

## SISWEC – Strengthening the Skills of Social Workers in a Europe in Crisis

The SISWEC project is aimed at reviewing social work training across Europe to better prepare social workers for the many crises our societies face. It aims to equip future professionals with the skills they need for real-world practice, combining knowledge with strong social impact.

### How can social work education better prepare students for today's crises?

Universities and training institutions play a vital role in shaping the next generation of social workers. As crises like economic hardship, forced migration, and public health emergencies grow more complex, so must the education that prepares professionals to respond.

The SISWEC project compared training programmes and found both shared strengths and key gaps.

#### What's working well?

- ✓ Different crisis-related topics are addressed across programmes, with varying levels of focus
- ✓ Courses link theory to practice
- ✓ Core skills like empathy, trauma response, and crisis intervention are prioritised

#### But differences remain:

Austria & Poland: focus on extremism and anti-democracy

Italy & Portugal: highlight humanitarian action

France & Cyprus: address migration and the need for intercultural competences development

Italy even offers a course on *Social Work in Crisis Contexts*

#### What's missing?

- There is often a stronger focus on individual and family crises than on collective or structural ones, leaving important interconnections underexplored
- Structural issues are rarely addressed in training
- Lack of training placements related to crisis situations

#### Recommendations for Social Work Educators

- ✓ Teach collective crisis response, not just individual care
- ✓ Emphasise critical thinking, systems approaches, and innovation
- ✓ Empower students as agents of social change
- ✓ Develop flexible, adaptive curricula to respond to emerging challenges
- ✓ Offer specialised micro-credentials in crisis management training

Want to know more? Visit SISWEC website <https://www.socialworkskills.eu/>