



The Social Services Network for Europe

Annual Review 2017



The European Social Network
is supported by the
European Commission

esn-eu.org



This publication has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) (2014-2020). For further information please consult: www.ec.europa.eu/social/easi
The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission.



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, deliver, and inspect 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.

Introduction

Letter from the Chair

Social Services
in Europe



Dear colleagues,

In the Bruges area, where I spend most of my time, we have a local saying that doors, like the years, open and close. The year 2017 was no exception as it opened and closed smoothly. Over the 365 days, both Europe and ESN faced challenges and lived through memorable moments.

Needless to say we were very impressed by the presence of more than 500 participants at our conference in Malta in July. This confirms that social care and public services are a cornerstone in improving people's lives and that we, as senior social services professionals, are willing and able to adapt to a challenging and changing environment. In 2018, equipping our members to face those challenges will be a core task for ESN's Chief Executive.

I wish to thank and congratulate John Halloran very much for his work for ESN and wish Alfonso Lara Montero all the best for the future in the post as new Chief Executive.

The coming year will also see the relocation of the ESN Secretariat from Brighton to Brussels. I am convinced that 'the heart of Europe' will offer us the best conditions to deliver the organisation's mission through supporting the exchange of knowledge and expertise and leading the development of guidelines and best practice for social care and public services across Europe.

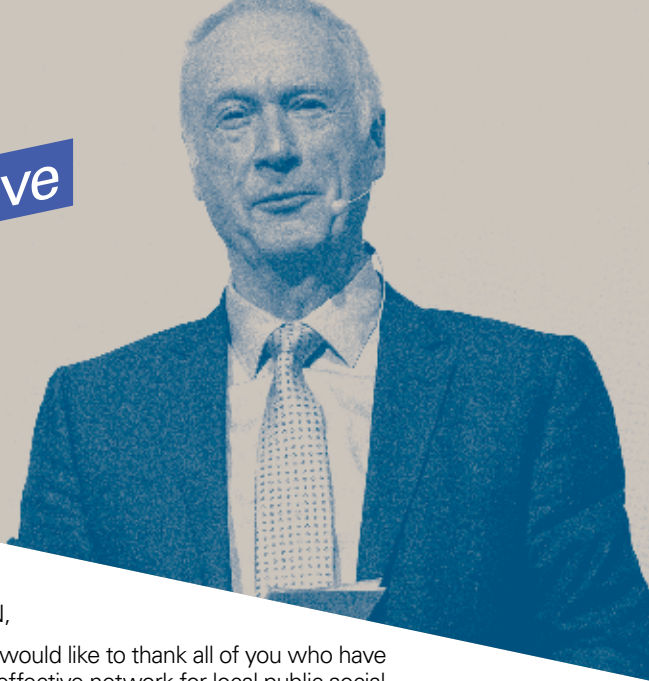
Our reflections and conclusions on 2017 are presented in this annual review. It reflects the spirit of an organisation such as ESN. Together we put citizens first, regardless of background. This is something we have delivered in the past and hope to continue to build on in the future.

I wish you an inspiring 2018!

Christian Fillet
Chair of ESN

Introduction

Letter from the Former Chief Executive



Dear members and friends of ESN,

I have stepped down as CEO and would like to thank all of you who have worked with me to make ESN an effective network for local public social services in Europe.

It has been an honour to have led ESN since the very first conference I organised in Ashford in Kent in 1993, four years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and just as the Channel Tunnel was about to be opened. Getting the funding and building the organisation, however, was quite another story. The daily struggle to survive can be hard but as more people became involved, we could take on the challenges and overcome them.

Travelling across Europe these 25 years, I learned that you must take the time to listen to, and understand, people's experiences. I was often uplifted by the resilience of members working in financially and politically difficult situations, caring for some of the most vulnerable in society. When we sat down together, we saw that our systems were different, but our differences stimulate openness and personal reflection and our shared values bring the necessary glue. I salute the wonderful, smart, driven people who have worked at our secretariat. I could not have done much without their ideas and enthusiasm!

Our first project, 'Towards a People's Europe', written together with people with disabilities, analysed the early development of personal budgets in 10 countries and I am proud that ESN has continued to put person-centred, community-based care at the heart of its work.

Our continent has a troubled past but a rich and vibrant culture and the European Union has been an important force for peace and a significant partner for our growing network and I pay tribute to their support.

I am pleased that ESN is now led by Alfonso Lara Montero who, as the Chief Executive, is looking forward to the full support of staff, members, and the Board to open a new and exciting chapter for learning and development in Europe.

For me, I count myself fortunate to have met and worked with so many of you.

John Halloran
Former ESN Chief Executive

2017 in Numbers

The year 2017 has been full of events and has seen extraordinary participation from our members. In this publication we summarise the main outcomes from each of our activities and provide an insight into the future of ESN.

Participating members
at ESN's activities

20-21 April

Members' Forum
– The future of
social welfare

Brussels, Belgium

Participants:

103

January

February

March

April

May

June

21 February

Welfare trends in
social services

Brighton, UK

Participants:

29

26-28 June

European
Social Services
Conference 2017

Valletta, Malta

Participants:

538

Number of events at European, national, and regional/local level where ESN participated



All year

Peer-learning visits

Finland, Spain, Sweden, UK

Participants: 10

23-24 October

Migrant children and young people – Social inclusion and transition to adulthood

Stockholm, Sweden

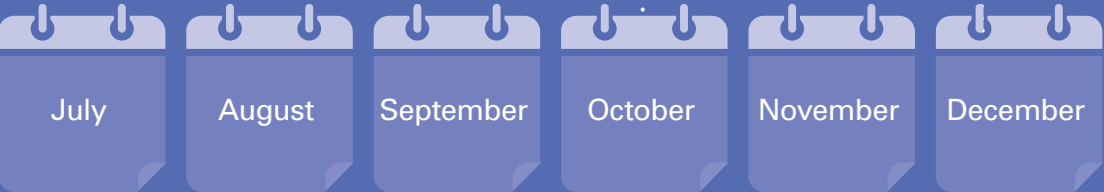
Participants: 150

1 December

Technology, co-production and integration in social services

Brighton, UK

Participants: 41



11 September

European Semester Reference Group – Annual meeting

Brussels, Belgium

Participants: 46

7 December

Innovation in social services: Approaches from Europe and the US

Online webinar

Participants: 35

Contents

Annual Review

2017

Engage	09
Current and Future Social Services Priorities	10
Learn	13
Seminar: Migrant Children and Young People – Social inclusion and transition to adulthood	14
Report: Promoting the Social Inclusion of Migrant Children and Young people – The duty of social services	16
Investing in Later Life	18
Promoting Independent Living	19
Innovation in Social Services: Approaches from Europe and the US	20
Share	23
Promoting Peer-Learning across Europe	24
Working with Members	26
Influence	29
Contributing to the European Semester	30
Working at EU Level	32
Network	35
A Growing and More Diverse Network	36
Annual Conference: Transforming Lives through Innovation and Technology!	38
Looking Forward – Letter from the Chief Executive	44
How we Work – Bringing Together Skills and Knowledge from across Europe	45
Governance and Leadership	46
Meet the Team in Brighton	48

Engage Members' Forum

“We see ESN as having a strong identity, a wide network, and as an extremely useful platform for our presence in the European field.”

Graham Owen,
Association of
Directors of Social
Services, Sweden



Engage Current and Future Social Services Priorities

In 2017, ESN consulted with and brought together representatives from across our member network to pinpoint the most important issues and themes, which they currently face, to inform ESN's strategy for 2018-2021.

Preparatory meeting

A preparatory meeting held in February served as the starting point for this series of work, giving an outline of the context for social services in 2017. Participants covered issues such as growing inequality in Europe stemming from the financial crisis and the resulting need to ensure the sustainability of public services against a backdrop of austerity measures. Participants also discussed the potential for innovation to overcome these challenges, by working more closely with other services, with service users, and by utilising technological tools.

Members' Forum

Following on from the input provided at the preparatory meeting, ESN gathered its members at a forum in April to discuss in detail policy priorities for social services, how ESN can tackle these, and ESN's membership structure and identity. The Members' Forum takes place once every four years and the discussions were informed by a questionnaire previously completed by our

members and which provided qualitative and quantitative information on their views.

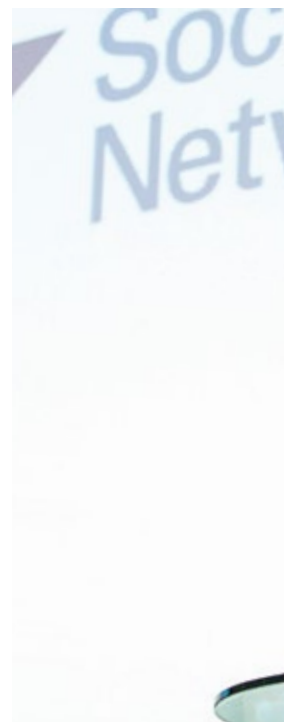
The discussions at the ESN Members' Forum covered a broad range of topics, but a number emerged as ones that were relevant across our members' work and were regarded as particularly important:

- Service user involvement
- Community-based ecosystems of services
- Integrated approaches and cooperation across sectors
- Services planning and evaluation
- Social services market development and procurement

After the Members' Forum, ESN developed a strategy which concentrated on these issues and how our members wanted ESN to approach them. This strategy underpinned the new proposal for a framework partnership between ESN and the European Commission for 2018-2021.

Members' Forum Follow-up Meeting

Subsequently, ESN organised a Members' Forum Follow-up Meeting on 1 December in Brighton. The meeting served as an excellent opportunity to explore in more detail the thematic areas of the 2018-2021 strategy. During the meeting delegates from our member network, service users from the local area, and representatives from industry participated in lively debates which will provide an excellent basis on which to explore our thematic areas for 2018-2021.



Watch the video on ESN members' views on current and future priorities for social services here:
esn-eu.org/videos/66/



“This was the right mix of stimulating data comparison and context, a future-oriented look at potential opportunities, and a clear and underlying willingness to listen to the people we are intending to serve.”

Christopher Haynes,
Gloucestershire Learning
Disability Partnership
Board, UK



Learn Improve Knowledge and Practice

“I am so glad to have been given the opportunity to come to this event. Lots of new ideas, better understanding of how social services work in different countries in Europe, and the possibility to connect with peers, both Swedish and others!”

Amanda Klint,
City of Karlstad, Sweden



Learn

Migrant Children and Young People

Social inclusion and transition to adulthood

23-24 October

Seminar 'Migrant children and young people – Social inclusion and transition to adulthood.'

Stockholm, Sweden

Participants:

150

The ESN annual seminar was organised in Stockholm, Sweden on 23-24 October in cooperation with ESN member, the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare. 150 participants from 22 countries took part in the event and discussed challenges faced by social services in promoting the inclusion of migrant children and their transition to adulthood.

The seminar enabled a broad analysis of the state of play in international, European, national and local policies concerning unaccompanied children and young migrants to ensure their effective inclusion and smooth transition to adulthood. Starting from the development of international instruments and policies, a number of key themes were explored, namely major issues around access to education, health, care and protection services, the importance of strengthening refugee families' integration, transition to adulthood, and future scenarios for policy and practice.

Participants agreed that the problems faced by unaccompanied children are far too often addressed from a migration perspective rather than from a child protection angle. This creates challenges for how social services care and protect the most vulnerable migrant children due to delays in appointing guardians, the uncertainty surrounding the outcomes of asylum-seeking procedures, or difficulties in accessing specialist healthcare.

Education and labour market integration play a key role in securing the successful social inclusion of migrant children and young people. We learned about the importance of matching training and skills development with the arrival age of migrant youth, and about innovative approaches in promoting their transition to adulthood.

Key lessons from the group discussions included providing adequate staff training, improving cooperation between services, and delivering aftercare plans for young migrants leaving child protection services at the age of 18.



You can find more information about this seminar here: esn-eu.org/events/109/



Listen to podcasts from the seminar here: esn-eu.org/migrant-children-and-young-people/



Watch our video from the seminar here: esn-eu.org/videos/



“It was really helpful to consider the work our team and service does, in comparison to other countries in Europe. I’ve never had this opportunity before — to consider aspects of practice in other countries and think about how they could be used in the UK/ Brighton, and to reflect on what we do well, too.”

Kate Eccles,
Brighton and Hove
City Council, UK



Learn

Promoting the Social Inclusion of Migrant Children and Young People

The duty of social services

ESN published a report on the social inclusion of migrant children and young people based on the answers to a questionnaire completed by ESN members, as well as the presentations and group discussions at the migration seminar.

The report discusses the issues that emerged as crucial for social services supporting migrant children and young people to integrate in their host societies. After an initial overview of reception systems, the publication discusses the care and support for unaccompanied children provided in various European countries. Specifically, the report reviews access to key services such as accommodation, healthcare, psychosocial support, education, and the coordination of these services through guardians.

The publication also discusses the barriers and success factors of the integration of children of refugee families, as well as best practice in terms of support for young migrants turning 18, with a focus on aftercare plans and access to education and vocational qualifications.

Each chapter includes practice examples to illustrate how peers from other countries are supporting the social inclusion of unaccompanied children, migrant families, and young refugees. The practices presented include ways of improving access to healthcare in Spain or education in Ireland, support for migrant single mothers in Germany, vocational training in Austria, or shared accommodation in Belgium.



Read 'Promoting the social inclusion of migrant children and young people. The duty of social services' here: esn-eu.org/raw.php?page=files&id=2697





“Every speaker and every experience at the seminar provided us with information we didn’t know, with knowledge about innovative practice and initiatives, and with new data and ideas to improve our own services.”

José Manuel Flores Campos,
Regional Government
of Andalusia, Agency
for Social Services and
Dependence, Spain



Learn Investing in Later Life

In 2017, ESN published 'Investing in later life: a toolkit for social services providing care for older people'.

The toolkit is the result of ESN's work on ageing and care between 2014 and 2016, mainly through its working group, its cross-cutting work on integrated care services, and the work on the social services workforce in 2016-2017.

Care and support for older people is a significant challenge for public social services in light of the demographic changes taking place across Europe. The objective of the toolkit is to provide recommendations and examples of innovative

practice for senior professionals working in social services providing care for older people.

The first chapter describes some of the best initiatives across Europe promoting active ageing to enhance the independence of older people, as well as specific recommendations for professionals working in this area.

The second chapter addresses the challenges experienced by social services in recruiting sufficient qualified staff, particularly in the provision of long-term care. This is due not only to the low status and image of the profession but also because of the growing pressure on the workforce.

Although there is a trend towards care models with more integrated person-centred services, most countries continue to provide health and social care services for older people in silos rather than in an integrated way. The third chapter outlines examples of recent policy and legal developments for integrated health and social care.

The fourth chapter provides an overview of how care services are supporting people with dementia and Alzheimer's disease, as well as their families, and how to best support people with learning disabilities as they grow older, with the aim to reduce preventable ill health and premature deaths.

You can find more information on ESN's work on ageing and care here: esn-eu.org/ageing-and-care

You can find more information about our working group on ageing and care here: esn-eu.org/ageing-and-care-working-group/

You can find more information on practices on ageing and care here: esn-eu.org/practices/



Download the toolkit here: esn-eu.org/raw.php?page=files&id=2620



Watch our video on Public Social Services Promoting Autonomy and Participation here: esn-eu.org/videos/43/



Learn

Promoting Independent Living

In 2017, ESN published 'Towards more independent lives for people with disabilities: reflections from social services across Europe'.

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide recommendations and examples of practice for senior social services professionals providing care for people with disabilities.

The publication is mainly based on desktop literature research, material from European projects in which ESN participates in an advisory role, ESN reports, and the results of the disability working group meetings. ESN's working group on disability met five times between 2014 and 2016.

Professionals who plan, coordinate, and manage social services for people with disabilities shared knowledge and best practice around different issues such as ways to promote the autonomy of people with disabilities through employment, empowering service users to actively participate in their care and support, and promoting their independence through the use of technology.

The first chapter provides a review of strategies from several European countries which aim to increase the participation of people with disabilities in the labour market, a detailed case study from the Netherlands, and a discussion on challenges and opportunities on how to improve active inclusion.

The second chapter analyses different ways of involving service users to promote their choice and control over decisions affecting them. The chapter describes how service user involvement can be implemented through person-centred planning, self-directed support and personal budgets, as well as through the design, evaluation, and delivery of services.

The third chapter examines the role of technology in promoting independent living across the life-cycle. The chapter discusses the opportunities provided by technology to promote greater autonomy for people with disabilities, questions on privacy and confidentiality, and the need to make technology user-friendly and attuned to the realities of the lives of people with disabilities and the professionals working with them.

Each chapter provides an overview of national policies and local practice, a detailed description of a relevant programme, and key challenges and opportunities for disability services planners and providers.

You can find more information about ESN's work on disability here: esn-eu.org/disability/

You can find more information about our working group on disability here: esn-eu.org/disability-working-group/



Download the toolkit here: esn-eu.org/raw.php?page=files&id=2712



Learn

Innovation in Social Services

Approaches from Europe and the US

7 December

Innovation in social services: Approaches from Europe and the US

Online webinar

The European Social Network organised its first in a series of webinars on 'Innovation in social services: approaches from Europe and the US' on 7 December. The topic and the format made it a success, with 35 participants actively engaging with the speakers.

Why is innovation in social services important?

Social innovation is essential to provide adequate and sustainable social protection systems – and evidence is increasingly becoming a key factor in planning and managing social services, given this greater emphasis on the efficiency of services in difficult economic times.

Policy approaches across Europe need to be tested to ensure quality if we want to ensure the success of social innovation.

What was the webinar about?

The webinar, which was chaired by Jenny Billings from the University of Kent, provided participants with guidance developed by ESN on what knowledge and measures are required for planning and evaluating social services, and the Value Curve model for service evaluation developed by the American Public Human Services Association.



Listen to and watch the full webinar here:
esn-eu.org/events/117/

Join the Conversation



Join us as we live-tweet
from our events

Get the inside track on EU policy

Discuss the issues affecting you
with like-minded professionals

Watch our latest videos
and tune in to our podcasts

Follow us on



@ESNsocal



Social Services in Europe



European Social Network



European Social Network (ESN)



European Social Network



Share Scaling Up Good Practice

“ESN’s members come from different services and because of this variety, the exchange of experiences turns into breaking down silos. I find it very enriching!”

Julien Van Geertsom,
Federal Public Planning
Service for Social
Integration, Belgium



Share Promoting Peer- Learning across Europe

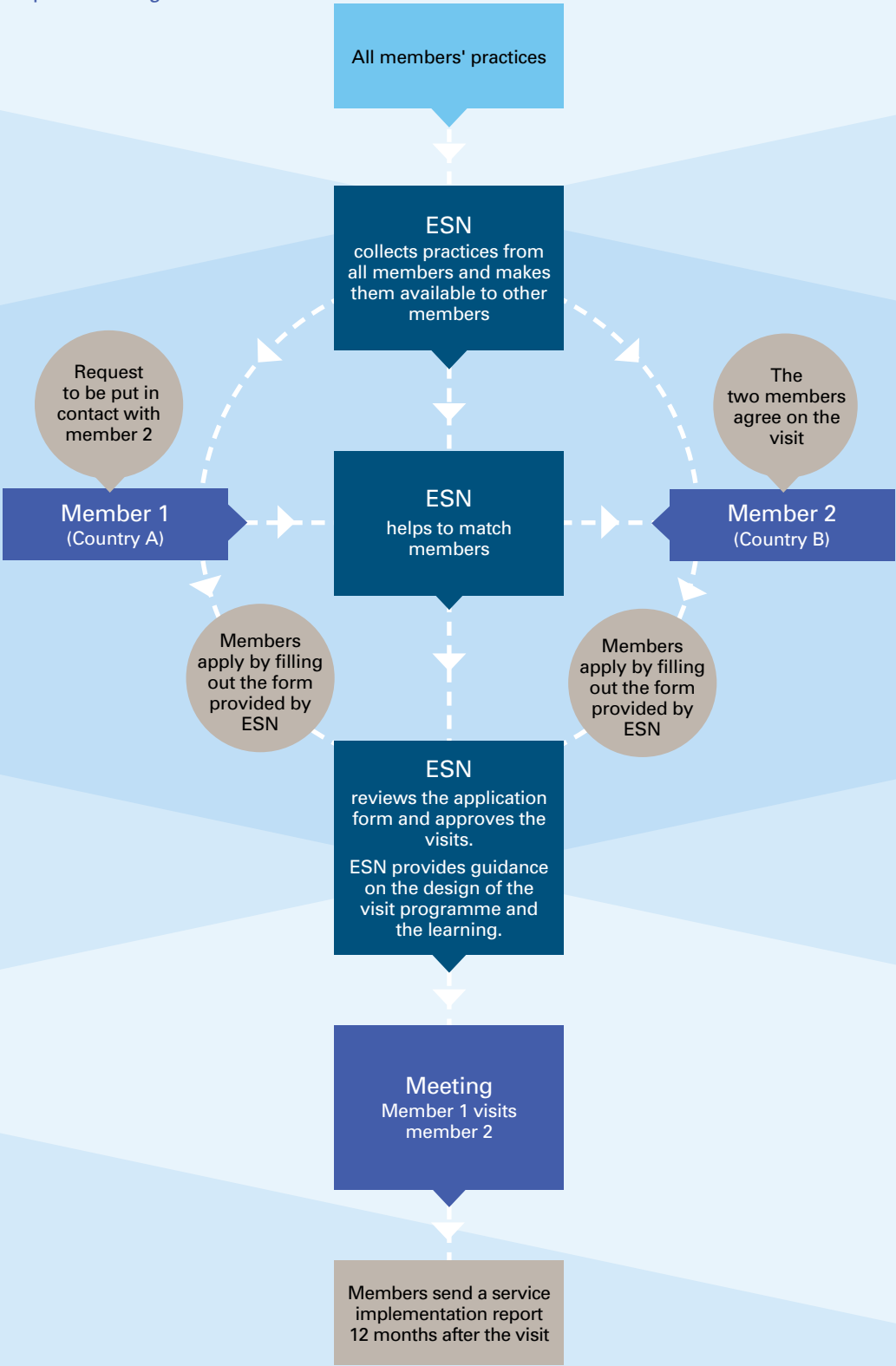
Since 2014, ESN organises a peer-learning visit programme which helps members, who are interested in a specific programme/service implemented elsewhere, to learn and seek advice to implement it in their own countries. This year, four visits took place:

1. On 12 and 13 September, representatives from the Public Centres of Social Welfare (OCMW Antwerp) in Belgium visited the Social Welfare Department of Barcelona County Council to learn about their home debt mediation service with the aim to implement it at home.
2. On 5 and 6 October, representatives from the Department for Integration in the City of Hannover visited the Integration Department of Gothenburg in Sweden. The purpose of this Peer Learning Visit was to find out about the projects implemented in Gothenburg to improve the social inclusion and access to regular services for migrants in Hannover, with a focus on employment and housing.
3. On 11 and 12 October, representatives from the Service Inspection Department at the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) in Malta visited the Care Inspectorate in Scotland. The aim of this visit was to find out about a project on drug and alcohol addiction services recently concluded by the Care Inspectorate and to get more information on Senior Social Work functions in Scotland which will be used when carrying out an audit on the Senior Social Worker in FSWS.
4. On 11 and 12 October, representatives from the Mazovian Social Policy Centre, Poland, visited the city of Tampere, Finland. The aim of the visit was to learn more about the Kotitori's project. The Kotitori's project is an innovative integrated home-care service for older people which aims to help older people remain at home longer due to the integration of a wide range of services. The Mazovian Social Policy Centre wanted to learn about how this project works in order to help them build a senior policy strategy.

“Our experience with the Care Inspectorate in Scotland gave us a lot of insight into the different practices of scrutiny and inspection of services. It helped us to learn how the Care Inspectorate works and the tools it uses for service evaluation. It was also an opportunity to share information on our practices ... Surely all of these experiences were possible thanks to the ESN funding for the Peer Learning Programme, an initiative which makes sharing of practices beyond borders possible.”

Elmer Stanmore,
Foundation for Social
Welfare Services, Malta

European Social Network's role
in the peer-learning visits



Share Working with Members

Reducing social divisions at the local level through participatory methods

On 13-14 March, ESN participated at the event 'What helps against social and political divisions at local level', hosted by the German Association for Public and Private Welfare in Berlin. Presentations featuring practices from across Europe sparked a discussion about the design of participatory methods.

ESN showcased the Development Plan for people with disabilities from the Municipality of Aarhus in Denmark, where the local social services department organised a series of workshops with and for people with disabilities, their carers, and their family members.

The outputs of the event were collected and formed the basis for a government report reviewing the development and impact of factors such as income distribution, unemployment, and disabilities.

Discussing approaches to integrated services

On 6 and 7 July, ESN member, the Department for Social Welfare of the Regional Government in Catalonia, Spain, organised a seminar on integrated care from the perspective of social services. At the seminar, ESN was invited to speak about the research project we conducted with Vilans, the Dutch Knowledge Institute for Long-Term Care, on integrated services in 2016. ESN's Chief Executive Alfonso Lara Montero highlighted key experiences at macro- meso- and micro-levels, as well as barriers and success factors.

On 12 July, ESN member, Matia Foundation, organised with the University of the Basque Country in San Sebastian, Spain, the summer course on the future of care. Matia Foundation invited Alfonso Lara Montero as visiting professor to address the topic of integrated care and services. Alfonso explained that implementing a comprehensive care model requires person-centred care, interdisciplinary teams, and a system that moves from evaluating processes to evaluating outcomes.

"Being part of ESN is an important occasion to share with European colleagues social issues. They are different in each EU country, because of the different historical and cultural background but, at the same time, I can see many similarities."

Paolo Favini,
Lombardy Region,
Italy





Sharing European perspectives on children's services

On 3 October in Glasgow, Scotland, the 'Partnerships Across Europe' seminar, organised collaboratively between ESN, Social Work Scotland and CELCIS, brought together leaders in social services from Scotland and Europe to discuss approaches to children's services development. During the seminar, Alfonso Lara Montero shared some of the results of ESN's project 'Investing in children's services, improving outcomes', including challenges faced in different European countries and examples of innovative practice. ESN also facilitated the attendance of participants from across Europe, enabling a lively debate and highlighting that social services face similar challenges regardless of their location in Europe. Jennifer Davidson, Director of CELCIS, remarked on the value of this sharing of experiences which can help social services across Europe to find solutions to common challenges.





Influence Contribute to EU Policy-making

“The group of social services directors and professionals of the European Social Network that analyses the European Commission’s country reports and recommendations is a very valuable exercise for us to gather the views and expertise of those on the ground to continue enhancing policy-making.”

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



Contributing to the European Semester

As part of our four-year strategy for 2014-2017, ESN launched a Reference Group of social services directors in public authorities and social services professionals to develop recommendations for the European Semester, the cycle of coordination of economic and social policies between the European Commission and Member States. The objective of this area of work is to reinforce the European Semester social and local dimension, by highlighting the challenges and opportunities faced by social services at local, regional and national levels.

The members of the Group have worked with the ESN's secretariat to contribute their views on the European Commission's country reports by completing questionnaires developed by ESN.

At the 2017 annual meeting of the Group, members highlighted that the European Commission should enhance the involvement of local social services departments and regional authorities in the European Semester process.

You can find more information about the Reference Group on the European Semester here: esn-eu.org/european-semester-reference-group/

Download your copy of ESN's 'Bringing together Europe and local communities' here: esn-eu.org/raw.php?page=files&id=2629

This is all the more important to ensure the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, an initiative approved by the European Commission to reinforce the social dimension of the EU.

Social services priorities for the European Semester 2018

The ESN report 'Bringing together Europe and local communities: Social services priorities for the European Semester 2018' contains country profiles, a cross-country analysis, and policy recommendations based on the analysis of ESN's Reference Group.

Several recurring themes emerged when analysing the countries presented in the report:

- The significant impact of the financial crisis on how social services are being managed and how social policy is being implemented
- The integration of health and social care for older people
- The development of community-based services across the life cycle and its implications for new ways of working in social services
- The promotion of inclusive policies for those people more in need, such as the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities or people with mental health problems, and refugees
- The implementation of administrative reforms across Europe, whether decentralising service provision or addressing overlaps and recentralising services instead

European
commission

The role of
reform
environment
and public

European Semester Reference

Brussels

Internal market
industry
entrepreneurship
and SMEs



“I’ve been at the European Semester meetings since 2015 and I feel it’s very good we are able to give front line information to the participants from other countries and to the European Commission at these meetings. It’s great to have the time to look at the country reports drafted by the European Commission and give feedback.”

Terry Madden,
Independent Adviser in
Social Work Supervision
& Consultation, Ireland



Contributing to the European Pillar of Social Rights

On 9 September 2015, the European Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, announced a European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) that would create a reference framework for employment and social performance of participating Member States.

The Commission published the EPSR on 26 April 2017 after a consultation period that lasted till December 2016. The EPSR consists of 20 principles based around three topics:

- Equal opportunities and access to the labour market
- Fair working conditions
- Social protection and inclusion

Accompanying the EPSR, there were legislative measures on work-life balance and social protection for all types of jobs, as well as a communication and Staff Working Document on the Working Time Directive.

Furthermore, a social scoreboard was unveiled which will record progress on social issues across the EU Member States.

In response to the public consultation launched by the Commission, ESN submitted its position paper, which highlighted the potential of the EPSR to support vulnerable people and local social services, in addition to making recommendations for its further development.

These recommendations include making a connection between the rights put forward by the Pillar and the statutory duties of local authorities, such as their duty of care. ESN also emphasised that social rights should apply to all people, and not be tied just to employment, and that the scoreboard should be further developed to include criteria related to disability or household composition.

Promoting migrants inclusion — how can EU funds make it happen?

On 29 March, ESN was invited to a conference organised by the European Commission's Home Affairs Directorate.

One of the issues discussed was the growing impact of the refugee crisis on public social services.

ESN raised awareness of the needs of public social services and how future European funds may address these needs while taking account of the challenges faced by local stakeholders in accessing and implementing EU funds.



Read ESN's contribution to the consultation launched by the European Commission, 'Towards a people's Europe', here: esn-eu.org/raw.php?page=files&iid=2338



Supporting the Commission's Annual Convention on youth inclusion

The 2017 Annual Convention on Inclusive Growth, held in Brussels on 24 April, focused on young people's social inclusion. ESN was represented at the event by the Secretariat and six senior social services representatives from public local social services.

ESN members from Brighton and Hove City Council in the UK, and the City of Arad in Romania, presented programmes supporting the social inclusion of young offenders and young people leaving care. ESN also hosted a side-event in cooperation with Eurohealthnet and Eurocarers to explore programmes supporting the wellbeing of school students with mental health problems.

Exploring innovation in social services

Jointly organised by the European Commission, the Portuguese Government, and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the High-level Conference 'Opening up to an ERA of social innovation' was held on 27 and 28 November, in Lisbon, Portugal. ESN's Chief Executive, Alfonso Lara Montero, moderated the plenary session on 'Social Innovation in Social Services'.

The session, chaired by Acting Social Policies Director Manuela Geleng, brought together leaders of social innovation projects funded by the EU in Belgium, Latvia and Finland. Several ESN members who are leading social innovation projects funded by the EU through the programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) also participated at the conference.

Contributing to EU initiatives through stakeholder dialogue

ESN participates in the meetings organised by the Directorate-General for Employment of the European Commission on its policy initiatives. These meetings are the opportunity for ESN to present its view on these social policy initiatives and discuss implementation with representatives from the European Commission and other EU networks. Throughout 2017, ESN has participated in meetings on the European Pillar of Social Rights, the organisation of the Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth, priorities for future EU funding, and stakeholder participation in the European Semester process.



Invest Innovate Transform

Empowering people
and communities



26th European Social Services Conference

Seville, Spain

28–30 May 2018

Network Learn from Others' Practice, Reflect on Yours

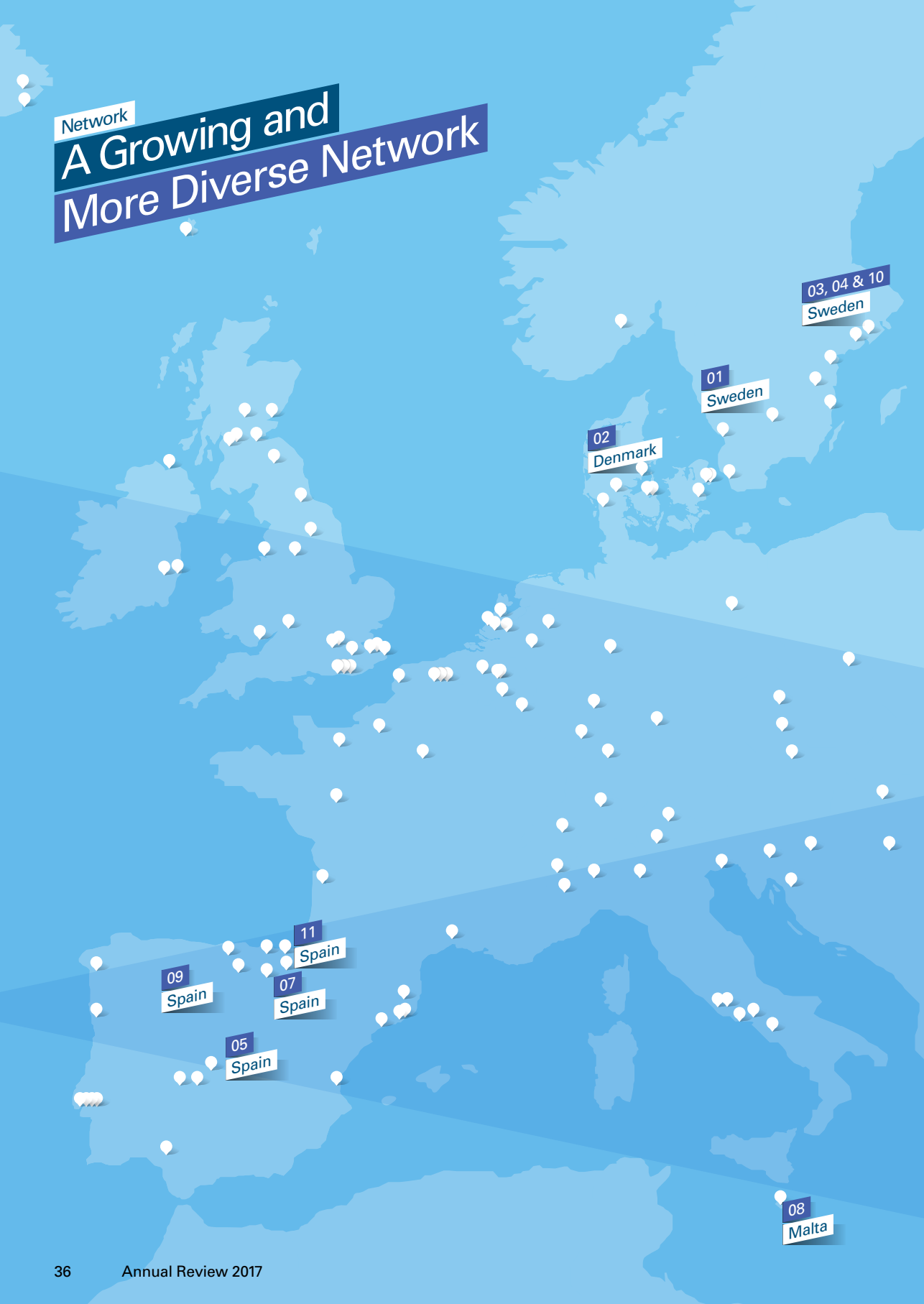
“The main benefits of ESN membership are knowledge sharing and practice sharing. At ESN you have many opportunities to meet people from different countries, different political organisations, that use different tools, different approaches. It helps to find new ideas and try to think outside the box.”

Emmanuel Gagneux,
Haute-Saône County
Council, France



Network

A Growing and More Diverse Network





New Members in 2017

- | | |
|----|--|
| 01 | Municipality of Varberg, Sweden |
| 02 | Central Denmark Region, Denmark |
| 03 | National Board of Institutional Care, Sweden |
| 04 | The Research and Development Centre in Care and Social Work, Municipality of Linköping, Sweden |
| 05 | Meridianos Foundation, Spain |
| 06 | Centre for Training and Assessment in Social Work (CFCECAS), Romania |
| 07 | Department of Social Rights of the Government of Navarra, Spain |
| 08 | Sapport Agency (Agenzija Sapport) Malta |
| 09 | Social Services Management Authority of Castilla y Leon, Spain |
| 10 | Sörmland County Council, Sweden |
| 11 | Gipuzkoa County Council, Spain |

06
Romania

 This symbol indicates existing members

Network

Transforming Lives through Innovation and Technology!

Valletta, Malta

25th European Social Services Conference

The 2017 European Social Services Conference (ESSC) was held in Malta in June, in cooperation with the Maltese government that held the Presidency of the European Council, and celebrated its 25th anniversary.

Over 530 delegates from 32 countries – an all-time high – came together in Valletta to explore how innovation and technology can help create better social services for the future.

Inspiring speakers described innovative initiatives aimed at empowering people, such as cards storing personal data, participatory budgets, budget calculators, and commissioning and co-production panels with service users. We also heard about smart technology solutions to address the problems facing social services, such as data-sharing applications, vans in remote areas equipped with technology to diagnose illnesses, and toolkits to support the implementation of welfare technology in municipalities.

The conference was also a space to learn about a range of digital tools for improving services across Europe. We saw no better way of doing this than by making the event live and digital.

The new conference mobile app enhanced delegates' experience by enabling them to take part in popular live Q&As during the plenary sessions.

Innovation: crucial for smarter services

Important changes are under way across government and local public services to make social services smarter. Turning to new solutions, the latest thinking and cutting-edge practice is necessary to ensure that public social services effectively tackle social exclusion in Europe, fight poverty and keep responding to the needs of citizens in a challenging environment.

We learned about Buurtzorg from Jos de Blok, which is changing the way community care is provided in the Netherlands by focusing on the role of community nurses and mobilising neighbours to support older people with chronic conditions at home and saving office costs.

In France, Wheeliz is a transport service for people with disabilities created by Charlotte de Vilmorin, who decided to set up the service because of her own difficulties as a disabled person when travelling.

Dolors Bassa, from the Catalan government, and Manuel Domene, from the Andalusian government, spoke of single case management systems that are being developed in these Spanish regions to bring together data from health, employment and social services.

"The event was so well run, it felt calm and Harry obviously felt safe and comfortable amongst the many delegates. It made me realise just how truly welcoming everyone had been. We were able to share our love of people, of inclusion, and our enthusiasm for promoting social cohesion through our favourite sport."

Linsey Fairchild – mother of Harry Fairchild, the world's first coach with Down's syndrome (Brighton Table Tennis Club) and service user





25
YEARS

SHARING
KNOWLEDGE
IMPROVING
LIVES



“The ESN Conference was a new experience for me, I had only heard stories about these annual meetings, which make possible the meeting of so many people working in social services in one place. I met lots of people with valuable and rich experience, bright ideas, and the passion to push things forward for their communities.”

Dilyana Deneva,
Youth Coordinator and
ENIL Office Assistant
(European Network on
Independent Living)/
service user



MALTA EU2017

Network

Transforming Lives through Innovation and Technology!

Valletta, Malta

25th European Social Services Conference

Embracing technology: key for the future of public social services

During the Conference, it became clear that one of the greatest impacts of technology is changing how service providers and users can connect and interact with each other, through apps for portable devices and online support.

The website Kellimni was presented in a panel discussion on digital tools, which offers information and help specifically for young people, including a one-to-one support feature. Its accessible and anonymous nature makes it popular, with 1,600 visitors on average per month.

From Aarhus, Denmark, a similar idea was presented, the life psychology app for young people. It provides guidance on reaching small and large life goals in a user-friendly designed app, helping to keep young people active in the labour market or in education.

In Bruges, a digital communication platform enables older people living at home, their carers, and health and social services to communicate with each other digitally.



“The was one of the most unique, interesting, and interactive conferences I’ve ever attended. I would highly recommend it to anyone with an interest in how social services in Europe and elsewhere can transform the lives of individuals and communities.”

Jaideep Prabhu,
Professor of Marketing
and Indian Business,
Judge Business
School, University
of Cambridge, UK



Co-production: a powerful approach to social services design

Co-production, design thinking, and person-centred care are just some of the innovative concepts used to describe a more participative and inclusive form of service provision, one built around the end user. In social services, it entails a shift from a top-down to a more bottom-up approach focused on planning services with, rather than merely for, the service user.

Jean-Paul Raymond, Director of Social Services in the City of Paris, talked about a bottom-up approach in public policy planning and delivery, for example through participatory budgets that challenged the Parisian administration to do things differently.

In a rich and diverse plenary session, practices from Ireland, France, the UK, and Austria showcased how co-production and other user-centred approaches can be implemented to create better social services.

This shows that public social services across Europe are already active in making the necessary shift towards co-production. It also showed a considerable appetite to engage with these innovative approaches.

“The conference was so rich in connections and opportunities, I have no doubt that it will help Wheeliz scale up internationally.”

Charlotte de Vilморin,
founder, Wheeliz, France



MALTA EU2017

Network

Transforming Lives through Innovation and Technology!

Valletta, Malta

25th European Social Services Conference


25
years


32
countries



204
ESN members'
representatives


538
delegates



50
workshop
presenters


2,191
website users
(from 1-30 June)


533
app downloads


390
minutes of live
coverage

6
project forum
presentations

24
news articles

20
keynote
speakers

5
plenary
sessions


21
videos

21
workshops

12
partners


5
official languages

3
panel
discussions



MALTA EU 2017

Looking Forward

Letter from the
Chief Executive

Dear colleagues and friends,

It is an honour to be leading ESN as Chief Executive from 1 January 2018.

Last year was a year of growth and transformation for ESN. Following the UK referendum result to leave the EU, and the decision to relocate the Secretariat from Brighton to Brussels, there has been the need to form a new team to deliver the programme for 2018. However, these changes are a fantastic opportunity to continue delivering services that are professional in character with well-researched publications and well-organised events to continue as a reference point for social services policy and practice.

For the past eight years, I have met with many ESN members working in social services for the wellbeing and care of people across Europe. I have learnt to admire their work supporting children, parents and carers, reducing the risks of abuse and youth offending, and helping adults to maintain or recover their autonomy under challenging financial and, in many cases, political circumstances.

Looking forward, I would like ESN to deliver a strategic programme that meets the European Union's policy objectives and the needs of ESN members in local communities across Europe in four key areas:

- Upholding people's social rights throughout the course of their life
- Promoting the sustainability and adequacy of social welfare
- Engaging in European and international policy and funding
- Strengthening ESN's capacity, membership, communications, and impact

I want to ensure that the activities delivered by ESN enable those who plan and manage social services to gain the knowledge and develop the skills they need to deliver quality care and support. Financial sustainability is essential to ESN's future and this cannot be underestimated. International recognition and financial support for ESN will enable the network to deliver a programme that not only ensures knowledge exchange but equally promotes increased membership and supports public authorities to improve policy and practice in social services.

I look forward to working with staff, members, partners, and friends to open a new and exciting chapter of learning and development for ESN, and helping to achieve a vision of social justice, social inclusion as well as efficient, effective, and sustainable social services delivery in Europe.

Let the journey begin!



Alfonso Lara Montero
ESN Chief Executive

How we Work Bringing Together Skills and Knowledge from across Europe

“Being part of ESN provides me and my organisation with a framework for discussion and knowledge exchange with similar organisations in Europe. A key element for us is on improving and reinforcing social services. For example, the programme to fight homelessness, which was presented at the 25th ESSC by Antwerp, in Belgium, has provided us with many new and innovate ideas for the development of our new regional homelessness strategy in Galicia.”

Carlos Santos Guerrero,
Regional Government
of Galicia, Spain



How we Work

Governance and Leadership

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is legally responsible for the governance of ESN. It is responsible for overseeing the management, financing, and work of the Network and the interest of its members.

The Board nominates the Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorary Treasurer and may allocate other responsibilities as needed.

The Trustees meet at least four times a year and are in regular communication throughout the year. Trustees do not receive payment for their work on behalf of ESN.

The Trustees, who were re-elected in June 2017, are:

- Chair of ESN: Christian Fillet, Director of Social Services, Public Centre for Social Welfare, City of Bruges, Belgium
- Vice Chair: Carlos Santos Guerrero, Deputy Director General of Social Services and Economic Management, Regional Government of Galicia, Spain
- Honorary Treasurer: Harri Jokiranta, Project Manager at City of Seinäjoki, Finland
- Legal and Performance: Graham Owen, Director of Social Services, Municipality of Trosa, Sweden
- Kate Bøgh, Social and Health Services Director, Municipality of Favrskov, Denmark
- Miran Kerin, President of the Association of Centres for Social Work, Slovenia.

ESN's Chief Executive acts as Legal Secretary and works with its governance bodies, the Board and the Council. ESN's Chief Executive is Alfonso Lara Montero as of 1 January 2018.

The Council

The Council consists of 18 national and regional organisations that bring together directors of social services. They are 'voting' members and elect the Board of Trustees. The Council is responsible for ESN's overall direction.

Each year, two Council meetings take place, one in the spring and one in the autumn. Two Council meetings took place in 2017. The first one in Brighton was in March and members discussed ESN's new governance structure and relocation of its secretariat to Brussels. The second meeting took place at the 25th European Social Services Conference in Valletta in June, and the Council members elected the Board of Trustees.

Funding

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

ESN accounts are annually audited, reviewed by the ESN Board of Trustees and submitted to the European Commission (with regards to the annual work programme), and to Companies House and the Charity Commission in the UK.

The annual accounts are available online at Companies House, which incorporates limited companies and registers and makes public all legally required information, and from the Charity Commission in the UK.



Carlos Santos Guerrero, Vice Chair,
Deputy Director General of Social Services and Economic
Management, Regional Government of Galicia, Spain



Christian Fillet, Chair of ESN,
Director of Social Services, Public Centre for Social Welfare,
City of Bruges, Belgium



Graham Owen, Legal and Performance,
Director of Social Services, Municipality of Trosa, Sweden



Harri Jokiranta, Honorary Treasurer,
Project Manager at City of Seinäjoki, Finland



Kate Bøgh, Social and Health Services Director,
Municipality of Favrskov, Denmark



Miran Kerin, President of the Association of
Centres for Social Work, Slovenia.

How we Work

Meet the Team in Brighton



The ESN Secretariat

ESN has an international and multi-skilled team from all across Europe and speaks over 11 languages. It is led by Alfonso Lara Montero, Chief Executive, who is responsible for managing the European Commission's programme and leading relations with institutional and private partners for our annual conference.

Membership and Administration

Tihomir Popovic, Membership and Project Officer, is in charge of membership development and financial oversight. He also takes care of the organisation of all the activities funded under the EC programme. Julia Charlton, Executive and Business Support, supports the Chief Executive with governance, financial administration, and human resources.

Policy

The policy team consists of three Policy Officers and a Policy Assistant, and works on a variety of themes that may change from year to year. In 2017, Valentina Guerra led ESN's seminar on migrant children and young people; Leyre Merchan is responsible for the peer-learning programme and supported the implementation of the European Semester Reference Group. William Hayward supported the implementation of the European Semester Reference Group and is responsible for the practice library. Throughout the year, we have welcomed young graduates joining our internship programme as policy assistants.

Communications

Anita Alfonsi, Senior Communications Officer, and Jake Gillam-Smith, Communications Assistant, look after our website, publications, videos, podcasts, and newsletters. They also support the European Social Services Conference team in promoting the conference.

European Social Services Conference

Our annual conference is organised by Sarah Yardley, Conference Manager, from January 2018. Sarah is supported by a conference assistant.

Designed and produced by mosaiccreates.co.uk

Written by Anita Alfonsi, Valentina Guerra, William Hayward,
Alfonso Lara Montero and Leyre Merchant.

Text arranged and adapted by: Anita Alfonsi

Photographs selected by: Jake Gillam-Smith

Photography by: Tobias Fischer, Simon Pugh, Studio 7 Co. Ltd



