

Report of the EASSW-President and the Secretary to the General Assembly of EASSW Cyprus, May 2005

EASSW was founded exactly 10 years ago as an independent European association and legal body. We have developed from the European Regional Group of IASSW, which was formally established in 1980.

The last 10 years have been good years - with much work and a growing, successful organization. In particular, the last 2 years were a very busy time for our European association:

Administration: We had to move our EASSW administration from Aarhus/Denmark to Berlin/Germany due to changes in the organisation and structure of the Aarhus school. This was – like always – not an easy process, but I think now everything becomes smoothly running. And I want to apologize for every inconvenience created through this change. But my secretary, Mrs. Nemark, who is now responsible for the administration asked me a favour to entreat all members to put their membership number on their remittance. It would make her life much easier.

Membership:

On one side, our association is still growing, because we gain every year new member schools. This means also that in different countries are all or almost all existing schools of social work EASSW-members (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Israel and Switzerland). On the other side we are losing members because schools are more and more merging. For this reason we want to re-organize our fee structure. The treasurer Isidor Wallimann will tell you more about this in his report.

All EC members are contributing to promoting EASSW membership. Anna Michalska and Mirka Necasova are outreaching particularly of the Central and Eastern European countries, Anna Metteri has organized membership of all Finnish schools as of this year, including the units of social services and social work at polytechnic

universities. Annamaria Campanini organized a special meeting of the heads of Italian departments of social work to promote the EASSW.

Our members schools are coming from 27 different countries. In order to ensure a better representation of the different European regions, the last **General Assembly** in May 2003 in Copenhagen enlarged our **Executive Committee** to 15 members. Currently it consists of 13 members from 13 different countries, but with the elections of today we will have all places occupied and I am looking forward to welcome the new members and to work with a stronger team in order to enhance the role of social work education in Europe.

Membership Services:

We offer our members a currently updated **Website**, where they can also publish cooperation for exchange and research projects etc., and we would urge you all to make more use of this tool. Jan Agten is responsible for the website and would be happy to advise you on how to make best use of it. All addresses etc. of the EC members are on the website www.eassw.org.

We publish our **EASSW Bulletin** with information on changes of the European higher education and social policy, on important congresses, with country reports or school profiles etc., but we have the problem that we still don't have a person, who is willing to take the responsibility as publication officer in order to guaranty a regular publication. Here we are coming to the limits of our voluntary work for EASSW, which all EC members are doing besides their full occupation. For this reason we will try now a new form of publication: to connect the bulletin with the Regional Seminars and their themes and we are looking for semi-professional support. A first bulletin about the Regional Seminar in Birmingham in April 2005 is just edited by Ann Davis.

We offer **Regional Seminars**. to provide more information to our member schools and to advise them about important developments in European higher education such as the Bologna process. In the last 2 years we had such seminars in France, Italy, Spain, Slovenia and Great Britain and our next two regional seminars will be held in Switzerland (including the region Austria, Southern Germany and the Alsace)

and Turkey. All members are invited to let the EASSW know if they would like to organize a regional seminar with us.

Besides having the consultative status to the Council of Europe with regular meetings with other NGOs (Answin Weissenborn is responsible for this task), we are also doing special **Consultations**, in the first line for our members, but also for other institutions or politicians like e.g. the ministers for higher education of the Kosovo and of Russia. Christine Labonté-Roset, Nol Reverda and Isidor Wallimann were much involved in these consultations.

These consultations in the last two years were mostly dealing with the already mentioned **Bologna Process**. Today 40 countries take part in this process, creating in all concerned states among other things a two-tiers study system, regular quality assurance through regular evaluation of institutions and accreditation of all study programmes, adjustment of study programmes to employability on the European labour market and to an international orientation. EASSW is an active partner in this process in order to co-determinate the decisions and results for the field of social work education. For this reason we work also closely with the **European University Association**. The secretary and the president of EASSW were for example members of an EUA-project on **European Joint Master Programmes**.

Several EC-members like Annamaria Campanini and Answin Weissenborn are members of the European thematic network 'European Social Work Commonalities and Differences - EUSW' which was founded 2001 and already published 2 books on European social work education and social work with children, youth and families in Europe.

Cooperation and Collaboration with other European associations: The last congress was a joint congress together with IFSW-Europe and FESET (the European association for social pedagogical training centres), this time we have again a joint congress with IFSW, FESET changed from a 2 year to a one year rhythm. Last year they had their congress in March in Alicante and this year they will have it in October in Barcelona. But nevertheless we have with both associations regular board or executive committee meetings, publish press releases about

important themes in the social work field together etc. In the past 2 years we started also a cooperation with AIEJI – Europe, the international association for social educators and with FICE, the international federation of educational communities.

The most important result of this cooperations was the foundation of the **European Network for Quality Assurance in Social Professions (ENQASP)**. In March 2004 in Alicante AIEJI – Europe, CESSNET (an European students and alumni-organisation from social work), EASSW and FESET signed the contract for becoming a legal entity. FICE joined us afterwards and IFSW – Europe is until now still an observer, but participating on most meetings. ENQASP will award to study programmes for social professions with a strong European and/or international focus an European quality label in order to facilitate the recognition of such programmes on the European level. The first programme, a joint programme of schools in Austria, Germany and Switzerland was successfully visited in April by ENQASP-experts and will get soon this quality label. Others will follow, because we have already several demands. Nol Reverda, Isidor Wallimann and Christine Labonté-Roset are representing EASSW in ENQASP.

EASSW has also re-enforced our representation on the IASSW board. Besides Christine-Labonté-Roset, who is as EASSW-president ex-ufficio IASSW-vice-president , Isidor Wallimann (Switzerland) and Darja Zaviršek (Slovenia) were elected from our executive committee as representatives of the European region. For this reason we were discussing in the executive committee our future connections with IASSW. Our concerns centred on the question, what functions and services should be fulfilled by the regional associations and what should be the most important functions and duties of IASSW. As a result of such considerations the EASSW Executive Committee developed a proposal for **Restructuring IASSW** in order to become a stronger voice on the international level with a clear corporate identity.

This proposal was presented to the IASSW board meeting in August 2003 in Helsinki. There it was discussed controversially and decided to create a working group with the 5 IASSW vice-presidents and other board members for seeking proposals for an eventual re-organisation of IASSW. In the IASSW-board meetings in

Adelaide October 2004 and January 2005 in Addis Ababa further discussions followed and in the moment a questionnaire for IASSW members and board representatives is developed in order to gain more knowledge about the meanings and interests about this theme. Our proposal, which is totally open to changes and complements etc. is attached. We hope that this process will start an open and intensive discussion on the future role and identity of IASSW with the result to include all schools of social work around the world even stronger into our common tasks.

Last but not least we want to thank all EC-colleagues for the hard work they did in the last 2 years. We are a wonderful team. Thank you. And it is a pity, that Sören Björkman, who was responsible for our elections 2 years ago and today will finish his second term in the EC. We will miss his experience for this task gained as local Swedish politician. In addition the team was saddened by the sudden death of Christen Christensen - our former secretary who has worked with most of us for many years.

Prof. Dr. Christine Labonté-Roset
EASSW President

Dr. Nol Reverda, Lector
EASSW Secretary

APPENDIX: The EASSW proposal of

Restructuring IASSW: Corporate Identity and Membership Services

Not long ago, the IASSW was the only organisation to provide a platform for schools wanting to be active on a transnational basis. With regional and sub-regional associations little developed, the IASSW was, therefore, bound to cater to individual schools. This has changed dramatically.

Alone in the past few years, we have observed a vigorous growth in regional and sub-regional associations of schools. Europe, Asia, the Pacific, the Caribbean and Africa deserve particular mention. Europe has seen the fastest growth, followed by Asia and the others. With the addition of Chinese schools, Asia too will experience hitherto unseen growth in its regional membership.

In some cases, the new regional and sub-regional associations are developments parallel to other processes of regional, economic, social and social policy integration. In turn, these processes encourage schools to focus primarily on their region by transcending national borders through contacts and development in the region.

The IASSW has moved away from the situation in which local schools would have to seek membership in the IASSW in order to connect with the outside world, both regionally and internationally. Accordingly, many functions that the IASSW once needed to fulfil are now met primarily by regional and sub-regional associations. This, in turn, calls for a redefinition of the tasks. The IASSW should restrict itself to tasks that cannot successfully be met by regions.

For the above reasons, the IASSW has lost much of its function (and attraction) for individual schools, while it remains a viable organisation for regional and sub-regional associations. What, then, should be IASSW's function if it is to serve regions and sub-regions? What should be its organisational structure to enable it to optimally serve its members?

Organizational Structure: Federation, not Association

The IASSW should move away:

- from the many membership categories
- from “duplicate” membership categories (school, national and regional)
- from the large board of directors
- from a board of directors with different voting rights among board members

The IASSW should move towards:

- a federation of regional and sub-regional associations with
- a membership of only regional and sub-regional associations
- voting rights to be newly determined for regional and sub-regional associations

IASSW functions

Being a federation of regional and sub-regional associations, the IASSW will need to retain functions pertaining to the global level, such as:

- retaining the UN consultative status and collaboration with IFSW
- working towards global qualifying standards

- organizing a world congress in a four-year cycle for world-level exchange
- organizing regular board meetings around content such as
 - world level social problems affecting training and social policy
 - developing policy strategies pertaining to world-level social problem issues for use both in the UN consulting and regional context

Financial Consequences: New Revenue Structure

Due to the rapid growth in regional and sub-regional associations, the pressure on the regional level to provide numerous and effective services has grown significantly. And with schools focusing more on regions, IASSW membership fees have increasingly come under question, since it is the regions which are in need of better services and higher membership fees on a daily basis. Regional membership fees, however, cannot easily be increased to match the increased demand for services in the region.

To resolve the above issue, all membership fees should be collected by regional associations. They in turn agree among themselves on a formula to finance the services to be rendered by IASSW. Thus, the present mode of financing the IASSW would be restructured.