

Respected colleagues, professors, social workers, students and researchers!

I'm honoured to address you today during your event "*All the country standing for social work!*", initiated by National College of Social Workers from Romania. I would like to thank my colleague dr. Felicia Andrioni from the University of Petrosani, who invited me to talk to you from far away, University of Ljubljana.

I'm very proud to address you as the president of the **East European sub-regional Association of the Schools of Social Work**, which is the first and the only network of the schools of social work in the region; and also I address you as the board member of the **global International Association of the Schools of Social Work**. This is the oldest and the largest organisation of educators in social work which brings together educators and researchers from **all over the world**. I hope, some of you will be able to come to the 2018 Dublin conference of the IASSW and IFSW, or in 2020 to the conference in Rimini, Italy. **In Rimini, we will have a unique conference of IASSW only, and will have a lot of place and time to exchange our experiences of teaching, practice and research!** We would welcome the Romanian schools which **are not yet the members of the IASSW, to join us!** Please visit our web site (<https://www.iassw-aiets.org/>) and read our wonderful on-line magazine *Social Dialogue*, which brings thematic issues from the writers in social work from all over the world. We also have an opportunity to grant small research and educational projects up to 4.000 USD, for those who are members.

Today, I would like to remind us, **that social work is a profession and a discipline which always moves between the three mandates: the state, the service-users and the mandate which is given to us by our profession.** Each of the three mandates have its own demands for social workers, as we learned from the founder of this idea, Prof. Sylvia Staub Bernasconi. **The three mandates are often in conflict. Neoliberalism and postsocialist social inequalities make service users more economically disadvantaged than they were some years ago; large long stay institutions for children and disabled adults are still not replaced with more humanized ways of living; independent live and self-determination are still strange words for postsocialist societies, although our governments signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities and other Conventions.**

The **Ethical Principles of Social Work** can help us to bridge this often conflicting situations; **the IASSW task force group is currently working on the revision of the Ethical Standards, and there is still time to get involved with suggestions and your own thoughts in regard of the new document** (I'm attaching the draft document).

Ethical Standards speak about **"social workers", but the word includes practitioners, educators and researchers;** overcoming the gap between the theory and practice goes hand in glove with communication between social work educators, workers and researchers.

The 9 Ethical Principals altogether, address a variety of issues, **like for instance social work as a human rights profession; social justice; the importance of self-determination of individuals; professional integrity; the right for participation.** People who are seen as either too old, or too young, have a gender which is not wanted, or sexual orientation which is not acceptable; or religion which is not the mainstream one; or have disabilities, or a dark skin colour, **have great difficulties to participate and to have their voice listened in the public realm.**

The Ethical Principles discuss the issue of culture; cultures are great in their diversities **but can also be oppressive and discriminatory.** In the “name of culture” many illegal migrant are criminalized; Roma people are seen as non-Europeans and cannot get into paid employment; girls bodies which are not ready to have children are used for reproduction, they marry as children and drop out of schools; control and violence against women is produced and reproduced in the name of the “culture” and female genital mutilation which inflict pain to thousands of girls are seen as “part of tradition and culture”. **Social workers have to challenge these forms of discrimination and unjust practices which are called “culture” and have to strive for diversity.**

IASSW and the IFSW are explicitly supporting and advocating for those social workers or social work educators and researchers, **who are criminalized because they fight for human rights and social justice;** building solidarity is an important issue of the international social work. **I would like to encourage you to discuss the Ethical Principles in small circles and to send your views and suggestions to the task force group of the IASSW.**

For your conference I wish you a successful work, new networks, friendships and ideas; we all need to build alliances, and mutual support; **we need to develop social work based on the human rights principles and stand against oppression and injustices in our profession and in our societies.**

With very best wishes and congratulation for the National College of Social Workers from Romania to organise this event!

Sincerely ,



Professor Darja Zaviršek

Ljubljana, 15. February 2018