



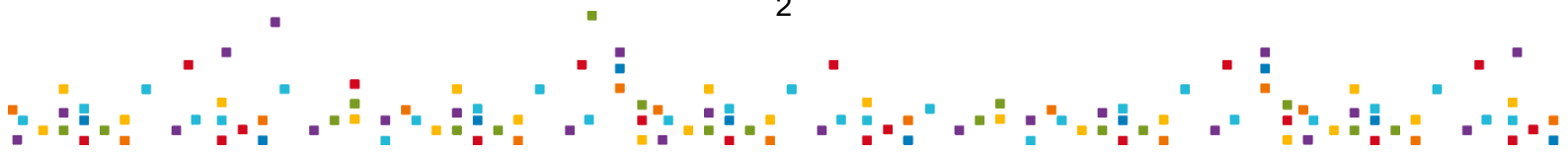
**UNIVERSITY OF OSTRAVA**  
EUROPEAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
FOR SOCIAL WORK

EUROPEAN RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL WORK  
ANNUAL REPORT  
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## CONTENTS

NEW ERIS DIRECTOR.....	3
ERIS MEMBER MEETINGS.....	3
EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES.....	4
INTERNATIONAL SPRING SCHOOL CONFERENCE .....	5
INTERNATIONALISATION OF STUDENT EDUCATION IN ERIS PARTNER UNIVERSITIES.....	5
PUBLISHING ACTIVITIES .....	7
CONFERENCE .....	7
ERIS WEBSITE AND PROMOTION.....	7



## NEW ERIS DIRECTOR

In the spring of 2023, a selection procedure for the position of a new ERIS Director was held. The selection procedure committee was established. The members were Alice Gojová (FSS UO), Jelena Petrucijová (FSS UO), Brian Littlechild (University of Hertfordshire, UK), Anita Gulczynska (University of Lodz, PL), Jutta Harrer-Amersdorffer (the individual ERIS member, DE). On the basis of the decision of the selection procedure committee Kateřina Mikulcová from the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ostrava became the new ERIS Director. She took up the post of Director of ERIS with effect from 1 September 2023. During the autumn, Kateřina presented to the ERIS partners her plan for the strategic development of the ERIS network.

## ERIS MEMBER MEETINGS

In 2023 three meetings of university representatives associated with the European Research Institute for Social Work (ERIS) were held. One of them was online, and the rest were on-site.

On 17 January 2023, the main topic in the first meeting was the organization tasks regarding Spring School 2023, ERIS Conference in Würzburg. The application for Affiliated membership for Institution – Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice was approved. The representative of this university is Assoc. Prof. Vladimír Lichner. The next topics of the meeting were *Foreign experts' experience* with providing lectures within research seminars for Ph.D. students at the Faculty of Social Studies and their experience with Spring School and an update of the List of experts, their research focus, and publication activities.

The first on-site meeting of ERIS representatives after COVID restrictions took place on 11 April 2023. At this meeting, the final organization tasks for Spring School were discussed. The next important topic was the ERIS annual conference 2023 as well as 2024 and its call for the host university. Alice Gojová, the dean of FSS UO, participated in this meeting. She has informed members about the selection procedure for a new ERIS director. ERIS is a part of the faculty, it is the reason why she is a responsible person for this task. The selection procedure committee was established. The members are Alice Gojová (FSS UO), Jelena Petrucijová (FSS UO), Brian Littlechild (University of Hertfordshire, UK), Anita Gulczynska (University of Lodz, PL), Jutta Harrer-Amersdorffer (the individual ERIS member, DE). The meeting of this committee should be held in May 2023.

The third meeting was held on 19 October 2023 on-site in Würzburg before the ERIS Annual Conference. The application for Affiliated Membership for Individuals of Anastasia Karpunina was approved.

## EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### INTERNATIONAL SPRING SCHOOL CONFERENCE

More than 50 professors and students from different parts of Europe were in Ostrava for the 16th International Spring School of Social Work, taking place from 11–14 April 2023 at the Faculty of Social Studies. The conference gives an opportunity to new, young scientists and researchers and welcomed a participant from as far away as Nepal.

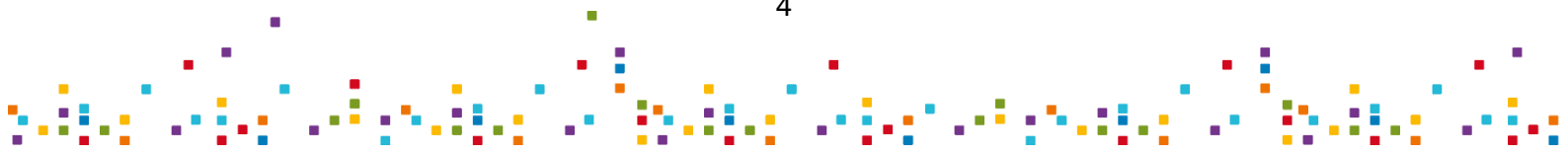
Presentations were made over three days from 16 participants from the UK, Spain, Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic. There was also an online session for three PhD students from the Gandhigram Rural Institute in India and their supervisor Prof. Hilaria Soundari.

The programme generally focused on student presentations centred around their dissertations and theses, and discussions with foreign and Czech experts. The papers were from different areas of social work, for example, social work with families and social work with people at risk of social exclusion. The individual contributions looked at the research topics through the lens of contemporary and historical discourse.

The programme also included a lecture by a professor recognised in the area of social work from the University of Hertfordshire, Prof. Brian Littlechild. In his lecture entitled “Social Work and Social Work Research: How well do our Research Questions, Methods and Findings Contribute to Improvements in Policies and Practices – and who Judges these Things, how?” he discussed the key features of social work research methodology, as well as the values of social workers and their influence on the implementation of the actual research. In his lecture, Professor Littlechild attempted to answer the questions “How do we proceed to best reflect these values and meet our objectives in terms of the human rights and needs of both social work service users and caregivers?” and “How do we measure whether what we do and how we do it has value – and from whose perspective?”.

Dr. Isabella Kaminszka Jaktaczka from the University of Lodz (Poland), prepared a very interesting methodology-focused workshop entitled “PhotoVoice in Social Work Research”. PhotoVoice is a popular participatory research technique, where people who are socially excluded or who are at risk of social exclusion, as well as others, are asked to participate. During the workshop, the participants were introduced to this technique along with examples of good practice and the lecturer’s personal experiences. Participants discussed the process of constructing research materials using this technique. The workshop engaged those interested in participatory action research in social work, as well as those seeking activities on the border between social work and art, and/or research activities that promote social response and change. Thanks to Assoc. Prof. Kateřina Mikulcová from the Faculty of Social Studies of UO, this year for the first time we included the “World Café” in the special programme. It is a method that utilizes an “everyone meeting everyone” approach in order to create a space that encourages “open conversation” where anyone can talk about things that are important to them. The topic of this year’s World Café matched that of Prof. Littlechild’s expert lecture, to which this activity was a follow-up.

Several ERIS (European Research Institute for Social Work) members from different European universities were involved. The first session led by Prof. Doris Böhler from the FHV Vorarlberg (Austria) and Prof. Sigrid Bathke from the Hochschule Landshut (Germany) focused on ways of living from a family perspective as a research topic for the future. Dr. Malgorzata Kostrzynska and Prof. Mariusz Granosik from the University of Lodz (Poland) focused



the attention of the conference participants on participatory approaches in social work. Prof. Laure Lienard from the Catholic University of Lille (France) dealt with the topics of poverty, exclusion, and violence. The last session, led Dr. Andrej Kállay from Slovakia, discussed human rights and specifically children's rights.

The professors in particular, but also the students, evaluated individual student presentations as very good. The participants highly appreciated the "small group dialogue" that took place at the end of each day, where active presenters were given a chance to discuss their topics and research steps in detail with European social work experts.

<https://fss.osu.eu/28371/16th-international-spring-school-of-social-work-for-masters-and-phd-students/>

<https://alive.osu.cz/academics-from-around-europe-attended-the-international-spring-school-of-social-work-hosted-by-the-uo-faculty-of-social-studies/>

## INTERNATIONALISATION OF STUDENT EDUCATION IN ERIS PARTNER UNIVERSITIES

Academicians from the Faculty of Social Studies, University of Ostrava gave several lectures for students from different universities belonging to ERIS.

Alice Gojová and Zuzana Stankova gave lectures for students at the Catholique University in Lille, France. The main topic was community social work.

Catholique University in Lille, France visited also Veronika Mia Racko. Her lecture was focused on the theme of Social Work in International Practice.

Kateřina Mikulcová lectured students at the University of Eastern Finland. Her lecture was focused on reflexivity in social work with families.

Marek Mikulec visited the Catholic University of Applied Sciences of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. Topics of seminars were Exclusion and vulnerability; Social work and Homelessness in Czechia; History of social work and Current Approach to planning the Net of social services in Czechia; Oppression and Emic Perspective – The Ethnographic Study of Life in the Excluded Locality The topic of his lecture was "Solution to problems in housing? Preparation of "law about support in housing".

Marie Špiláčková gave lectures on the topic of "Task-centred approach – theory and practice in the Czech Republic" and "Alice Masaryková vs. Helena Radlinska" for students at the University of Lodz, Poland.

Oldřich Chytil gave lecture for PhD students at P.J Šafárik University in Košice. The lecture topic was: "Current Theoretical Discourse of Social Work and its Reflection on Changes in Society.". The seminar with PhD students was on the topic "Does the theoretical anchoring of their dissertation research reflect the changes in society?".

Barbora Gřundělová gave lectures about three different topics: 1) Socio-spatial, political and economic aspects of social work (topic: Activation of unemployment people in the Czech labor market policy), 2) Politics and social work (topic: Activation of unemployment people in the Czech labor market policy), 3) Politics and the future (topic: participatory methods) for students at the Catholic University of Applied Sciences of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany.

Prof. Brian Littlechild from the University of Hertfordshire was the Visiting Professor at the Faculty of Social Studies, University of Ostrava. He provided teaching, including training in the Follow-up Master's degree programme Social Work, with a specialization on Social work with families in a full-time and part-time form of study in the Social and Legal Child Protection in an International Context course and connected it with topics such as Child protection system in Great Britain, Introduction, Substitute family care, Institutional care, Examples of good practice. He provided also lectures in doctoral degree programmes Sociální práce (lectured in Czech) and Social Work (lectured in English) in a full-time and part-time form of study within research afternoons organized in the Dissertation Seminar with topics such Overview of qualitative methods, focusing on selected methods, Creative writing, and publishing strategies.

Prof. Juha Hämäläinen from the University of Eastern Finland was also the Visiting Professor at the Faculty of Social Studies, University of Ostrava. He provided teaching, including training in the Follow-up Master's degree programme Social Work and for international students in a full-time and part-time form of study in the Development of Theoretical Concepts of Social Work course and connected it with topics such as Classification and evaluation of social work theories, Relationship between theory-practice, Philosophy of science, Social work as a scientific solution to the problem. He provided lectures in doctoral degree programmes Sociální práce (lectured in Czech) and Social Work (lectured in English) in a full-time and part-time form of study within research afternoons organized in the Dissertation Seminar with topics such as Comparative research in social work I. and II.

Anita Gulczynska together with Malgorzata Kostrzyńska from the University of Lodz, Poland; Ondrej Botek and Miriam Slaná from the University of Trnava, Slovakia; Laure Lienard, Emmanuel Jovelin from the Catholic University in Lille, France; Doris Böhler from FHV - Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences, Austria; Sigrid Bathke from Landshut University of Applied Sciences; Andrej Kallay from MCI/The Entrepreneurial University, Austria visited the Faculty of Social Studies, University of Ostrava.

The University of Ostrava is in close touch and cooperation with the University of Trnava regarding the 2-year Master's degree in Social Work and Social Entrepreneurship. The Follow-up Master's degree in Social Work and Social Entrepreneurship is conceived and implemented as a Joint Degree programme, meaning that part of the study programme is implemented in cooperation with two foreign universities – the University of Trnava and Fachhochschule Campus Wien.

## PUBLISHING ACTIVITIES

### ERIS Journal

Winter Issue 1/2023 – The editors are Karen Mills and Sigrid Bathke. The theme of the issue is 'Developments in Social Work Research'. 7 papers and 1 research notes.

Summer Issue 4/2023 – The editors are Miriam Slaná and Ondrej Botek. The issue is not thematically unified. 7 papers, 1 book review, 1 research notes.

ERIS Journal – Both Winter Issue 2023 and Summer Issue 2023 are available on [English homepage » Social Work \(socialnprace.cz\)](#)

## CONFERENCE

On 20 and 21 October 2023, the ERIS International Conference took place in Würzburg, Germany. The topic was *The Social Work in Crisis: Solution or Part of the Problem?*. The conference was attended by more than 60 academics and students from all over the world. To name a few participating countries, we can mention Germany, Great Britain, Poland, Slovakia, and Austria. A transnational perspective of social work was provided particularly by speakers from Oman, Lebanon, and India. The conference brought not only interesting contributions and inspirations from abroad but also the opportunity to network with partners with a common interest from all over the world.

During his welcome speech, Professor Oldřich Chytil handed over the position of ERIS Director to Kateřina Mikulcová and received from her to stormy applause of the whole auditorium, big thank you for the ERIS foundation and execution role of the ERIS Director for the last 15 years.

The keynote speaker, Timo Toikko from the University of Eastern Finland, gave a speech on *Social Policy in Challenging Times*, where, among other things, the conference participants had the opportunity to learn how state social policy is related to the citizen happiness index.

During the conference, we could hear contributions specialising in topics such as resistance in social work, life stories of women from rural India, developing empathy in social work students through simulation dolls, the refugee crisis, the role of codes of conduct in social work decision-making processes, etc.

The conference also offered thematic walks around the city focused, for example, on homeless service networks and street work.

<https://eris.osu.eu/29364/the-social-work-in-crisis-solution-or-part-of-the-problem/>

## ERIS WEBSITE AND PROMOTION

ERIS website content as well as the formal layout and appearance have been continuously updated. ERIS has been promoted by representatives of all partner universities through conferences and workshops, within author profiles in professional journals, etc.