The European Association of Schools of Social Work and Social Work Educators (EASSW)

Christine Labonté-Roset is President of the EASSW.

EASSW is the European independent branch of the IASSW (International Association of Schools of Social Work established 1928) and brings together schools, universities, institutions and individuals supporting social work education from all over Europe.

The European Association has developed from the European Regional Group (ERG), which was first suggested in 1976, and brought Europe into line with other regional groupings already established in IASSW (Asia, Africa and South America). The European Regional Group was formally established at the World congress in Hong Kong in 1980 and has since organised periodic European seminars since, the first one in Vienna (1981). At a seminar in Turin (1993) the idea of a more autonomous European Association was proposed and this was formally agreed at the Lisbon seminar (1995). (EASSW maintains close links with IASSW and its president serves as a Vice President on the Board of IASSW).

The Association represents and promotes the interests of social work education at the European level, it contributes to the academic and international development of social work and social work education and it provides a European forum for its members.

The EASSW tries to pursue its goals through the following activities:

- Biennial European congresses on themes of social work and social development. The last one was held in Helsinki in June 1999, the next one will be in June 7 - 9, 2001 in Lodz, Poland under the theme Theoretical approaches in social work education.

- Assistance for European exchange programmes of member schools, for curricula development and implementation of new schools in social work (i.e. in Eastern Europe), for developing European networks and research projects.

- Thematic work groups with regular exchange via Internet or meetings.

- Activities as representatives of social work education on the European community level and in European NGOs.

The structure and functions of our association is maintained by the General Assembly, comprising all members and taking place biennially, and by the Executive Committee, with 10 members from 10 European countries. There are currently 26 countries in membership extending beyond EU countries to others such as Israel, Norway, Russia, Albania and Yugoslavia.

Benefits for members, besides the biennial European congresses, are the EASSW newsletter, informing about new developments in social work education; assistance as described above; the possibility of participation in ongoing projects and activities; intensive co-operation possibilities through the EASSW Exchange; a Trading Group (every member receives every year 5 vouchers for exchange activities); and research and exchange possibilities through the EASSW-Thematic Groups.

Besides the EASSW newsletter, we are publishing the EASSW directory of schools of social work and the Proceedings of the biennial congresses. A new series of EASSW books in different languages about social policy and social work developments has just started in Italy, other countries will follow.

We have exchange and co-operation, with the European branch of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and FESET, the European Association of Training Centres for Socio-educational Care Work, including exchange of information, newsletters and articles, and regular common board meetings and events.

Over the last 3 years these organisations and the European Centre for Community Education (ECCE) worked together in the thematic network, ECSPRESS (European Consortium of Social Professions with Education and Social Studies)
under the framework of SOCRATES.

This network, which also included different European associations of the professional field, held annual European seminars, identified experts for the fields of European curricula, European social policy and social work practice relative to marginalisation and exclusion. These experts were monitoring several European projects. It is hoped that this work will continue, including increasing collaboration with and between Central and Eastern European Countries.

EASSW is a fast growing organisation. In the last 3 years we doubled our membership and inside IASSW we are the strongest and most active continental branch. We hope we can continue to become stronger and that together with the European branch of IFSW and FESET we can influence European social and educational policy. We invite all schools, universities but also individual teachers to become members to support these goals. National or Regional Associations can become - free of charge - honorary members of EASSW in order to receive all information.

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**European social work education quiz (answers on page 62)**

1. European social work courses vary considerably in the percentage of course time that is devoted to practice placements. What (according to Council of Europe, 1995) are the minimum and maximum percentages to be found?

2. In which three European countries is qualifying social work training exclusively located in universities?

3. Which two countries were the first to establish social work training?...

4. ... and in which year?

5. In Switzerland, there are three separate practice disciplines in which social welfare professionals have been able to train. What are they?

6. In which EU country do social workers have to go beyond their national boundary to obtain a professional qualification?

7. In which city is a social work training school named after Alice Salomon?

8. What do the following acronyms stand for:
   a) ECSPRESS?
   b) NCSSW?
   c) ECTS?