



# News Letter

1/2003

Observatory for the Development of Social  
Services in Europe

## Quality as a conflict and as a process<sup>1</sup>

The intensive discussion on quality that Europeans have engaged in for the past 15 years has been accompanied by the introduction of (quasi) market mechanisms, particularly the competition principle – a process accelerated by the circumstances of European integration. It has been assumed that the selective effect of competition would improve the quality of public services. However, at least where Germany is concerned, this has not been the case: what has developed instead is a “negative pressure on quality” that has forced legislators to adopt regulations for the statutory control of quality management.

Since then, debate in the field of social work has concentrated on the issue of the *pragmatic implementation* of statutory guidelines through the establishment and optimisation of processes of quality control and quality management. But what “quality” really is has by no means been clearly defined. True enough, the “trinity” of structural, process and outcome quality has recently been experiencing a certain degree of popularity as an attempted definition, but this labels and schematises quality more than it really grasps the actual con-

cept of it. In order to avoid the inherent problems of one-sided decision- and essence-based attempts at definition, this article will present an ideal analytical concept of *quality as a field of social conflict* and suggest a process to productively approach this conflict.

### The quality of social services – a field of conflict in society

The “quality” of something always depends on the normative orientations and interests of the parties involved. In other words, quality is always a *relative* – and *relational* concept in terms of the interests of the other participants.

There are three central actors and/or groups of actors in the field of conflict involving the quality of social services – users, professionals (in their organisations) and (local) state authorities – and the divergences in their respective interests with regard to quality give rise to latent or manifest conflicts in their interaction. These interests will now be briefly outlined:

- *(Local) state authorities* have an interest in regulating and standardising the way of life of recipients within the scope of legitimately recognised “state goals” which the state, as a tax collector, must implement in an economically feasible manner.
- *Professionals* have an interest in gaining and maintaining a scientifically and academically founded power of definition on the provision

process and in preserving their labour power.

- And *finally*, users have an interest in the use-value of services in terms of the appropriate handling of their problems, and they want to increase their acting autonomy.

If we now relate these various interests to each other, we see three corresponding fields of conflict:

- *In the user – state relationship* the interests of the users in having their needs satisfied (solving problems and ensuring acting autonomy) collides with the interest of state authorities to regulate ways of life. The content of the conflict is the *legitimation and recognition of the right* to social services.
- *In the state – professionals relationship* the professional interest in autonomy and continuity conflicts with the state authorities’ interest in instrumentalising professional activities for state purposes. The most important conflicts here surround the issue of *the effectiveness and efficiency* of professional social work carried out on behalf of the welfare state.
- *In the user – professionals relationship* the main issue is the usefulness and utility value of professional services for solving problems and the professional definition of problems and their solutions. The conflict focuses on the adequacy of services with regard to the problems.

## Editorial

DEAR READER,

FOLLOWING THE CONFERENCE ON “INDICATORS AND QUALITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN A EUROPEAN CONTEXT”, WHICH WAS HELD BY THE OBSERVATORY IN OCTOBER OF LAST YEAR, THIS ISSUE LOOKS MAINLY AT THE TOPICS OF QUALITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF INDICATORS. WE ARE, INTER ALIA, CONCERNED WITH THE QUESTION OF WHAT CRITERIA SHOULD BE USED TO MEASURE GOOD QUALITY IN THE AREA OF SOCIAL SERVICES AT EUROPEAN LEVEL. BUT WHAT EXACTLY IS QUALITY IN SOCIAL SERVICES? IN HIS EDITORIAL ARTICLE, PROFESSOR ANDREAS SCHAARSCHUCH OF THE BERGISCHE UNIVERSITY IN WUPPERTAL/GERMANY DEMONSTRATES THAT IT IS A VERY CONTROVERSIAL CONCEPT, AND THAT EXAMINING AND ASSESSING QUALITY DEPENDS VERY MUCH ON THE SUBJECTIVE INTERESTS, VALUES AND POSITION OF THE INDIVIDUAL ACTORS IN THE SO-CALLED “WELFARE MIX”. IN THE GUEST COLUMN, PROFESSOR PETER BERESFORD, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AT BRUNEL UNIVERSITY/GREAT BRITAIN, EXAMINES THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY FROM THE BRITISH USER-PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL SERVICES. FOR HIM, QUALITY IS THE RESULT OF DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMATION AND THUS INVOLVES THE PARTICIPATION OF ACTIVE CONSUMERS. THE CENTRAL RESULTS OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED CONFERENCE, WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON THOSE OF THE WORKING GROUP ON “INDICATORS FOR SOCIAL SERVICES”, ARE PRESENTED IN THE FIRST ARTICLE OF THE MAIN REPORT.

THE EDITORIAL TEAM

<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on the ideas of the author together with those of Dr. Stefan Schnurr, Bielefeld/Rostock University, Germany

But what is the “quality” of social services from the perspective of the various actors? To answer this question, one actor needs to look from its perspective at the other actors and their interests and to relate these to its own interests. This assumes that each actor already has a specific concept of “quality” based on its own interests.

### “Quality” from the perspective of the (local) state authorities

In this context, “quality” can be described as the usefulness of social services in society. This is the extent to which social services, within the scope of professional activity, fulfil their function of regulating users’ ways of life. *A person-related social service is a high-quality service if it effectively regulates its users’ ways of life.*

### “Quality” from the perspective of professionals (in organisations)

Here, the “quality” of social services consists essentially of “good work”. The main focus is the adequacy of professional social services vis-à-vis the problems concerned (with regard to users) within the context of fulfilment of social functions (with regard to the state authorities). *Service provision has high quality if “case and relational norm” (Offe) match.*

### “Quality” from the perspective of users

Social services are considered as having a high level of quality if they have a high use-value for their users. This means the usefulness of professional social work (related to the professional activity) with regard to the fulfilment of legitimately recognised needs (related to the state authorities). *Service provision has high quality if it increases acting autonomy and social recognition.*

This shows that “one-dimensional”, expertocratic or techno-managerial pre-defined characterisations of “quality”, quality criteria and quality indicators are inappropriate in this context, and that as a result of the *heterogeneity and contingency* of interests, norms



and evaluation standards the “quality” of person-related social services must be determined separately in each case. Because of the differences in realisable financial, social and cultural resources, however, the relationships of the actors to each other remain structured on a power basis, so that the chances to implement a definition of “quality” based on the interests of any one actor are not at all evenly distributed.

The following question arises in view of this situation: how can “quality” of person-related social services be determined in society when we have to assume that a) the individual actors concerned are pursuing diverging interests and b) these interests do not a priori seem likely to be harmonised or made compatible?

The answer to this question takes us to a formal and process-based definition of the quality of person-related social services:

*The quality of person-related social services is determined within the scope of a conflict in society for legitimate rights, for the effectiveness, efficiency and adequacy of services which, through a formalised negotiating process, can be transformed into a – temporary – compromise regarding the quality of services.*

### Compromises about quality

The essential point now is to transform the *conflicts* about quality into (temporary) *compromises* about quality. We are not talking about an unquestioning consensus but about temporary agreements; i.e. what should be considered as quality on the basis of differing quality perspectives and power potentials. This is why it is important to establish places, times and processes to enable a multi-perspective debate on the content of quality of social services where all the actors concerned can assert their perspectives of “quality”.

There are criteria that can be formulated as *quality criteria of the second order, or meta-quality*:

- Public awareness of the negotiation process regarding quality
- The time, space and social accessibility of the field of negotiation regarding quality
- The structural guarantee that all the actors concerned can express their concerns
- Process transparency regarding the process and its consequences
- Discursiveness: exchange and negotiation of rational, verifiable arguments
- The legal form of the process, the enforceability of participatory rights

This conceptual perspective is linked with the hope that the debate about quality can be repoliticised and the process

of determining quality made the subject of a democratic process in facilities offering person-related social services.

Prof. Dr. Andreas Schaarschuch  
Bergische Universität Wuppertal/  
Germany

## Guest column

### Involving Service Users: The best route to improving service quality

In recent years, increasing priority has been attached to two developments in public policy in the UK. The two are reflected in the increasing emphasis in government policy and public debates on first raising the *quality* of services and second, on increasing public participation, or ‘service user involvement’ in policy and practice. There may be disagreement about how much concrete change and improvements these new focuses in policy have achieved, but their emergence as central to government pronouncements and public expectations is indisputable. They have been particularly associated with welfare, health and social care provision.

The new rhetoric is immediately obvious in the policy process. Thus, in relation to ‘quality’, government has established ‘National Service Frameworks’ to establish standards for key policy areas and service user groups, including mental health, cancer, young and older people. It established a ‘*quality strategy for social care*’, which emphasized the importance of policy and practice being knowledge- or ‘evidence’-based. There is a new language of ‘quality standards’, ‘performance indicators’ and ‘outcome measures’. In the last few years, new Care Standards Commissions were established to monitor and safeguard quality; a General Social Care Council set up to identify and maintain standards of occupational practice and conduct and a Social

Care Institute for Excellence created to gather the knowledge for improving quality.

Requirements for user involvement are built into health and social care legislation and guidance. A 'czar' for 'public and patient involvement' was appointed to give this force in the National Health Service. Requirements for participation and 'partnership' are built into regeneration, housing and education policy, as well as in health and social care. From 2003, University courses providing new degree courses in professional social work must involve service users in *all* aspects of their training, from curriculum development to assessment.

There is one important point, though, that needs to be made, about these two developments – improving quality and involving service users – in the UK. So far they have generally been treated separately and in isolation. They have not often been considered in relation to each other. This may not seem an important point to some policy makers and commentators, but the likelihood is that if either is to work effectively, then it will need to be properly connected to the other. This is an issue which has implications far beyond the UK and which needs to be considered in a broader European context.

So far, for example, in the UK at least discussions about quality have been dominated by professional and managerialist approaches and perspectives. For a long time, service users have had little say or involvement in the discussion. Yet as the old English saying goes, 'Who knows better where the shoe pinches than the person wearing it?'. We know that service users' views and priorities about quality are not necessarily the same as those of professionals and service providers. Unless service users are able to inform and help shape the discussion about 'what is quality' and how it can best be measured, then



the quality debate is likely to be lacking a key source of insight and information. Increasingly, in the UK at least, the 'quality discussion' is becoming a bureaucratic 'tick box' exercise. Practitioners are increasingly seeing it as a burdensome activity which may at best only run parallel to and at worst may actually obstruct their capacity to work well, instead of supporting and encouraging better working. Service users in the UK, frequently report the practice they experience as an increasingly routinised activity, where what counts is only what can be formally measured, rather than what they may value.

The interest in 'quality' unrelated to increased 'user involvement' has resulted in an emphasis; some would say a preoccupation, with standard setting and measurement. Yet as another old English saying goes, 'you don't fatten pigs by weighing them'. The mere act of measuring for quality does not of itself necessarily improve quality.

Significantly the most recent highest profile cause célèbre in the field of social care in

the UK has concerned failure to address issues of either quality or of user involvement. This was the tragic murder of Victoria Climbié in 2000. The public inquiry into the affair headed by Lord Laming, which reported in January 2003, found appalling failures across social care, health and police services, at every level, from local politicians and senior management to practitioners and middle managers. Yet elaborate quality standards and procedures were in place for such child protection cases. At the same time, significantly, as the Report highlighted, there was no user involvement. 'No one listened to the child' (Laming, 2003)<sup>1</sup>.

There is a key lesson to learn from the UK experience. If the two goals of improving quality and enabling effective user involvement are to be taken forward, they must be more closely connected. Each is important to the other. This is a crucial coupling

<sup>1</sup> Laming, H. (2003), Report of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry (The Laming Report), CM 5730, January, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

if we are to see meaningful improvements in the quality of public provision.

Thus, without the development of clear quality standards for user involvement, participation is likely to remain patchy and frequently tokenistic – more of a 'rubber stamp' than a real corrective to paternalistic and inferior public services. Equally, without effective user involvement, aspirations to improve quality run the risk of being misdirected and ineffective.

In the UK, service user controlled organizations have begun to develop their own discussions and activities around developing and implementing 'user-defined' quality standards and outcome measures. Shaping Our Lives National User Network, which is now core funded by the government Department of Health, has undertaken both national and local research and development projects (supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation) to find out more about what service users see as 'good outcomes' from services and support. Two key findings have emerged from this work. First service users reject conventional assumptions that process can be separated from outcome. For them, how support is provided determines how helpful it is likely to be and how positive the outcomes are. Second, while each service user may have their own idiosyncratic preferences from services and support, there do seem to be many qualities, which are commonly valued. These relate to reliability and being treated with respect, honesty and equality.

The UK experience highlights that service users and their organizations have a real contribution to make in improving service quality. There is also now an increasing body of evidence to show this can be done and that it can work. In the UK, longstanding tensions between user-led and budget-driven services continue to be problematic. The involvement of service users offers the prospect of both a motor to help drive quality improve-

ment and a route map to show where it should be heading.

**Further information:**

Shaping Our Lives National User Network, Unit 57, Eurolink Centre, 49 Effra Road, Brixton, London, SW2 1BZ, England, phone: +44-(0)20-7095-1159, Email: information@shapingour-lives.org.uk

*Prof. Peter Beresford*  
 Director of the Centre for Citizen Participation, Professor of Social Policy, Brunel University, and Chair of Shaping Our Lives National User Network

**Main report**

**Promoting the development of indicators for social services in Europe**

More than 80 experts – practitioners, social scientists and policy-makers – took part in the conference on “Indicators and quality of social services in a European context” held in Berlin on 16/17 October 2002. The event was organised by the Observatory in close cooperation with the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the National Arbeiterwohlfahrt Federation and Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband – Gesamtverband. Discussions took place in separate working groups, the topics of which were “Quality of social services” and “Development of indicators”. The main objective of the working groups was reviewing the professional debate in this field from a European perspective as well as formulating recommendations and suggesting tasks for the various actors involved in social work.

Two sub-groups looked at the topic of “Quality of social services from a European perspective”. The first of these dealt with “Quality from the perspective of providers and users of social services – an area of suspense”. The provider perspective was primarily concerned with the standards of

concrete, interactive social services by professional or volunteer staff. The second perspective, which focused on users, concentrated on the effects social services have on those who are directly involved. This issue of our Newsletter includes a first overview about this topic in the contributions of Professor Andreas Schaarschuch (editorial article) and Professor Peter Beresford (guest column), who both spoke in the first working group. The second sub-group examined the quality of social services from the perspective of social protection systems. Aspects such as the organisation of social rights and supply infrastructure, the scope of services and the relative importance and foundations of quality assurance and quality development in the various national social protection systems formed the core of the discussion.

As already mentioned in the editorial, this article of our Main Report focuses on the results of the working group that discussed “Indicators for social services from a European perspective”. Presentations and discussions in this working group concentrated on three question complexes: 1) What indicators are available on access/conditions of entitlement, scope of services, quality, funding and providers of social services? What are suitable indicators to describe social services so as to make them comparable from country to country? To what extent can these indicators then be linked to information on individual needs, on the needs of specific groups or of an entire society? 2) What is the political and institutional framework for the discussion, development and determination of indicators in the areas of employment, social affairs and health at national and European levels? How is this framework to be used, and how can it be evaluated? 3) And as a corollary: what new requirements for the providers of social services and for government institutions, in particular for the relevant national ministries, are generated by new policy man-

agement instruments at European level? What participation options are there for organisations of non-profit providers and for local providers of social services?

On the basis of information gathered from national statistics and data from specific professional areas, approaches and systems of social reporting in various fields of social work, this working group examined options and ways of further developing suitable indicators and reporting systems for social services, including such that would allow cross-border comparisons. This process crystallised various – at times complementary – requirements as to contents from both an academic and a political point of view:

- 1) For policy-making purposes, indicators must be appropriate to reflect political aims and the degree to which they have been achieved. Ideally speaking, they should also be derived from them. In the area of social services, however, political aims are often controversial due to the conflicting interests of financing bodies, providers and users. They must therefore be determined in an ongoing negotiation process.
- 2) The indicators selected must correspond to social needs.
- 3) Indicators for social services should – particularly in view of the activities and points of attention of the European Union – specifically cover the aspects

of “access/accessibility”, “scope of services”, “quality” and “financial viability”. 4) Both social scientists and policy-makers point out the necessity for internationally comparable indicators to take into account the legal and institutional contexts as well as prevailing socio-demographic and socio-economic conditions. 5) The search for significant comparative indicators, for instance on pre-primary-school child care, makes it necessary to determine so-called functional equivalents (e.g. “nursery school” and “kindergarten”). 6) In order to better assess the efficiency and effectiveness of social work, we also need to develop indicators that can reflect the interventions – in form of care, counselling, support, rehabilitation or promotion of personal skills – of social services. The challenge of developing indicators on the quality of structure, processes and results of social services is, at national level, still in its very early stages, much like the systematic recording of subjective user evaluations – for instance with regard to “accessibility”, “scope of services” or “quality of social services” – as a useful complement to objective indicators.

The workshop presented a few prospects for increased consideration of social services at EU level. The representative of the EU Commission, Denis Crowley,





specifically named the following options:

- 1) Explicitly considering social services in the continued development of guidelines for the second round (2003–2005) of national action plans against poverty and social exclusion (NAPincl).
- 2) Taking advantage of the possibility of defining further dimensions and aims that would be relevant and appropriate at national level only, as well as indicators to match. For those fields of social policy included within the scope of the open method of coordination – for instance employment, poverty and social exclusion, health care and care for the elderly, pensions, youth – both the degree of fulfilment of these goals and the instruments and processes used nationally would then, in this case, be assessed at national level only.
- 3) Focusing on the development of standards and targets for good practice; this would include promoting detailed analyses of social policy models and structures commensurate to the problems involved and encouraging exchanges between the (actors of the) Member States. This approach would require little coordination and do better justice to the broad structural, conceptual, cultural and terminological differences between the systems of social service provision in the various Member States. It would mean a partial

departure from the strategy of setting binding indicators for social services to apply across Europe. Overall, it became obvious that developing suitable indicators on the task, role and efficiency of social services is very closely linked to the open method of coordination, but assessing the aims, instruments and roles of the individual actors within this process remained contentious. Finally, participants discussed potential points of contact and possibilities for looking at issues in greater depth within the scope of social reporting (the annual Commission report on the Social Situation in the European Union) and promotion of research (e.g. action programme of the General Directorate on “Employment and Social Affairs” to strengthen social cohesion) in the EU.

You will find the individual contributions and the extensive reports of the working group rapporteurs in the conference paper, which can be downloaded as a pdf file from our project website.

Beatrix Holzer/Mathias Maucher

## Will legal certainty for services of general interest be appearing soon?

For years now, there has been intensive discussion on the subject of services of general interest. Non-profit providers of social services in Germany particularly have been asking themselves to what extent their special position within the corporatist model of the welfare state – restricted as it is through the regulations of the Code of Social Law [Sozialgesetzbuch, SGB] and of the Child and Youth Welfare Act [Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz, KJHG] – is compatible with EU legislation. One of the concrete issues is whether financial privileges coupled with non-profit status constitute inadmissible subsidies within the meaning of Article 87 para. 1 EC. The EU Commission addressed the issue of “services of general interest” (SGI) for the first time in its Communication of 1996. The European Council of Lisbon requested the Commission to update this Communication, which it did with the publication of a second Communication in September 2000 [COM (2000) 580 of 20 September 2000]; the intent of the second Communication was to present a legal framework for SGIs in the light of the rulings of European courts and of Commission practice. Yet legal uncertainty remains in spite and because of a number of judgments of the European Court of Justice in cases related to the regulations of Articles 86 and 87 EC: specifically, the question of what services of general interest actually are, how economic activities differ from non-economic ones, and in what areas European law is to be applied. Two processes, which have been so far treated separately by the Commission, could shed some light on the EU-level. On the one hand, the request of the European Council of Laeken (December 2001) to the Commission to clarify the open questions on the application of subsidy regulations by setting a common framework. In this regard, the

European Commission Directorate-General for Competition published a so-called “non-paper” entitled “Services of general economic interest and state aid” in November 2002. In a second process, the Commission was requested by the European Council of Barcelona (March 2002) to consider how a framework directive could systematically deal with the various questions surrounding the topic of services of general interest – in particular the content of services, welfare obligations, selection of service providers, and funding and evaluation of the services. The Commission is expected to publish a Green Paper (probably in April) that will discuss these questions and open them to debate among a broad (specialised) public. Finally, it must be noted that the processes outlined above are insufficiently linked or coordinated in time with both the consultancy phase and the decision-making process on the European social model and on questions of social policy in the Constitutional Convention. The Observatory will continue to follow these processes and present their central results in its publications.

Beatrix Holzer

## Social services in Europe

### Social Services in Italy

One fruitful way to profile the Italian social welfare system is to observe the balance between economic transfers and personal social services. In fact, social care includes the provision of *money transfers to individuals* (under the form of social pensions, care allowances



and so on) and *direct personal social services* delivered by public or private providers.

The building of a national, universal welfare state – particularly after the Second World War – proved to be for the most part an effort of enlarging economic provisions to individuals. Monetary expenditure for welfare purposes almost doubled between 1960 and the mid-eighties. In 1998 social protection expenditures, as defined by Eurostat, have reached 25.2 % of GNP, the most part of which (16.2 %) is spent on pensions (the highest proportion in EU countries).

For what concerns direct personal social services (or in-kind provisions), Italy witnessed a remarkable development – during the last twenty years – in different sectors: most notably social exclusion, the dis-

abled, the elderly. While religiously-inspired institutions have traditionally played (and still play) a large role in the Italian welfare society, public social services have grown in quantity and quality of programs carried out. To this respect, a long waited national reform has given new impulse.

#### National Reform

Recent law no. 328/00 is the most important comprehensive legislation on social services. It gives an overall, national framework and aims toward

the building of “an integrated system of social services and activities”, through the participation of State, regional and municipal institutions, and of third sector organisations.

This law states for the first time and in clear terms the roles and functions of these different actors, adopting “the method of planning activities, of operating through projects, of evaluating their quality and impact” (Article 3).

It regulates relationship within the different actors, giving special emphasis to the power of the twenty Regions, especially in planning services and allocating funds. It also provides new regulation on the relationship between public and nonprofit agencies, the so-called *welfare mix*, which has developed greatly in recent years.

New legislation has to deal with the great geographic differences existing in Italy. The basic unit of Italian local government – *the Comune or municipality* – is by far the most important supplier of social services. There are more than 8,000 Comuni and they differ greatly in size, political orientation, and level of service provision. In particular, there are growing differences between the North, where services are comparable to northern European standards, and the South, where the basic services are often not existing or very scarce. Social services in the South still need consistent development. The only type of services, which is more widespread in the South, is residential care.

#### Changing social needs

A mention has to be made on the developing structure of social needs in Italy. In fact, changing demographics are bringing severe consequences for the social services system.

Italy is one of the fastest ageing countries in the EU, with a large number of elderly people – today more than 11 million, which is 18 % of the population –, and one of the lowest fertility rates in the world. Italy is the first country (in 1996) in which people aged 65 and older have become more numerous than people under 15. 38 % of Italian families have at least one individual over 65 years old living with them, and one fourth of all elderly people lives alone (for a total of 2.6 million).

All this produces growing pressures on community care services, in a country where home care for the elderly involves no more of 5 % of total target population, and in which less than 4 % live in nursing homes, against EU mean percentages which are substantially higher. Many observers consider as inadequate such levels of coverage, a situation which is going to be exacerbated in the short- and especially long-term, given the ageing process of population.

The ageing Italian society has also recently experienced heavy immigration flows,

especially from North Africa and Eastern Europe. In a country where immigration was almost non-existing until the eighties, in the year 2002 immigrants have reached 2.9 % of total population.

#### Money transfers versus in-kind provisions?

Recent trends, both nationally and regionally, testify a reverse trend toward the expansion of direct payments to individuals – in the form of care allowances and cash payments – to the disadvantage of personal social services. Such payments are given to service users (e.g. families with a dependent elderly or disabled person) to enable them to purchase services of their choice. It is a common trend with other European countries.

Also, a basic income programme has been experimented for four years now in over 300 municipalities, following the French experience of the *Revenu minimum d'insertion* (Rmi), which combines a minimum income scheme with personalised social inclusion programme, which are contracted between individuals/families and local authorities. Basic income schemes have been urged by the European Union since 1992 (and the Lisbon Council in March 2000 has launched a coordinated social inclusion process also to this respect; see:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/index_en.htm)).

All these kinds of money transfers have both pros and cons. Implementation of cash payments to families, as it occurs in many local areas, often leaves families alone, thus allowing inappropriate use of the money received. Many of the recipients in fact have a weak knowledge about who best fits their needs in a given area, about the type of choice they have at their disposal. As a matter of fact case-manager functions are being much debated in Italy today in connection of such cash payments, but much less operated and financed.

Even on Rmi, national government has now proposed to pur-



sue it under the form of a regionalised basic salary scheme, thus cutting off the inclusion side of the measure, which has proved to be the salient part to fight poverty. Social policies are thus facing the big challenge to guarantee free-choice decisions with the need to sustain the demandside, which certainly requires strong regulatory function within the social care market.

*Dr. Sergio Pasquinelli  
Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale (IRS),  
Milano, Italy  
e-mail: spasquinelli@hsn.it*

## News from the Observatory

### International session at the German Welfare Congress

On 8 May 2003, the Observatory, in close cooperation with the Council of Europe, will be hosting an international session at this year's German Welfare Congress "Between Care and Autonomy – Participation in the Welfare State". The title of the event is "Possibilities and practices in the participation of citizens and users in the planning, implementation and evaluation of social services".

Already at the conference on "The Role of Social Services for

Sustainable Social Development', organised by the Observatory and the Council of Europe, one of the working groups had examined the possibilities and limitations of citizens' participation in social services. This group elaborated a set of general recommendations laying down the basic conditions and mechanisms to encourage citizens' participation. On the basis of the results of this conference, the Council of Europe decided to take up the topic of the "future of social services in Europe" as a new focal point of its work.

The Council of Europe's "Committee for Social Cohesion" (CDCS) will create a Group of Specialists on citizens' and users' participation in social services and representatives of Council of Europe member states and other organisations. This group will have the task of analysing the current situation and trends in terms of citizens' and users' participation in social services in Europe and of drawing up policy recommendations. The group will meet for the first time at the German Welfare Congress, which will be held in Freiburg between 7 and 9 May 2003.

On 8 May 2003, a selection of experts invited by the Observatory will present their experience regarding good practice and interesting models of citizens' and users' participa-

## Termine

### May

**7-9/Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany:**  
76th German Welfare Congress on 'Between Care and Autonomy – Participation in the Welfare State'  
Information:  
www.deutscher-verein.de  
International session of the conference

**8 May:**  
Possibilities and practices in the participation of citizens and users in the planning, implementation and evaluation of social services"  
Information:  
Ms Alma Amrhein  
E-mail:  
amrhein@deutscher-verein.de

**22-23/Düsseldorf, Germany:**  
'Personnel as a factor of success in social economy', Congress of the German Federation of Non-Statutory Welfare Services [BAGFW], Bank für Sozialwirtschaft and Nomos Verlag  
Information:  
E-mail: hin@awobu.awo.org

**26-29/Copenhagen, Denmark:**  
'The Role of Social Work in Future Europe', conference of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)  
Information:  
E-mail: info@socialwork2003.dk  
www.socialwork2003.dk  
Phone: +44-33-3 04-3 43

### June

**11-13/Oslo, Norway:**  
'Different Faces of Poverty – Fighting Social Exclusion', Europe Regional Symposium of the International Council on Social Welfare  
Information:  
Congress-Conference AS - CONGEX  
Phone: +47-22 56 19 30  
E-mail: ICSW@congreg.no  
www.congreg.no/icsw

### July

**2-4/Venice, Italy:**  
'Health and Social Services: Partners for a Social Europe', 11th conference of the European Social Network  
Information:  
E-mail info@socialeurope.com  
Phone: +44-12 73-54 98 17

### September

**23-25/Leipzig, Germany:**  
Nursing Services Fair  
Information:  
www.pflegemesse.de

**20-24/Helsinki/Finland:**  
'European Societies or European Society?', conference  
Information:  
Euresco  
www.esf.org/euresco

**25-27/Kassel, Germany:**  
5th German Social Work Congress  
Information:  
BSA@uni-kassel.de  
Phone: +49-05 61-8 04 20 59

### November

**13/Berlin, Germany:**  
'Social services in the process of EU expansion in central eastern Europe', workshop of experts organised by the Diakonisches Werk of the Lutheran Church in Germany in cooperation with the Observatory and other associations  
Information:  
Dr. Stephanie Scholz, Diakonisches Werk der EKD, Europareferentin  
E-mail: scholz@diakonie.de

**13-15/Copenhagen, Denmark:**  
'Changing European Societies – The Role for Social Policy"  
ESPAnet Conference  
Information:  
E-mail: jk@sfi.dk  
www.sfi.dk/espamet

tion – both from their national points of view and from a European perspective – to the participants of the German Welfare Congress.

In a follow-up to the conference of October 2001, participants will focus on the question of what concrete forms of citizens' and users' participation in social services exist in Europe today and under what concrete conditions – legislative, financial, moral or cultural – this participation is taking place. In addition to analysing the current situation, they will also try to establish basic prerequisites for improved citizens' and users' participation in future. Theoretical approaches for a discussion of new partici-

pation models can, for instance, be found in the social state theory, in "civil dialogue", participative democracy or the implementation of basic democratic rights.

The session will attempt to determine the common aspects of practical examples and of future participation forms in order to lay the foundation for a "charter of citizens' and users' participation in social services" (working title). The results of the discussion will be published soon.

*Cornelia Markowski*

## Current events

## Publications

## New publications of the Observatory:

## Working papers

Working paper no. 10: "Eine EU-Verfassung mit sozialen Grundrechten – Zur Einschätzung der Rückwirkungen auf die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und auf die Ideenpolitik eines europäischen Sozialmodells" [An EU constitution with fundamental rights in the social area – Appraisal of the effects on Germany and on the concept of a European social model], by Prof. Dr. Frank Schulz-Niewandt, Cologne University/Germany.

## Contents:

On 8 December 2000, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union was proclaimed in Nice. According to the author, this milestone will also affect the development of a European social policy. This working paper shows what direct and indirect effects the Charter will have on social policy in the individual Member States – and here more particularly on the Federal Republic of Germany – and on the concept of a European social model.

## Conference papers/Documents:

- 'The role of social services for sustainable social development', conference organised by the Observatory in cooperation with the Council of Europe, 25-26 October 2001 in Berlin
- 'Indicators and quality of social services in a European context', conference organised in cooperation with Arbeiterwohlfahrt Bundesverband and Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband – Gesamtverband, 16-17 October 2002 (available as pdf file only!)

These publications are available for download as pdf files from the Observatory's website at <http://www.soziale-dienste-in-europa.de>. Hard copies may be ordered by using the order-form (available from the Observatory, address information in imprint section).

## News update

There are a few new faces at the Observatory!

Ms. Cornelia Markowski is in charge of the office of the Co-ordination Group of the Observatory for the Development of Social Services in Europe, located at the German Association for Public and Private Welfare. In future, she will work as a scientific officer supporting specific projects carried out by the German Association.



*Ms. Markowski studied law at Europa-Universität Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder)/Germany and at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow/Poland. She specialised in European institutional law, in the development of European integration and in industrial and social law.*

Contact:  
Am Stockborn 1-3  
60439 Frankfurt/Main  
Phone: +49-(0)69-95807-133  
Fax: +49-(0)69-95807-161  
E-mail: [markowski.observatorium@deutscher-verein.de](mailto:markowski.observatorium@deutscher-verein.de)

Ms. Markowski is supported in her work by Ms. Friederike Heil, who, among other activities, has worked as an administrative assistant at the Office of the Co-ordination Group of the Observatory for the Development of Social Services in Europe since 2001.



*Ms. Heil is an office communications specialist; she has been a member of Working Unit VI, International Department of Social Work, at the German*

*Association for Public and Private Welfare since 1999. She is in charge of organisational tasks in connection with project work. She also works for the Working Unit secretariat and is specialised in elderly care, candidate EU countries and EU eastward expansion, migration and integration.*

Contact:  
Phone: +49-69-9 58 07-1 32  
Fax: +49-69-9 58 07-166  
E-mail:  
[heil@deutscher-verein.de](mailto:heil@deutscher-verein.de)

Ms. Barbara Braun-Schönwandt has been working as an administrative assistant at the Monitoring Unit of the Observatory for the Development of Social Services in Europe at the Institute for Social Work and Social Education since January.



*Her tasks focus on the administration of the Monitoring Unit. She is a media engineer, and until now she had been working in German and European private enterprises.*

Contact:  
Am Stockborn 5-7  
D-60439 Frankfurt a.M.  
Phone: +49-69-9 57 89-1 74  
Fax: +49-69-9 57 89-1 90  
E-mail: [barbara.braun-schoenwandt@iss-ffm.de](mailto:barbara.braun-schoenwandt@iss-ffm.de)

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Observatory for the Development of Social Services in Europe  
Hans-Georg Weigel (Director)  
Am Stockborn 5-7  
D-60439 Frankfurt a. M.

Beatrix Holzer (responsible)  
E-mail: [beatrix.holzer@iss-ffm.de](mailto:beatrix.holzer@iss-ffm.de)  
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## The agencies of the Observatory are:

Institute for Social Work and Social Education  
Am Stockborn 5-7  
D-60439 Frankfurt a. M.  
Phone +49-69-9 57 89-0  
Fax: +49-69-9 57 89-1 90  
E-mail: [info@iss-ffm.de](mailto:info@iss-ffm.de)  
Internet: [www.iss-ffm.de](http://www.iss-ffm.de)

German Association of Public and Private Welfare  
Manager of the coordinating group  
Am Stockborn 1-3  
D-60439 Frankfurt a. M.  
Phone +49-69-9 58 07-1 33  
Fax: +49-69-9 58 07-1 61  
E-mail:  
[kontakt@deutscher-verein.de](mailto:kontakt@deutscher-verein.de)  
Internet: [www.deutscher-verein.de](http://www.deutscher-verein.de)

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