



Press Release

International Federation of Social Workers – Europe

Contact: Ana Radulesco. IFSW Europe Vicepresident
europe.ifsw@ifsw.org

There is enough for everybody – it's about sharing! Social worker's engagement in fighting poverty

Today, 17th of October, International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, the International Federation of Social Workers - Europe (IFSW Europe) would like to thank social workers for their efforts in fighting poverty and reduce the impact of austerity measures on people's lives.

Regardless of whether these austerity measures were actually justified, the consequences for social work are disastrous:

- Drastic financial cuts in social services
- Restrictions and closures of many support measures
- Violation of the rights of people to appropriate assistance

New forms of poverty and social deprivation arose and proliferated. A number of changes and challenges caused by globalization, an aging population and technological shifts have hit the already vulnerable population and increased the number of people living below the poverty line. New forms of poverty have emerged and employment and work are no longer a guarantee for protection against poverty. Working Poor are the fastest growing segment of the impoverished population with devastating effects on the next generation. For children, access to education is massively difficult.

Children who grow up in poverty suffer more persistent, more frequent, and more severe from health problems.

The times demand that social workers engage in activities that show the devastating effects of austerity measures and call for their end.

Social workers see the effects of austerity and poverty every day in people's lives but they also see growing resilience of the people, who make use of social work services.

Here are some examples of their involvement:

- Social workers from "**Association Nationale des Assistants de Service Social**" (ANAS), France, together with the organization ATD Quart Monde prepared a number of public events for rising awareness of what is needed for fighting poverty. In order to increase their impact, ANAS is preparing a newspaper about social work and poverty to be sent to those



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who make decisions that influence people's ability to participate in social life and labour market.

- The activities of the **“British Association of Social Workers” (BASW)** continued after April 2017, when social workers and representatives of service users walked 100 miles from Birmingham to Liverpool, highlighting the impact of austerity. In June 2017 BASW produced a manifesto for all politicians identifying the problems and, through properly funded services, the solutions. BASW started to deepen the research that identified the impact of austerity on social work and social work users. Major research was undertaken on the impact of inadequate funding. In September 2017 BASW held “Fringe Meetings” at the conferences of two major political parties in UK, highlighting the impact of funding around care for the elderly and family support. In the summer the “Boot Out Austerity Walkers” reconvened as the anti-austerity group and from September 2017 have been working on a resource pack, and shaping an ongoing campaign. In October 2017, BASW submitted evidence to a Parliamentary Inquiry into the impact of Universal Credit, the Government welfare program.
- The engagement of ASproAS, **the Romanian Association of Social Workers**, continues with the necessary steps to develop community based social services and to employ professional social workers. The professionalization of social services will ensure to meet the complex needs of people living in poverty. Together with the European Commission, social workers started to intensify the research on how people can break the poverty circle. Social workers in Romania continue their actions that highlight the following message: “Without social workers and their skills, a country cannot progress in terms of social inclusion and economic growth!”

These are just three examples from a long list of activities in different countries. Since 1995, annual poverty conferences have taken place in Austria, which are of great public interest. Campaigns are held in Poland, Spain and other counties.

Social workers strongly advocate that economic growth is possible only when countries succeed in ensuring an efficient and sustainable social inclusion safety net.

Now is the time that social workers engage and actively influence the social policy in Europe and make the impact of austerity visible. IFSW Europe ensures that social workers can contribute to the debates on developing the social dimension of Europe and make their involvement in a transformational and sustainable social protection in Europe visible. The European Pillar of Social Rights and the White Paper on Future of Europe are two of the weighty topics on the agenda. Both of them have an impact at the global level and will influence The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development.

IFSW Europe thanks all the social workers that answer the call for action and have inspired people around the world to engage in fighting poverty and inhuman austerity measures.