

**ICSW EUROPE NEWSLETTER**  
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## A Message from the President

*"The EU is like a big tanker. It turns very slowly. But once it starts turning it will go that way."*

This was the answer by an EU lead economist to my question whether the Wellbeing Economy idea has had any influence on the EU agenda. This happened at the NGO seminar organized by the EU Directorate of Economic and Financial Affairs (ECFIN) in Brussels this November. ECFIN had invited some two-dozen active people from various NGOs from Member States to discuss the economic framework of the EU. The NGO representatives were questioning and even pressing the Directorate's experts about how the EU will be including ecological and social concerns on its agenda. As experienced civil servants the EU experts were quite careful about making definite statements on behalf of the forthcoming Commission (that time the nomination process was still ongoing). It was, however, encouraging that they referred very fluently to a broader concept of wellbeing and to the necessity of including ecological issues on their analyses particularly referring to The European Green Deal. After all, it is these exact people who have done and will be doing the background analytics for the new Commission.

It has been an active Autumn for ICSW Europe. To recount some highlights:

ICSW participated actively with the NGO community in the conferences organized in cooperation with the Finnish Government during the Finnish EU Presidency. In September we were involved in the Second Flagship Conference on Social Europe organized by Social Platform. In October we worked with FINGO (an umbrella of Finnish Development NGOs) at the Conference. ICSW chaired the working group on Inequality. Also, ICSW Europe nominated a second representative, our Georgian member, to the Council of Europe (CoE). A short report is included in this newsletter.

ICSW Europe supported financially three joint Seminars/Expert Meetings. The German speaking members organized an Expert Meeting on *"The Situation of Family Caregivers in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland"*.

Forening for Sosialt Arbeid – ICSW Norway organized a seminar on *"Preventive work among young people"* on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019. On 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> December there was the Expert Meeting on *"Poverty of Children in Nordic Countries"* organized by our Swedish Member.

Also Germany and Austria participated and gave presentation (the Report is forthcoming and highlights will be included in the next newsletter). While we do not have a full list of events organized by Members I would like to mention one organized by the Finnish Member. It is also worth mentioning the International Social Policy Afternoon in Finland: the theme was *"Ecosocial Europe"*. Why mention this – it is because of the topic, a rising theme we will return to. Further details on the outputs of some of these conferences can be studied through the links provided in this newsletter.

A new announcement for support to Members' expert events will be announced soon by the Board. Start developing ideas! We will also have a General Assembly in 2020 and the Board has been exploring potential hosts. Think about your organization's interest in hosting and get in touch with me.

It is also important to repeat that ICSW Europe has updated its registration in Utrecht, the Netherlands with the help of our local Member MOVISIE. We are very grateful to MOVISIE for their active involvement. It is important – and economical – that the homestead of an organization is not changing too often.

We look forward to the year 2020 as a new opportunity to support development *"Towards Wellbeing for All"* in Europe. It is the same idea as *"Health for All"* – a slogan (launched by WHO in 1978 in Alma Ata). Those days *"health"* was defined as *"a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"*. I think that since 1978 the concept and practice of social policy has developed so much that putting equal signs between well-being and health is not useful anymore. We just need to widen the concept of wellbeing beyond health – and beyond economics. We also need to widen and concretize the understanding of *"wellbeing policies"*.

Wellbeing is not a *"state"* – it is a process of *"faring well"* in life. It implies that one can also have reasonable security and confidence that life moves to

right direction also tomorrow. Lack of sense of mission and (factually founded) lack of confidence about future might be one of the key challenges of European people today. Outcomes of illbeing and insecurity can be seen as unpredictability on today's political arenas that entertain "simple solutions to complex challenges". One of ICSW task is to make it clear that including the social value of equality and fairness to all policies creates useful coherence and cooperation in society.

**Ronald Wiman, President of ICSW Europe**

## ICSW Europe Members

### ICSW Expert Meeting The Situation of Family Caregivers in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland



The 7<sup>th</sup> biannual joint meeting of the ICSW member groups of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, was held in **Eisenstadt, Austria, on November 14-15, 2019**.

The meeting, dedicated to review and discuss the situation of family caregivers in the respective countries, was chaired by *Irene Köhler* (AUT), *Michael Löher* (GER), and *Valérie Borioli-Sandoz* (CH).

A recent and exhaustive study on family caregiving in Austria (2018), realized in cooperation with the Austrian Ministry for Social Affairs, was presented by *Martin Nagl-Cupal*, Institute for Nursing Studies, University of Vienna. Keynote speeches by *Dorothee Lebeda* (GER), *Valérie Borioli-Sandoz* (CH), and *Birgit Meinhard-Schiebel* (AUT), focused on issues of information and acceptance: How can service offers be brought to the attention of family caregivers, how do they become aware of (and accept) them, which are the best methods to disseminate information on

existing programs? Examples of good practice in creating local services of support were presented by *Stefanie Emmert-Olschar* (GER), *Valérie Borioli-Sandoz* (CH), and *Monika Wild* (AUT).

The review and discussion of recent studies and existing programs revealed that, despite the high numbers of individuals involved in family caregiving, the creation of public awareness is still an important challenge. Programs of community based voluntary work, as a measurement to accompany formal care, have produced very positive results, both in the area of information and in order to alleviate possible negative effects of family caregiving to the caregiver (i.e. poor health, social isolation, lack of financial protection, etc).

A sustained development of these programs, however, requires a close cooperation with formal health care, and a structural funding by the public hand. The identification of existing options and policy solutions to reach individuals involved in family caregiving, to secure their social and financial protection, and to highlight their role for society as a whole were among the most pressing issues in the discussion of the proposed agenda.



A detailed report (in German language) is available at:

<https://oeksa.at/>

(*Irene Köhler, ÖKSA – Österreichisches Komitee für Soziale Arbeit*)

**Social Platform  
Extraordinary General Assembly  
Steering Group Meeting**

Social Platform's extraordinary General Assembly 2019 and Steering Group Meeting took place in Brussels on **December 5<sup>th</sup> 2019**.

It has adopted the 2020 Work Programme within the current multi-annual strategic plan and in view of the post 2020 strategy to be built.

Public information about the decisions taken by the GA are not yet available on the website.

*(source: Social Platform)*

**'Socialising the European Semester' – Social Platform publishes new report**



The Semester process provides a framework for the coordination of economic and social policies across the EU. While it was conceived as a purely macroeconomic process, social priorities were progressively added in the last few years. However, imbalances between macroeconomic and social priorities remain.

Social Platform is convinced that the full implementation of the Social Pillar can only be achieved through legislation, socio-economic governance – including the Semester process – funding and civil dialogue. More information can be found in SP position paper [“Building Social Europe. A comprehensive implementation plan for an effective European Pillar of Social Rights”](#).

On 21 November 2019 Social Platform published a [report](#) looking at how to socialise the European Semester process.

The aim of this report is to highlight the need to improve the social priorities in the [European Semester](#) and therefore support the implementation of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) (Social Pillar), a commitment made by EU leaders in 2017 to deliver new and more effective social rights for citizens. The report gives SP's perspective on the 2019 Semester process and makes recommendations for the upcoming 2020 cycle and possible future reforms of the Semester process, with regards to improving the balance of its thematic priorities and its design.

In SP's analysis of the 2019 process and recommendations for the 2020 cycle, SP follows the structure of the so-called virtuous triangle of boosting investment, structural reforms and responsible fiscal policies.

In the conclusions, SP contextualises the reforms of the European Semester process that SP believes are necessary and links them to the objectives of the future European Commission and highlights how this is a very opportune moment for reforms of the process.

*(source: Social Platform; available at:  
<https://www.socialplatform.org/news/socialising-the-european-semester-social-platform-publishes-new-report/>)*

## European Council Council of the European Union



### Economy of Wellbeing: the Council adopts conclusions

The Council on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019 adopted conclusions on the Economy of Wellbeing inviting the member states and the Commission to include an economy of wellbeing perspective horizontally in national and Union policies and to put people and their wellbeing at the centre of policy design.

The concept of the Economy of Wellbeing is a priority for the Finnish presidency. Its core claim is that while people's wellbeing is a value in itself, it is also vitally important for the Union's economic growth, productivity, long-term fiscal sustainability and societal stability.

**ICSW Europe** contributed to the Council Conclusions.

Full text of the Conclusions is available at:  
<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13432-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

[Infographic on the Economy of Wellbeing](#)  
[The Economy of Well-being - OECD Background Paper](#)

[Visit the meeting page](#)

(source: European Council, Council of the European Union;  
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/10/24/economy-of-wellbeing-the-council-adopts-conclusions/#>)

## Conference of INGOs



CONFERENCE OF INGOs  
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

The Autumn Session of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe took place in Strasbourg on **28-31 October 2019**.

Days 28 and 29 were dedicated to internal matters of the Management Committee and reports from the three standing Committees on "Human Rights", "Democracy, Social Cohesion and Global Challenges" and " Education and Culture".

Our representatives to the Conference, *Gérard Schaefer* (France) and a new representative *Nino Shatberashvili* (the President of the Georgian Association of Social Workers – GASW; ICSW Europe) attended the plenary sessions on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October.

Two important documents for a better management of the Conference were adopted during the Session: "Rules of procedure" and the revised "Code of good practice" for civil participation in the political decision making process.

Three reports on visits to countries concerning INGOs participation were presented: in the UK, Romania and Italy.

A Capacity building training was also set up to make cooperation between INGOs and the Council of Europe bodies more efficient.

Order of business and Meetings of the working groups agenda is available on the [website of the Conference](#).

(source: Council of Europe, Conference of INGOs; <https://www.coe.int/en/web/ingo/sessions>.  
Report written by Jean-Michel Hote, Vice-President ICSW Europe)



Eurochild advocates for children's rights and well-being to be at the heart of policymaking.

Eurochild is a network of organisations working with and for children throughout Europe, striving for a society that respects the rights of children. It influences policies, builds internal capacities, facilitates mutual learning and exchanges practice and research. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the foundation of Eurochild work.

### **Eurochild releases report on situation of children in 22 European countries**

Growing inequality affects children's access to healthcare and education; poverty continues to remain persistently high among children (24%), compared to the adult population (22%). Despite this, the European Semester – the European framework for socio-economic coordination – has failed to motivate countries to prioritise children.

The latest Eurochild report “New Opportunities for Investing in Children” assesses the European Semester featuring the situation of children in 22 countries with alternative recommendations for 2020.

*“Eurochild has engaged with the European Semester since 2011. While there is greater visibility of children, there has been little improvement in children's lives. Child poverty remains too high across Europe. The next 5-year cycle of the EU offers an opportunity to ramp up investment and political action. We look to the EU to set ambitious targets and to catalyse national action with the European Child Guarantee initiative”*

Jana Hainsworth, Secretary General, Eurochild.

Eurochild's latest report “New Opportunities for Investing in Children” analyses the impact of the European Semester on children in 22 European countries and offers following five key findings:

- Child poverty still not given the attention it deserves
- Particularly vulnerable groups of children being left behind
- Welcome attention given to early childhood education and care
- More effort needed to prevent family separation
- Systematic participation of children, a right of children, still underdeveloped.

The report ‘New opportunities for investing in children’ comes at a time when Europe's next strategic direction is under discussion with the start of the new legislature. Eurochild makes the case for prioritising children, and setting corresponding EU targets in the next policy framework guiding the European Semester. The report also offers its own alternatives to the country specific recommendations in light of assessments by 29 Eurochild members. It comments furthermore, on the links between policy monitoring and the use of EU funding; and makes recommendations to EU decision-makers for ensuring the overall process is more inclusive and leads to better outcomes for children.

[The report will be released at a high-level political round table at the European Parliament](#) in collaboration with Bertelsmann Stiftung, in the presence of European policy makers and civil society actors.

[Read the full report and discover the situation of children in your country](#)



(source: Eurochild;  
<https://www.eurochild.org/about-us/what-we-do/>)



### [Call for action for EU Member States to invest in children](#)

Ahead of the EU Council Summit on December 12-13, 2019, Eurochild reminded EU leaders to prioritise investment in children in the future EU budget negotiations. Read our joint statement as part of the EU Alliance on Investing in Children.

### [How the EU can learn from New Zealand's progressive social wellbeing budget](#)

The innovative and child-friendly approach to budgeting by the New Zealand government – an 'economy of wellbeing' – could provide valuable lessons for the EU budget.

### [Statement on child poverty from Committee of Ministers from the Council of Europe](#)

The Committee of Ministers have expressed concern about the very high rates of child poverty in Europe and the growing inequalities that particularly affect them. In a declaration adopted on 12 December, a number of recommendations have been made for reducing child poverty levels.

For more information click on the headlines.

*(source: Eurochild)*

## Conferences/Expert Meetings

### Beyond Growth: Indicators and Politics for People and Planet

Fingo's [Finnish Development NGOs] main event during Finland's Presidency, [Beyond Growth – Indicators and politics for people and planet](#), brought 150 specialist from decision-making, administration, civil society, business, and academia to Helsinki to discuss and develop recommendations for the EU to advance the use of wellbeing and sustainability indicators as guides for policy-making.

The conference took place in **Helsinki**, Finland on **October 28<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> 2019**.

Many of the planet-wide ecosystems are near to their tipping points, climate change threatens everything that is important to us, and inequality within countries is growing. So far, the societal objectives and indicators tied up with economic growth, gross domestic product (GDP) in particular, have framed our ways of responding to the deepening sustainability crisis. There is a widely shared need for redefining progress through measures that go beyond GDP. We require a stronger and more realistic knowledge base for policy-making to create wellbeing that is sustainable now and in the future.

This knowledge co-creation conference aimed to advance the ongoing discussions on developing measures of wellbeing and sustainability and improving their use in integrated policy processes. This multi-stakeholder gathering built upon the processes of the OECD and the search for pathways and indicators initiated by EU member states (e.g. Austria with Growth in Transition initiative) and the European Parliament (Post-Growth conference 2018). As part of the event, thematic working groups discussed and developed recommendations for the EU to advance the use of wellbeing and sustainability indicators as guides for policy-making.

The event was organized by [Finnish Development NGOs – Fingo](#) together with [Finland's National Commission on Sustainable Development](#). This conference was Fingo's main event during the Finland's Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2019.

### Thematic working groups and partners

During the event, thematic working groups discussed and developed recommendations for the EU to advance the use of measures of wellbeing and sustainability as guides for policy-making.

The five thematic working groups were:

- 1) Inequality of Income, Wealth and Opportunities
- 2) Resilience and Respecting the Ecosystem Boundaries
- 3) Fair Transition to Carbon Neutral Circular Economy
- 4) Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development – How European Policies Affect the Global South
- 5) Respecting Human Rights in Business

The thematic working groups were coordinated by Fingo and managed in partnership with [SOSTE Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health](#) (theme 1); [EBB European Environmental Bureau](#) (theme 2); [Sitra, the Finnish Innovation Fund](#) (theme 3); [CONCORD, the European confederation of Relief and Development NGOs](#) (theme 4); [Fairtrade Finland](#), and [Felm, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission](#) (theme 5).

#### 1) Inequality of Income, Wealth and Opportunities

This thematic group discussed the comprehensive understanding of inequality as a factor of wellbeing. The impacts of inequality on different groups in society were emphasised, while the main focus was on the European Pillar of Social Rights as a framework for reducing inequality in the EU.

Working group "Inequality of Income, Wealth and Opportunities" was organised in partnership with [SOSTE Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health](#) and [The International Council on Social Welfare \(ICSW\)](#).

Chair: *Ronald Wiman* (ICSW Europe)

**Speakers:** *Richard Layard* (London School of Economics); *Carlos Gradin* (UNU-WIDER); *Terhi Ravaska* (The Labour Institute for Economic Research); *Ismo Grönroos-Saikkala* (European Commission Representation in Finland).

Discussion papers of the next working groups can be read here:

<https://www.fingo.fi/tapahtumat/beyond-growth/working-groups>

The programme is available [here](#).

(source: EuroHealthNet; available at: <https://eurohealthnet.eu/media/events/beyond-growth-indicators-and-politics-people-and-planet-helsinki-finland>)

### Upcoming Conferences/Expert Meetings

**Promoting Human Relationships : Bridging the Future  
Joint World Conference on Social Work Education and  
Social Development**

**SWESD conference: June 28th – July 1st, 2020**



The SWESD 2020 International Scientific Committee is pleased to announce the [Call for Abstracts](#) for the [Joint World Conference on Social Work Education and Social Development](#): Promoting Human Relationships: Bridging the Future

**Authors are warmly invited to submit abstracts for Oral, Symposium, Workshop, Regional dialogue and Poster presentations and invites both traditional papers and innovative contributions of various kind.**

### Abstract Submission Deadline Extended!

Due to numerous requests collected from Authors, the Scientific Committee has decided to extend the Abstract Submission Deadline.  
New deadline: January 7th, 2020

**CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT YOUR ABSTRACTS**



## Publications

This is to share a new publication by Nobel Laureate **Joseph Stiglitz** and a group of progressive economists, [Rewriting the Rules of the European Economy](#), published by the **Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS)**.

Rewriting the Rules of the European Economy is a comprehensive assessment of what ails Europe and what can be done to restore inclusive growth and prosperity for all Europeans – the European sequel of Joseph Stiglitz's [Re-writing the rules of the American Economy](#) (2015).

Joseph Stiglitz, joined by co-authors Ernst Stetter, Carter Dougherty, Stephany Griffith-Jones, Isabel Ortiz, Jeronim Capaldo, Daniela Gabor and Margit Schratzenstaller-Altzinger, expose the link between the rapidly rising fortunes of Europe's wealthiest citizens and increasing economic insecurity for everyone else.

Inequality is a choice made with the rules created to structure the economy. Over the last decades, Europe's policy choices have weakened the economy and benefited a few. The volume examines the array of policies that lie beneath the surface – the rules that determine the balance of power between public and private, employers and workers, innovation and shared growth, and other aspects that make up the current European economy. The conclusion is that, to improve economic performance and create shared prosperity, we must rewrite the rules of the economy, in particular redress the market fundamentalism that has characterized much of European economic and social policy for the last quarter century. The volume explicitly rejects the doctrine of austerity that defined the European Union's response to the 2008 financial crisis and recession in favor of adequately regulating markets and the financial sector, supporting aggregate demand, employment, equity and prosperity for all Europeans, including through improved wages, collective bargaining, working conditions and a European social security system for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Chapters:

- chapter 1:* Employment, not austerity
- chapter 2:* Monetary policy: prioritizing employment
- chapter 3:* Investing for an equitable future
- chapter 4:* Promoting competitive markets: Incentives, regulations and participation
- chapter 5:* Toward a financial system that serves society
- chapter 6:* Taxation to promote justice and growth
- chapter 7:* Poverty, inequality, and the welfare state
- chapter 8:* A European social security system for the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- chapter 9:* Labor markets, good wages, and working conditions
- chapter 10:* The future of Europe in a globalized world



The publication for downloading is available at:

[https://www.feps-europe.eu/attachments/publications/book\\_stiglitz-web-pp.pdf](https://www.feps-europe.eu/attachments/publications/book_stiglitz-web-pp.pdf)



CECOP new publication:

**All for One – Response of worker-owned cooperatives to non-standard employment**

“All for One – Response of worker-owned cooperatives to non-standard employment”, a new report produced by CECOP sets out to show the contributions made by cooperatives to the issues related to **non-standard employment**, such as precariousness, low income, insufficient social security coverage and workers' isolation.



The report adopts an approach based on the concept of decent work deficits in order to identify specific problematic situations to which worker-owned cooperatives have been responding over the time. However, this report focusses particularly on independent

workers (also called freelancers) whose situations are not covered sufficiently by political and institutional debates on non-standard employment.

As the examples from Belgium, Finland, France and Spain illustrate, cooperatives have been a laboratory for experimentation on innovative and sustainable forms of work and employment, providing a response to the needs of workers in non-standard employment situations, as well as their aspirations for creating a working community of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The cooperative laboratory for new forms of work and employment suggests several possible scenarios which might allow us to embrace the Present and the Future of Work. We invite you to discover them, as well as policy recommendations we are addressing to EU and national authorities.

[DOWNLOAD THE REPORT](#)

## Useful Links

Conference “Beyond Growth: Indicators and Politics for People and Planet“:

[Beyond Growth – Indicators and politics for people and planet](#)

Economy of Wellbeing: the Council Conclusions:

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13432-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

2019 Eurochild Report on the European Semester:

[Read the full report and discover the situation of children in your country](#)

Eurochild:

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

SWESD 2020 Conference, Rimini, Italy:

<http://swesd2020.org/>

## 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.

The Newsletter of ICSW European Region is published quarterly. Material may be freely reproduced or cited provided the source is acknowledged. Contributions on social welfare from all sectors of the international community are welcome.

Contributions and comments can be sent to:

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