of Social Work, officially adopted by IASSW in Copenhagen in June 2001, clearly sums up the role of Social Work and its aims.

Furthermore, in recent years, European countries have faced different experiences which have necessarily required different approaches, forcing Social Work educational and professional structures to tune their expertise in accordance to the national needs. Today's result is the presence of institutions and operators who are able to respond successfully to their regional needs and demands, but are less able to respond to needs in a European context. That may limit the transferability of knowledge and the mobility of social workers across Europe. There is therefore a need to develop connections among the various European actors in Social Work in order to develop common approaches to key issues in social work education and equality in social rights and treatment.

Involving many Countries such as Italy, Sweden, UK, Germany, Norway and Greece, a nine-year-long cooperation among members of an 'Erasmus ICP', allowed the development of many interesting experiences: teachers and students exchanges within the network, a joint module called "Ethnic Diversity and European Welfare Practice", several intensive programs. "European Mental Health Social Work" and "Professional social work in a changing Europe" were founded for three years, "Supervision in social work for one year and last "Service User Involvement in Social Work" which it is hoped will continue for further two years.

But, beside the satisfaction generated by these experiences, this grouping of universities still had a sense that there was considerable potential within the Socrates scheme to further develop their knowledge and understanding of pan-European social work, and to help other European countries lecturers, practitioners and students

participate in the development of and access to such knowledge. From just such a discussion at a group meeting in 2001, the initial proposal for the Thematic Network was developed.

In order to face the challenges set by contemporary society the idea of the group was to activate processes that:

- Strengthen the image of Social Work in order to make possible both an active presence and a significant interlocutor in reference to the construction of social policies oriented towards the strengthening of citizens rights and the fight against social exclusion and poverty;
- Facilitate a deep confrontation at different levels: theoretical bases, educational processes, roles definition, fields of application, social policy guidelines, organisation of services;
- Allow to identify common aspects and differences on which let shared definitions emerge;
- Broaden the debate and the research of theoretical approaches and intervention methodologies with a view to the acquisition of an effective and significant role by social work;
- Allow the realisation a deeper analysis of emerging social problems, also taking into consideration globalisation processes.

Moving from these considerations, the University of Parma became the voice to a need commonly shared the members of the group that had been working together for so many years.

A monitoring activity done on the thematic networks previously approved pointed out that a Network co-ordinate by the Fachhochschule Koblenz had just finished: this network was mainly

addressed, more in general, to the analysis of social professions in Europe; therefore, there were no previous specific experiences addressed to Social Work.

The final approval was in July 2003 and, since September, we could start our activities: the first event was the first Annual Meeting that took place in Parma from October 30th to November 2nd, 2003.

To address this issue of transferability the thematic network in European Social Work is striving towards the following aims

- to involve academic and professional bodies in Social Work across Europe to establish a shared knowledge base;
- to compare and develop European social work curricula in order to disseminate successful approaches to common problems;
- to help students develop a European perspective and approach to social work issues;
- to encourage the use of new information technologies to support exchange of information within a European context;

Additionally the Thematic Network has proposed the following core objectives:

- To identify commonalities and differences in social work education across all European states;
- To develop sources of reference for social work teachers, students, institutions and practitioners to enable them to compare and develop European social work curricula;
- To access European practice and placement opportunities;
- To access information about pre- and post-professional social work courses all over Europe;

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- To access information about social work research opportunities and projects to facilitate new initiatives;
 - To create international courses, organised by member institutions, delivered across Europe. These courses, open to all European students and social work actors, will also draw upon contributions of experts from outside the EU.

Until now very few steps have been undertaken towards developing a European dimension in Social Work education or building educational links across the EU to inform and enhance practice developments. This Thematic Network is the first real Europe-wide initiative of this sort, although there have been some useful attempts at smaller scale initiatives, involving fewer partners in Europe. It seems to be the most suitable instrument to develop a shared knowledge base, with which to strengthen Social Work both as a discipline and as a profession. It also offers opportunities for partners to engage in a productive and meaningful debate in relation to teaching methods and curriculum contents. This has the potential to drive forward positive changes in each of these areas.

In this context the Network will aim to facilitate greater student participation in their own education, more reflexive learning and sustained personal growth as practitioners.

As well as the aims and objectives outlined above, the Thematic Network is committed to concrete outcomes to benefit exchange and enhancement of social work knowledge across Europe. Website for accessing information on pan-European issues has been established www.EUSW.org and regular newsletters are available in paper and electronic form. A Summer school for students and professionals is also being planned. And a book about social work in Europe is the first key outcome.

This book then is a pivotal part of the overall project of the thematic network. In it every participant country will chart the most important features of social work in their nation. The book will then offer to readers the opportunity to discover what social work represents in the various areas of the European continent. Each chapter will explore facets of the work and educational context, professional issues and policy matters. By reading individual chapter we can gain a fundamental understanding of social work in any of the member countries and by reading the whole volume the commonalities and differences across Europe.

In this volume we will address some key themes in social work in each European country. What seemed most important to us is that any reader could pick up this book and gain an introductory understanding of social work in the countries of their interest. Clearly this is ambitious. In reality we have selected only some facets of the general picture.

First of all each chapters will consider the background of social work in each country, including historical, political, social and cultural issues of significance. For example it might consider how social work activities gradually evolve did? Was it through the church and notions of charity? Or perhaps a national commitment to poverty relief stimulated the growth of social work. It is also the case that in some countries particular tragic events created need for social intervention? The chapter will also address how and when the state became involved in providing welfare services.

The chapters will consider the issue of social work education in each country, looking first at how social work education emerged historically and into what kind of institutional context. Issues such as how and when the identification of need for a

specialist education arose will be considered. Whether the existing university system has been accepting of the academic status of social work education and at what academic level, may form part of this discussion. There are considerable national variations in the relationship between the academic establishment and social work education and the chapters will highlight these differences.

As well as the status of social work education the chapters will discuss the curriculum. Many countries have differences in relation to their ethos, philosophy, subject areas and the importance they give to social work practice. In each chapter the issue of theoretical underpinning will be given consideration and the relative influences of disciplines such as psychology, sociology, social policy and psychoanalysis will be traced. The ratio of practice focus within courses and what this suggest about the status of such activities will also be discussed.

The issue of the meanings of the term 'social worker', in each country, and how is it different from other 'social' professions, will form the next section of each chapter.

We know that in different countries social workers have very different roles which may rend the term problematic, in some countries there are for example social pedagogues, social educators or care managers undertaking locally defined activities. Each chapter will attempt to clarify the definition and activities of these kind of different categories. This will underline not only which activities are considered to be the provenance of social work and which are not. For example whether workers who deal primarily with the relief of poverty via administering state benefits would or would not be considered as social workers, is subject to national variation.

Professionalism is the next concern of each chapter. They will illustrate issues of status

relative to professionalism generally in their countries and discuss the process of becoming professionalized and the extent to which this has been achieved. The mechanisms which indicate and reinforce professional status will be explored. Professional registers, associations and professional codes are some of the aspects which may be considered. In many countries the professionalism of social work has been and continues to be somewhat ambiguous. Factors such as its traditional female orientation may be implicated in this, as is the professions own some times ambivalent attitude towards the all issues of being a profession.

The next aspect to which each chapter gives attention is the question of what kind of role and what kind of activities does national and local policy and law define for social work. This context clearly dictates not just the activities of a social worker but the kind of agencies within which this work is carried out. In some countries the voluntary or non – governmental sector is primarily responsible for such welfare delivery whereas in others the state provides most social services. Where social workers are employed, as well as the statutory and policy orientations of their activities leads to much differentiation across Europe.

In the last section of each chapter authors were asked to highlight what they see as the most significant contemporary issues in social work and the challenges their countries currently face. At this point we have one chapter for almost all the 24 Countries involved in the network and we are working to find some significant commonalities and differences in the European picture. The book's conclusion will address the most important of these themes.

The volume will be published in springtime, in English by Carocci Editore (Roma).

<http://www.carocci.it>

European social work

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