

## ERIS Annual Report 2016

### I. Meeting of ERIS members

In 2016 there were two meetings of representatives from partner universities of ERIS (the European Research Institute for Social Work). The first was held on 12 April 2016 in Ostrava; participants discussed the Institute's research and publishing activities – especially ongoing work on the book *Social Work and Poverty (ERIS Monograph Vol. 4, eds. Sýkorová, D., Klimentová, E.)* and plans for publications in 2017–2020 (including the contents of English-language versions of the *ERIS Journal* following its merger with the Czech/Slovak periodical *Sociální práce/Sociálna práca*). Other topics included the content and organization of the 10th international ERIS conference 'Participatory Social Work: Approaches, Barriers, Critique', to be held on 29–30 September at the University of Łódź, Poland. The members present also acknowledged receipt of a request by the Catholic University of Applied Sciences of North Rhine-Westphalia for the termination of its ERIS membership.

The second ERIS meeting was held on Saturday 28 September 2016 in Łódź, on the occasion of the 10th annual international conference. Participants discussed plans for the 2017 conference (on the topic of Social Work and Minorities), to be held on 12–13 October in Lille, France. The participants also approved the dates, framework programme and organizational arrangements for the International Spring School of Social Work 2017.

### II. Educational activities

The International Spring School of Social Work was again the main focus of ERIS's educational activities; the tenth annual spring school was held in Ostrava from 12–15 April 2016. The event featured a total of 54 participants, of whom 37 were from universities outside the Czech Republic – Eichstätt, Landshut, Koblenz, Bremen (Germany), Hertfordshire (UK), Kuopio (Finland), Trnava (Slovakia), Dornbirn (Austria), Łódź and Olsztyn (Poland). We also welcomed participants from as far afield as India, Moscow, and the USA (Texas). The programme focused mainly on students' presentations based on their Master's or doctoral dissertations, accompanied by discussions with academics, group and individual consultations. The students welcomed the feedback from the academics and the opportunity to discuss the topics of their dissertations with experts from various countries in an informal and supportive environment.

As in previous years, the programme included lectures and a workshop held as part of the project 'Enlargement and Development of the Research Team at the Faculty of Social Studies, University of Ostrava'. The workshop took the form of a research afternoon featuring Prof. Ewa Kantowicz from Poland and Prof. Detlef Baum from Germany, on the topic 'Reflection on comparative methodology in social work (social studies)'.

### **Strengthening international links in education for students of ERIS partner universities**

During 2016, two academics from the University of Ostrava's Faculty of Social Studies were actively involved in teaching at partner institutions. O. Chytil lectured at the Catholic University of Eichstätt, and K. Glumbíková lectured at UEF in Kuopio. P. Erath from the Catholic University of Eichstätt lectured at the Catholic University of Lille and the University of Ostrava. M. Pfaller-Rott from the Catholic University of Eichstätt lectured at the University of Applied Sciences in Kaunas. B. Littlechild from the University of Hertfordshire lectured at the Faculty of Social Studies in Ostrava. A. Gulczynska, M. Kostrzynska and M. Granosik from the University of Łódź likewise lectured in Ostrava.

### **III. Publication activities**

ERIS Journal

Eris Journal – the winter 2016 and summer 2016 English-language issues are available in electronic and printed form: <http://www.socialniproace.cz/eng/index.php?sekce=2>

ERIS publications

In December 2016 the fourth ERIS monograph *Social Work and Poverty* was published, and preparations continued for the fifth monograph in the series: *Philosophy and Ethics in Social Work*.

### **IV. ERIS conference**

“Participatory Social Work: Approaches, Barriers, Critique”, Łódź 29–30<sup>th</sup> September, 2016.

The conference gathered together over 100 academics, social work practitioners and students (at doctoral, Master's and Bachelor's levels) from a range of countries: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Finland, France, India, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and the United Kingdom.

The conference topics were summed up in the call: “Contemporary social work is challenged on the one hand by increasing and multidimensional social diversity, and on the other hand by a growing emphasis on building a civil society based on activity, equality and participation. The result of these phenomena is the growing expectation of the democratization of the social services system, expressed in a greater appreciation for the importance of the activity of service users, both in academic discourse and in daily practice. Adopting the assumption that service users know best the reality in which they live has undermined the dyadic frames of social work demonstrated in the divisions: theory/practice, researcher/those researched, professionals who ‘know best’/recipients of social welfare, etc., and has given rise to participatory social work (...) Participatory social work raises anew the issues of the credibility of knowledge, the processes of its creation and use, the purpose of social work, its relationship to politics, and - above all - the role and competences of a social worker (co-)constructing social change in partnership "with" and not just "for" the service users.”

### **V. Joint projects**

During 2016, work began on two joint projects for calls as part of the HORIZON 2020 programme, which are scheduled for 2017.

One project – focusing on migration – is being coordinated by the Catholic University of Lille, and participation is expected from the following ERIS partners: the Faculty of Social Studies at the University of Ostrava; the University of Trnava; the University of Eastern Finland; the University of Hertfordshire; the University of Trento.

The second project – focusing on young people and identity – is being coordinated by the Catholic University of Eichstätt, and participation is expected from the Catholic University of Lille and the Faculty of Social Studies at the University of Ostrava. A preparatory meeting was held in Eichstätt.

## **VI. The ERIS website and promotional activities**

Improvements and updates were made to the content, organization and appearance of the ERIS website. ERIS was promoted by representatives of all member universities at various conferences and workshops, via author profiles in journals, etc.