







The European Social Network is supported by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation 'EaSI' 2014-2020

esn-eu.org

The European Social Network (ESN) is the independent network for local public social services in Europe. It brings together the organisations that plan, finance, research, manage, regulate and deliver local public social services, including health, social welfare, employment, education and housing. We support the development of effective social policy and social care practice through the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR A GIANT LEAP FORWARD

#### Dear Colleagues,

Another year has gone by. It's not that I'm fond of clichés, but once again, 2018 has taught us the important values in life we should embrace, cherish and safeguard. As chair of ESN, alongside colleagues from across Europe, I have witnessed once more that it is of great importance to keep evaluating, reinventing and improving public social services. We did this with our 2018 policy activities and at our 26<sup>th</sup> European Social Services Conference in Seville.

The personal contacts I made and the conversations I had throughout the year confirmed what most of us already know: as the independent network, we hold the key for high-quality policy on public social services in Europe. These services should be available and affordable for every citizen, regardless of their cultural or social background. We consider this a basic value, never to be questioned.

However, recent political issues have at times threatened these values we hold so dear. The ongoing debate on Brexit and its final deal and the upcoming European elections make us wonder which road Europe will choose in the future. Will it be a future focusing on individual profit for EU Member States? Or will it be a future in which we shake hands with our neighbours and let common interest prevail? Most importantly for us, will the future be led by compromise that allows us to make 'a giant leap forward' in social policy and social services?

I believe we can. In practice, this giant leap forward is made through every discussion and every debate that ESN members and partners take part in.

In 2018 we have shown that our input and the implementation of our mission and vision represents and inspires social services throughout Europe. This annual review is a synopsis of our joint work last year.

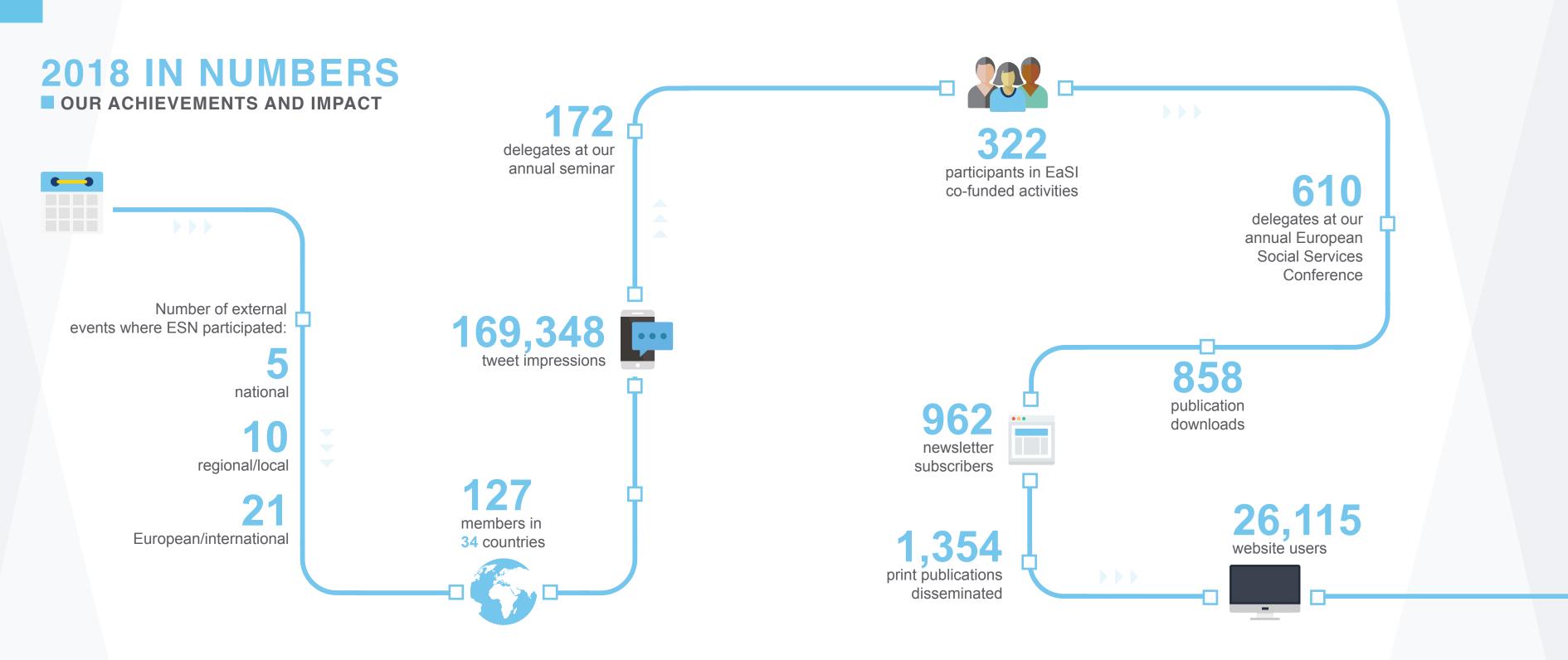
As a network, we remain loyal to our approach in 2019 and we hope you will join us in this journey!

Christian Fillet | Chair



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# **TABLE OF CONTENT**

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR 03 A Giant Leap Forward 2018 IN NUMBERS 04 Our Achievements and Impact TABLE OF CONTENT 06 Annual Review **ACTIVITIES IN 2018** 80 Leading Social Services in Europe CHAMPIONING SOCIAL SERVICES IN EUROPE 10 The Voice of Social Services in the European Semester TRANSFORMING POLICY AND PRACTICE 12 From Active Inclusion to Inclusive Activation SHARING KNOWLEDGE 14 Integrated Care and Support Strategies **INFORMING A GLOBAL AGENDA** 16 2030 SDGs: The Role of Social Services PEER TO PEER LEARNING 18 Transferring Knowledge **REPRESENTING OUR MEMBERS** 20 Extending Knowledge and Capacity Building







22	<b>PROMOTING PAR</b> Empowering Peo
24	EUROPEAN SOCI
28	WORKING IN PAR Join Our Commu
30	AN EXPANDING N Join Our Commu
32	IMPROVING COM
34	GOVERNANCE Meet the Board
36	A Transformative
37	ESN SECRETARI/ Meet the Team
38	PUBLICATIONS Highlights in 201

#### PARTICIPATION

People

**DCIAL SERVICES CONFERENCE** te Transfrom

PARTNERSHIP nmunity of Partners

**G NETWORK** nmunity of Members

OMMUNICATIONS People and Ideas

I THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE tive Year

RIAT

2018







# **ACTIVITIES IN 2018**



8 FEBRUARY:

9 FEBRUARY: Council Meeting, Brighton UK

8 APRIL:

28-29 JUNE: European Semester Reference Group Meeting, Brussels

Brussels

**5-6 NOVEMBER:** Inclusive Activation Seminar, Vienna

Board Meeting, Brighton UK

1

Board Meeting, Manchester UK



### **1-2 OCTOBER:**

SDG Working Group Meeting,

### 6 DECEMBER:

Board Meeting, Brussels

#### **29-30 NOVEMBER:**

Integrated Support & Care Working Group Meeting, Lisbon

4



11 OCTOBER: Board Meeting, Malta

**12 OCTOBER:** Council Meeting, Malta



27-30 MAY: 26<sup>th</sup> European Social Services Conference, Seville



# CHAMPIONING SOCIAL SERVICES IN EUROPE

### EUROPEAN SEMESTER: THE VOICE OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Our Reference Group on the European Semester is composed of social services directors and professionals. They develop analysis and recommendations for the European Semester, an annual economic and social policy cycle between the European Commission and the Member States.

Through dialogue between the Group and officials from the European Commission, we have raised awareness of issues they face, and influenced the policy guidance of the European Commission.

The Group met with the European Commission on 28-29 June to analyse key trends and priorities, which were subsequently presented in our report 'Connecting social services to Europe: European Semester 2019'.

#### Key trends in social services

Quality social services - Improve funding to enhance reach and quality



- Housing exclusion Greater support needed for social services to address rising homelessness
- Long-term care Improve funding and service coordination for care quality in the context of an ageing population

#### Social services priorities for the European Semester 2019

- Devote specific attention to principles in the European Pillar of Social Rights related to social services: community-based services for children, young people, people with disabilities and long-term conditions
- Embrace a broader view of social inclusion beyond employment
- Recognise social spending as an investment

# **CONNECTING SOCIAL SERVICES TO EUROPE**





I learnt much more on cross-country issues for social services in Europe and the response of the European Commission to these. Furthermore, my participation demonstrated to me the importance of the involvement of local social services in European policy-making.

Joris Beaumon, Association of Flemish Directors of Social Services (VVOS), Belgium



The ESN report on connecting social services to Europe and the meeting with their members gives a precious input to the Commission's European Semester monitoring work. It is also an important basis for engagement on the problems and social policies that can address them.

Jeroen Jutte, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, European Commission

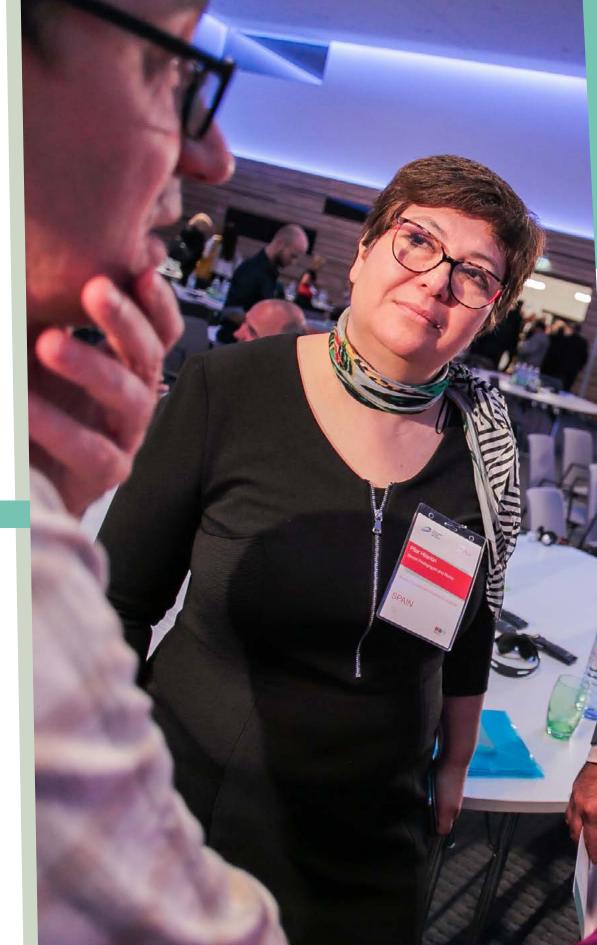
### TRANSFORMING POLICY AND PRACTICE FROM ACTIVE INCLUSION TO INCLUSIVE ACTIVATION

We believe in a shift from an activation approach grounded solely on employment to a more holistic one - where social, health, education, housing and employment services are all considered important for improving outcomes for the social inclusion of vulnerable people. We call this approach Inclusive Activation.

This idea was at the core of our seminar in Vienna (Austria) on 5-6 November, where over 170 delegates from across Europe came together to discuss this approach. The ideas from these discussions are presented in our follow-up report.

#### Key messages from our seminar in Vienna:

- Social services are crucial for outreach to the most vulnerable
- 2 Continue integrated support beyond the signing of an employment contract
- **3** Focus on social inclusion programmes for those not ready for the labour market
- 4 Structure the provision of services around coordinated services
- 5 Reinforce the role of case managers who can coordinate and personalise services
- 6 Improve monitoring and evaluation of personalised plans to ensure their success





The content of the seminar addressed the heart of my work. I went home with guidance, contacts, and inspiring ideas on how to manage my practices.

Luc Delaporte, Manager of Territorial Unit on Social Action, Seine-Maritime County Council, France



Our Inclusive Activation seminar in Vienna was organised in cooperation with the Austrian Presidency of the European Council and our member, the City of Vienna.

WATCH VIENNA VIDEO ON OUR E-LIBRARY https://www.esn-eu.org/elibrary/



### SHARING KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATED CARE AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

In 2018 we launched a working group to analyse policy and practice on integrated care and support across the life cycle. Through this work with our members we know that integrated care and support is crucial to:

- Better address the complex issues faced by people
- Identify needs earlier through more preventative approaches

We brought together 20 of our members on 29-30 November in Lisbon (Portugal) for the first meeting. Together we identified relevant practice and held in-depth discussions on ways to respond better to children's needs through more coordinated services.

As follow-up, the practice examples have been published on our **practice library**. We then summarised effective strategies in an analytical report, highlighting the need for all professionals to coordinate in joint planning and engage in **a shared vision and responsibility** for child protection.

**PRACTICE EXAMPLE:** The Directorate General for Social Affairs and Child Protection (Hungary) is implementing this shared vision and responsibility through their **Inter-Sectoral Team**. This team operates at national level to embed a sense of shared responsibility and improve understanding of roles between public social services, health care, education, the police, and third sector organisations.





IN 2019 THIS WORKING GROUP WILL FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE IN STATE CARE.



SEE OUR E-LIBRARY FOR 12 PRACTICES FROM THE WORKING GROUP. www.esn-eu.org/practices





By participating in the Working Group, I took ideas, inspiration and suggestions on how to improve my programme, and will continue to collaborate with other participants.

Kjerstin Bergman, National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen), Sweden

# INFORMING A GLOBAL AGENDA

#### **2030 SDGs: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Social services in local and regional authorities play a crucial role in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The OECD has highlighted that 65% of the SDGs sub-targets will not be reached without the involvement of local and regional authorities.

For this reason, we launched a specific Working Group on the SDGs, which met for the first time on 1-2 October to discuss SDG 1: Eradication of Poverty.

We took a global approach in the meeting with our members from Europe exchanging knowledge and ideas with peers from the USA, Canada, and Peru.

#### Following the first meeting we published a policy briefing with the following key messages:

- The SDGs can be a tool to strengthen the voice of social services in the global agenda
- Policy Briefing Sector Sector

Cartoneen Statement

- Investment in quality social services and its workforce is crucial for implementation of the SDGs
- Platforms for exchange between local social services practitioners and policy-makers at national level can also promote implementation



SEE E-LIBRARY FOR THE POLICY BRIEFING ON 'IMPLEMENTING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA' www.esn-eu.org/publications







The meeting in Brussels was a great opportunity to learn about the experience of other countries in the network regarding the implementation of the SDGs at many different levels in different contexts. There is a need for periodic and accessible data and analysis. This type of workshop is thus important to guide policymakers, providing them with tools and evidence on what can contribute towards the 2030 Agenda.

Adriana Conconi, Policy and Outreach Director, Poverty and Human Development Initiative, University of Oxford

### PEER TO PEER LEARNING TRANSFERRING KNOWLEDGE

Since 2014, ESN organises a peer-learning visit programme which helps members, who are interested in a specific programme/service implemented elsewhere to learn and seek advice to implement it in their own countries. This year, three visits took place:

On 3-4 July, representatives from the Directorate-General for Social Affairs and Child Protection in Hungary visited the Association of Centres for Social Work in Slovenia to learn from the Slovenian system of care for children in need, focusing particularly on how to improve foster care and work with biological family.

On 6-7 September, a representative from the Social Services Consortium of Campania region, in Italy, visited the Association of Social Directors and the Municipality of Hafnarfjordur in Iceland, to learn about projects and interventions aimed at avoiding the removal of children from their families when they are in vulnerable situations.

On 1-4 October, representatives from the National Agency for Children, Families and the Community (Agenzija Appogg) of Malta visited Renfrewshire Council in Scotland to learn about integrated support system where services delivery, management and organisation are brought together to improve their provision.



#### What did you learn in your visit to Renfrewshire Council in Scotland?

I had the opportunity to learn the principles and values that underpin child protection work in Scotland.

decisions. It also includes the development of community programmes such as 'Families First' which have contributed to reduced poverty and crime rates through community support groups.

#### How did this change how you work?

I was inspired by what I saw in Scotland. Back in Malta I met with senior managers to discuss how we can

We now place less emphasis on risk-aversion where parents are treated as security risks, and more on collaborative approaches by involving them more in meetings and making our facilities more welcoming.

We're also developing our community services, for example by strengthening links to child protection to encourage more preventative work with vulnerable families.

Overall, we've seen that through implementation of the principles we learnt during our visit to Renfrewshire, we've made enormous progress in improving our services.



Steve Libreri I Child Protection Manager, Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS), Malta

# REPRESENTING **OUR MEMBERS**

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE AND **CAPACITY BUILDING** 



#### THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER AS A TOOL FOR DELIVERING A **MORE SOCIAL EUROPE**

ESN Vice-Chair Carlos Santos Guerrero reinforced the importance of consulting local and regional authorities in the European Semester.



#### **PACT PROJECT**

The Region of Castilla y León is implementing a new model of care for assessing vulnerability. We provided insights in the final PACT contrasted the project against similar ones in Europe.



European Pillar of Social Rights, by organising a joint side-event with Eurocities, as well as speaking in the



#### LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: THE **ROLE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION** IN THE SUSTAINABLE **DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

We highlighted how social services are innovating through digitalisation and data analytics to improve outcomes for vulnerable people, whilst connecting with welfare developments in countries neighbouring the EU such as Armenia.

#### **ESN PARTICIPATED AT 36 EXTERNAL EVENTS. THESE ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS:**



**REPRESENTING ESN** 

**CAPACITY BUILDING** 

Navarra, Spain



#### **ERSISI PROJECT**

The Regional Government of Navarra (Spain) is implementing and employment services through case-managers. We supported the project by explaining how evidence from the pilot can be scaled up.

31 OCTOBER | 1 NOVEMBER

**14 NOVEMBER** 

17 DECEMBER

Kortrijk, Belgium



#### **MISSION PROJECT**

The Public Centre for Social Welfare (OCMW) Kortrijk is improving outreach and integrated support to vulnerable families through multidisciplinary case managers. We are part of the advisory board and provide guidance on the

# **PROMOTING PARTICIPATION**EMPOWERING PEOPLE

We invited people who use the services of our members to showcase their perspective and explain how social services made a difference in their lives.

#### Empowering people to fulfil their potential



•••

One of the things that I found, being unemployed, is that the system can be very inflexible. When you are unemployed in Denmark you cannot set up your own business.

Annemette Kjølby Kristensen, Nordiq House, Entrepreneur, Workshop presenter at Inclusive Activation Seminar 5-6 November, Vienna, Austria

Thanks to a new approach from social services, that's exactly what Annamette did. She was granted 6700 euros which helped her set up her florist business Nordiq House. Today she's an entrepreneur branching out to a business designing leather goods as well.

#### Incorporating the voice of children and young people

voung people

#### European Social Services Conference 27-30 May, Seville, Spain

Our member, the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (**CELCIS**), hosted a thematic panel discussion at our Conference with six care experienced young people, plus organisations from Malta, France, and Scotland, UK.

They presented how young people are involved in shaping policy and practice:

**Care Inspectorate, Scotland, UK:** Care experienced young people accompany inspections of children's services, making the process easier and more collaborative for children and



**National Agency for Children, Families and the Community, Malta:** A Youth Forum meets regularly to discuss issues in the community

**National Observatory for the Protection of Children, France:** Care experienced young people help to improve practice through reflective meetings with child protection practitioners

#### Enabling users to inform policy and practice



I represent people with learning difficulties as I have personally experienced the challenges we face. Finding work is one of these challenges, and I want to make our right to employment a reality.

Maco Buchinger, Self-advocate for people with learning disabilities, Speaker at Inclusive Activation Seminar 5-6 November, Vienna, Austria



Maco drew on his own experience to explain how important it was that social policy and practice ensures access to social protection, education, and employment for people with learning disabilities.

Our 2019 Co-production Forum will showcase policy and practice where users have supported the design of services for them.

## **EUROPEAN SOCIAL SERVICES CONFERENCE**

■ INVEST INNOVATE TRANSFORM

The 26<sup>th</sup> European Social Services Conference took place in Seville on 27<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> May. This was the best attended conference so far with 610 delegates from 39 countries.

Participants came not only from Europe, but also from Palestine, Israel, the United States, New Zealand or Australia, and had the opportunity to participate in 8 plenaries, 28 workshops, a project forum that featured 11 projects, and endless area that featured **11** partners.

The theme of the conference was empowering users of social services and communities, making best use of investment in human capital and technology to do so. Delegates learnt about truly inspiring developments, from apps to promote independent living or grassroot community initiatives to large-scale digital transformation for people with social care needs.

without weaving a strong social fabric

Herminia Palacio, New York City Deputy Mayor

### 27<sup>th</sup> MAY

A pre-conference event 'Nordic Day' organised successful inclusion of young migrants.

#### 28<sup>th</sup> MAY

We learnt about building partnerships between sectors, universal basic income, and community grassroots initiatives as key elements of social

29<sup>th</sup> MAY

### 30<sup>th</sup> MAY

- integration of employment and social services • co-designing services with young people
- technology-led services
- service assessment





We focused on linking up with private investors for innovation to overcome austerity and to support vulnerable people in our societies.





## We believe in working collaboratively

The Conference took place at a time of social policy changes. **The European Pillar of Social Rights** had been launched and reforms to decentralise social services and enhance social rights were underway across Europe, for example in The Netherlands, Finland, Poland and Bulgaria.

The Regional Government of Andalucía was our main partner and host, alongside Seville County Council and La Caixa Banking Foundation.

They are immersed in the implementation of their 2016 social services legislation, with discussions at the Conference allowing them to reflect on their own reform, share their challenges and discover best practice from others.

We believe in working collaboratively so we partnered not only with our members, but also with international private sector organisations, European agencies, Spanish foundations, and IT companies to enrich discussions as we strive towards a common goal of supporting the social inclusion of the most vulnerable in our societies.



## **WORKING IN** PARTNERSHIP **JOIN OUR COMMUNITY OF PARTNERS**

For the 26<sup>th</sup> European Social Services Conference in Seville we worked with our partners.



### **REGIONAL GOVERNMENT OF ANDALUSIA**

SEVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL 
LA CAIXA BANKING FOUNDATION ■ IBM WATSON HEALTH

ASOCIACIÓN INSERTA EMPLEO EDENRED

MACROSAD SAP

CELCIS RAISOFT FRA ISOTROL EUROFOUND SOPRA STERIA AYESA



# AN EXPANDING NETWORK

### JOIN OUR COMMUNITY OF MEMBERS

#### **ESN Core/ Associate**

Core Members (public authorities; social services directors associations)

Associate Members (professional associations; inspection and development bodies; service providers; applied research organisations).

### **ESN Board and Council**

Council Members (only for public authorities and associations of directors)

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21

The Council helps guide ESN's policy direction.

European Social Network

### ESN GLOBAL

Public authorities, associations of professionals and social services directors, quality inspection and applied research organisations from across the world who share our mission and values.

### ESN ALL INCLUSIVE Public Authority Package

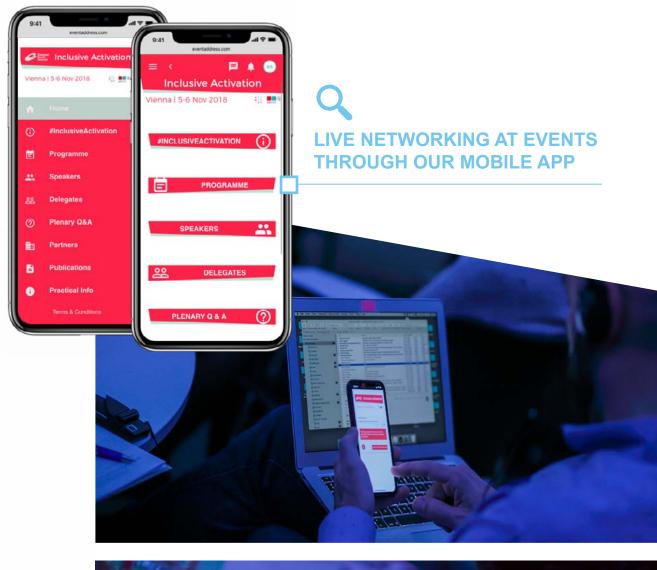
This is ESN's newest membership package. It includes additional funded places to attend our annual conference and seminar.

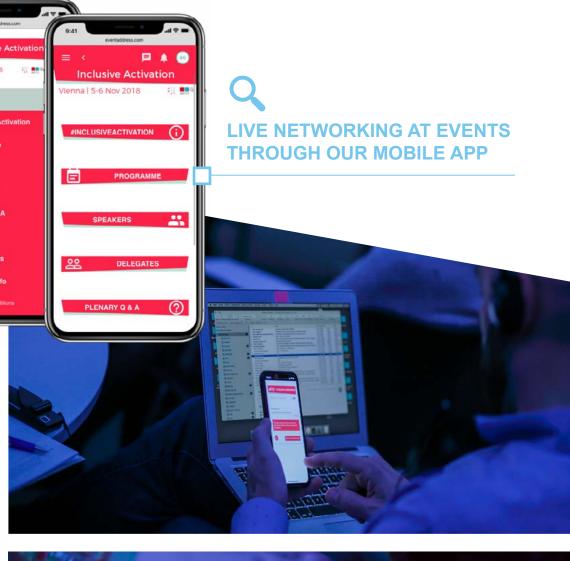


## **IMPROVING** COMMUNICATIONS **CONNECTING PEOPLE AND IDEAS**

### **A REBRANDED AND MORE USER-FRIENDLY WEBSITE**









### GOVERNANCE MEET THE BOARD

#### Board

The Board consists of six trustees representing social services directors' associations and directors at regional authorities' social services departments. The trustees have a responsibility for ESN's governance, strategy and development, and are elected every three years by the members of the Council. The Board meets four to six times per vear.

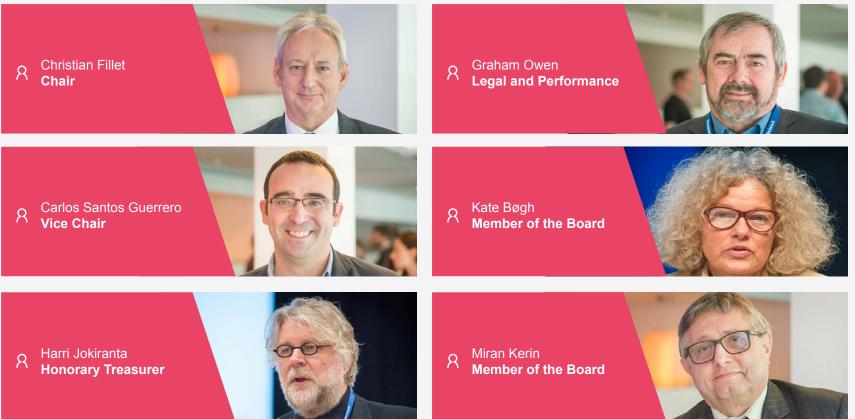
#### Council

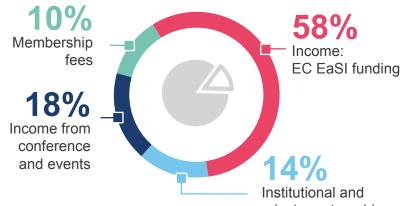
National and regional organisations of social services directors together with social services departments in regional authorities have a special role within the Network as members of the ESN Council. Members of the Council access all legal and financial documentation, all meeting records and decisions including agreements and reporting documents to the European Commission and approve the annual accounts. The Council consists currently of 20-member organisations representing uniquely the management of public social services at a national or regional level.

The ESN's Council and its elected Board of Trustees are directly involved in planning and development of the network and its programme of activities, in holding the Secretariat to account and evaluating the network's performance. The Chief Executive is in regular contact with the Board trustees with whom he shares ideas and concerns.

#### Funding

ESN signed a framework partnership agreement with the European Commission for 2018-2021 under the EaSI programme for employment and social innovation and receives a grant for its annual work programme. The European Social Services Conference organised by ESN is a separate self-funded activity for which ESN works with institutional and private partners.





private partnerships

## **LETTER FROM** THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE A TRANSFORMATIVE YEAR

#### Dear colleagues,

2018 has been a year of transformation and growth for us. In the aftermath of Brexit, we saw ESN relocating from Brighton (UK), where it had been established for 19 years, to Brussels.

ESN saw the departure of most of its staff and I had to form a new team to ensure that ESN delivered on its commitments to the European Commission, our members and partners at large.

Looking back, I can certainly say that we were very successful in doing so. We now have a well-established team wishing to move the organisation forward.

Despite the relocation challenges, 2018 saw the biggest annual conference to date in Seville, with over 600 delegates and a record number of partners. Additionally, our Inclusive Activation seminar organised in cooperation with the Austrian Presidency of the EU and our long-standing member the city of Vienna, also gathered a record number of 172 participants.

We embraced 2018 as a year of opportunities. For the first time in 20 years we have redesigned our membership, developed a new online platform for members engagement, and we have just launched a new website. New activities such as our work on the sustainable development agenda have led us to link up with colleagues in other parts of the world, such as the United States. Canada, and China.

Over the year, I have met with many ESN members working tirelessly to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable and have learnt to admire their work supporting children and young people, helping adults to maintain or recover their independence, and caring for the elderly. I want to ensure that the activities delivered by ESN enable those who plan and manage social services gain the knowledge and develop the skills they need to deliver guality care and support.

I would like to thank the European Commission, institutional and private partners for their continuing support driven by our shared social values of upholding people's social rights and promoting the sustainability and adequacy of social welfare.

As we entered 2019, we received over 85 contribution proposals for our annual conference in Milan highlighting that the shift From Quality of Care to Quality of Life is an important goal for social services across Europe.

In 2019, I look forward to continuing working with staff, members, partners and friends to help achieve a vision of social justice, inclusion and sustainable social services for all in Europe.







# **ESN SECRETARIAT**

## **PUBLICATONS** HIGHLIGHTS IN 2018

### Implementing the Sustainable Development Agenda: the Role of Social Services

The global agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provides social services an opportunity to emphasise their role related to people's empowerment, upholding human rights, social justice and promoting social inclusion.

### Promoting the social inclusion of migrant children and young people: The duty of social services

The report explores the issues that emerged as crucial for social services when supporting the integration of migrant children and young people in their host societies.



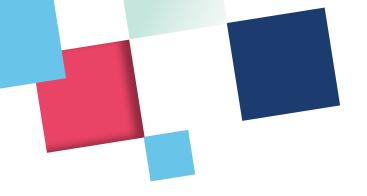
#### **Tools for Inclusive Activation**

This publication is the result of our work on inclusive activation mainly through our seminar and research in the framework of our 2018-2021 strategy.

#### Connecting Social Services to Europe: European Semester 2019

Based on the insights of social services we present crosscountry analysis, country profiles, and policy recomandations from 24 Member States.

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