

Long Program Description

Central European Social Policy and Social Work Network

(CESPASWON – www.cespaswon.net)

Network purpose:

Social work and social policy education has always provided important contribution to the societies by producing professionals that are equipped for interventions that affect social welfare, social justice and social rights and that empower citizens to overcome social risks and social problems. Given the large amount of pressing social needs and the limited amount of resources, there are benefits from uniting forces across neighboring countries and creating regional capacities for training and research in social work and social policy.

The main idea behind the Central European Social Policy and Social Work Network (CESPASWON) is to build up on previously existing cooperation practices in the region (i.e. among ex-Yugoslav countries) and extend the links with new partners (i.e. Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary) in order to establish academic alliances among universities that will nurture, promote and advance the regional social work and social policy research and teaching. In that respect, the network heritage lies in joint mutual activities undertaken within previous and current projects and networks, such as: SweBiH (1997-2001), East European regional Association of Schools of Social Work (since 2008), LSEE Research Network on Social Cohesion in SEE (since 2009), Southeast European Social Policy Initiative (since 2013), Eastern European Social Policy Network (since 2016), etc. Notwithstanding the importance and undertakings within these networks, still there is a growing need to respond to the changing demands for skills and competencies in social work and social policy. Hence, the network purpose is to promote and enrich exchange of teaching practices and to broaden studying opportunities by providing collaborative regional dimension and flexible learning for students of social work and social policy, as well as for other related disciplines in the Central and Eastern Europe.

CESPASWON employs a structured and multifaceted approach to research and teaching. Central to this network is the **annual Regional Week**, where teaching staff from all participating units deliver lectures to a group of PhD students (and advanced MA students), fostering an intensive learning environment. This is complemented by **field education**, promoting real-world applicability of theoretical concepts. Additionally, a **regional platform for social work and social policy** is established, compiling all materials from lectures, seminars, and discussions, thereby facilitating knowledge dissemination. Importantly, professors that are members of this Network also engage in **mentoring PhD theses** of the students from participating units in this network, specifically focusing on the regional dimensions of social work and social policy, ensuring that research outputs are informed by local contexts and realities. Research output of the Network is produced in the format of **ofjoint activities**, including joint publications, joint organization of and participation at the conferences, delivering lectures, webinars etc.

Planned activities:

The network ultimate goal is to provide a regional dimension of social work and social policy studies, that is flexible but yet compatible with the formal accredited curriculums. It will enhance the current educational offer by enriching the partner university courses with a regional insights, developments and trends related to social work and social policy. This will additionally equip skills of social workers and social policy advocates or makers to respond not only to national, but to broader regional needs and challenges. An additional imperative of the network will aim to provide alternative educational approach to new generations of students who want a choice as to what, how, where and when to learn.

To achieve these, the main network activities consist of:

A) Regional week: The regional week serves as a gathering point among all partner



universities, where through lectures and seminars a more broader regional social work and social policy dimension will be developed. Each year a partner university hosts a set of lectures, seminars and discussions to which all other partner universities contribute. The regional week provides both a thematic

focus (previously agreed among partners), as well as a regional (comparative) outlook on the issues most pertinent to the current social work and social policy challenges. It is aimed towards MA students in their final semester as well as PhD students. As of 2024, 6 Regional Weeks have been organized in Skopje, Belgrade (online), Ljubljana (hybrid), Klagenfurt, Sarajevo and Banja Luka, with active participation from students and teachers of all network participating units.

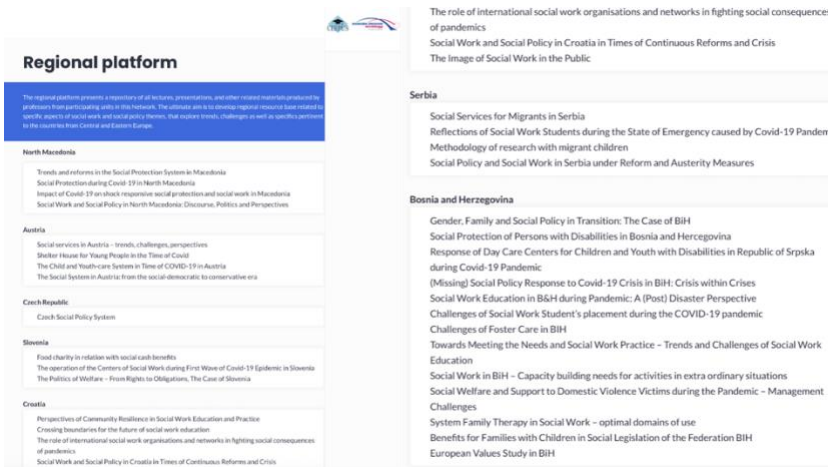
B) Field-based education: The academic and practical components of social work



education are of equal importance. Hence, an integral element of the student mobility is the involvement in fieldwork, in order to experience the functioning of social welfare agencies and social welfare provisions, as well as actual socio- economic challenges and situations in the region. In this respect, students will be familiarized with the specific

vulnerable groups and approaches of social work in different national contexts.

- C) **Regional platform for social work and social policy:** The regional platform presents a repository of all lectures, presentations, and other related materials produced by professors from participating units in this Network. The ultimate aim is to develop regional resource base related to specific aspects of social work and social policy themes, that explore trends, challenges as well as specifics pertinent to the countries from Central and Eastern Europe.



- D) **Student presentations:** During the Regional Week, PhD students present their ongoing research work and get a chance to benefit from peer discussion, as well as to gain input from professors contributing to the CESPANON network. This in particular is valuable for the evaluation of the methodology of the students' PhD research. In addition, there is an ongoing initiative to publish papers presented by the students during the Regional Week.



- E) **Mentoring of PhD thesis:** Students participating at the Regional week will be encouraged to research the regional dimension of social work and social policy in their PhD thesis. In case students express such an interest, professors engaged in the Network will mentor the students and provide them with resources developed within the network (i.e. the regional platform, peer- reviews materials etc.).



F) Joint activities: Research output of the Network is produced in the format of joint activities, including joint publications, joint organization of and participation at the conferences, delivering lectures, webinars, etc.



Use of e-learning and e-teaching is part of the CESPASWON network activities since its establishing, i.e. in the period 2019-2024. For example in 2020 and 2021, the CEPASWON network organized the Second and the Third Regional Week (hosts University of Belgrade and University of Ljubljana respectively) as online and hybrid teaching events (more info [here](#); and [here](#)). Also, in early 2020 the Network organized a webinar “Social Work and Social Policy in times of crisis”, with panelists from PPU from University of Ljubljana, Carinthia University of Applied Sciences and Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje (more info [here](#)).



In addition, in 2021 all participating units within the CESPASWON network have contributed to a joint project proposal within the 2021 Call for Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships in Higher Education. The project goal, entitled DIGITAL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICUM (SWOP) was to create an online platform for digital social work practicum, aimed at improving skill-building experience of social work students prior to agency placement. The platform was planned as combination of interactive and non-interactive elements, providing: a) simulated and supervised practice and b) self-guided practice learning.

The plan of the CEPASWON members for 2025-2026 is to continue the current online and digital practices and organize joint webinars and events, as well as continue sharing best practices related to digital social work teaching and practice/fieldwork.

Latest activity:

The network held the 6th regional week during 21-25 October 2024. The theme of the Regional Week was “How to prepare students for the contemporary challenges of social work” (see Agenda [here](#)). The host of the 6th Regional Week was the Faculty of Political Science, University of Banja Luka, Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Hercegovina. During the 6th Regional the member of the network promoted their joint research output – the



book “Social Policy and Social Work Transformation in Central and Southeast Europe”, published by Springer (see more [here](#)). The CESPASWON members and authors in the book – prof. Maja Gerovska Mitev, prof. Andrea Rakanovic Radonjic, prof. Hubert Höllmüller, prof. Natalija Perisic, prof. Borjana Mikovic and dr. Drasko Gajic, promoted their joint book in front of the students, staff and professionals from the social work centers. There

was also a media coverage of the book promotion broadcasted at the main national television in the Republic of Srpska. Media coverage can be found [here](#).



Thematic topics of the regional week:

Each regional week focuses on a previously agreed thematic topic, discussed from a different angle that will also reflect the research profile of the engaged professors. The topics cover current needs and challenges related to social work and social policy. Some of the thematic topics include: poverty and social inclusion, migration and social services, deinstitutionalization and social services, activation of welfare beneficiaries, human rights and social work, decentralization of social services, preparing social work students for contemporary challenges, etc.

In addition, when possible (depending on the date of the regional week) the thematic topics also reflect and correlate with specific international days with relevance for social work and social policy, such as: International Day for Eradication of Poverty, Universal Children's Day, International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD), Human Rights Day, etc.

Student presentations cover recent research of social policy and social work in the region. MA and PhD students get a chance to benefit from peer discussion, as well as to gain input from professors contributing to the CESPAWON network. This in particular is valuable for the evaluation of the methodology of the students' PhD research. In addition, there is an ongoing initiative to publish papers presented by the students during the Regional Week.

Joint activity in 2025:

The Seventh Regional Week in Social Policy and Social Work will be held in October 2025, at the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia. The regional week serves as a gathering point among all partner universities, where through intensive one week of lectures and seminars a broader regional social work and social policy dimension is developed. Each year a partner university hosts a set of lectures, seminars and discussions to which all other partner universities contribute. The regional week provides both a thematic focus (previously agreed among partners), as well as a regional (comparative) outlook on the issues most pertinent to the current social work and social policy challenges. It is aimed towards PhD students as well as MA students in their final semester.

- The host of the 7th Regional Week (Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia) will propose a set of topics to be discussed among all partner units, as leading topics at the 7th Regional Week. The host will send a draft Agenda for the 7th Regional Week to all PPU's. The host will propose social welfare organizations to be visited as part of the fieldwork during the Regional Week. The host will prepare all promotional materials including the certificates for participating students. The host will engage in media promotion of the 7th Regional Week among the university and news outlets in the country. The host will secure timeslots for teachers to hold lectures during the Regional Week, in front of students and staff from the host university and beyond. .
- The PPU coordinator of this Network (Ss. Cyril und Methodius University in Skopje,

Faculty of Philosophy) will support the host in topics selection for the 7th Regional Week, will support the host in preparing the agenda as well as support the timely communication of all materials. The PPU coordinator will engage in timely publishing of all materials prepared for the 7th Regional Week on the CESPASWON website (www.cespaswon.net). The coordinating PPU will prepare a summary/notes of the joint network meeting that will be held during the 7th Regional Week, and disseminate it to all network partners.

- All participating units will engage in active promotion of the 7th Regional Week, as well as incentivize PhD students and colleagues to apply to the 7th Regional Week. The goal is to have at least one PhD/or MA student as well as one teacher from each PPU to attend the 7th Regional Week. Each participating unit will disseminate calls for the 7th Regional Week, as well as the call for CEEPUS mobility among students and staff. Each participating unit will nominate at least one priority topic to be discussed at the regional week. Each participating unit will send materials (lectures, PhD presentations, etc.) that will be presented at the 7th Regional Week to be published at the Network website. Each PPU will nominate at least one teacher to attend the network meeting during the 7th Regional Week.

Planned mobility actions:

Mobility of teachers:

- Participating in the regional week by giving lecture to a selected group of students;
- Contributing to field education;
- Contributing to the regional platform for social work and social policy, comprised of all materials related to the held lectures, seminars and discussions during the regional week;
- Mentoring of PhD thesis on topics related to a regional dimension of social work and social policy.

Mobility of students:

- Participating in the regional week (through CEEPUS short-term excursion);
- Participation in the field education/field practice (through CEEPUS short-term excursion)
- Presentation of the PhD research thesis during the Regional Week
- Semester mobility (CEEPUS mobility student)



Special contribution of each institution:

- The coordinator prepares and/or coordinates activities of the regional week each year;
- The coordinator together with the participating unit that hosts the regional week proposes a set of topics to be discussed among all partner units, as leading topics at the regional.
- The coordinator maintains the regional web platform coordinates immanent activities among the partners;
- The coordinator together with the participating unit that hosts the regional week organizes and contributes to the field education;
- The coordinator and all participating units engage in active promotion of the possibility for mentoring of PhD students on topics related to the regional issues in social policy and social work.
- Each participating unit contributes to the regional week;
- Each participating unit disseminate calls for the regional week and the call for mobility among students and professors;
- Each participating unit nominate at least one priority topic to be discussed at the regional week;
- Each participating unit contributes to planning and coordination of the field education/practice;
- Each participating unit contributes to the regional platform;

Selection Criteria:

Student mobility and short-term student mobility:

- Students enrolled on postgraduate programs (MA or PhD)
- Good knowledge of English language
- Motivation
- Competencies in using open source data will be an advantage.

Teacher mobility

- Academic merit and competence
- Teaching staff within respective social work/social policy department within a University from the Central and Eastern Europe
- Good knowledge of English language

Joining the CESPASWON network (universities)

- Each partner university has to have BA, MA and/or PhD program in Social Work and Social Policy.
- Maximum two universities from one country can be members of CESPASWON network. Exception: due to its specific federal composition, BIH can be represented with three universities.

Coordination:

During the year there is a continual communication and coordination through a number of channels, including: in-person meetings, online meetings and regular email communication. Each year, in September, the network members have an intensive group email communication, to agree upon the agenda of the Regional Week. In October or November, during the Regional Week, each year there is an in-person network meeting. The network meeting is used to agree upon: joint activities, new expressions of interest by universities for joining our network, next host of the regional week and other jointly agreed items. During November to December the network members have online meetings and group email communication to agree upon the network report and the renewal application. Throughout the whole year the network members engage in joint activities (in person or online) related to joint publications, conferences and events (i.e. book promotion, research projects, etc.). During May network members intensively engage in in-person contacts with PhD students to promote the Regional Week and to attract them and other colleagues to apply for CEEPUS mobility.

The performance of the network is monitored through:

- Regular assessment of teachers and students involved;
- Number of students and teachers involved in the mobility;
- Linkages with other networks and number of joint activities with other networks.

Recognition:

Apart from obtaining the Letter of Endorsement, all partners involved in this Network ensure that the network activities will be streamlined and integrated with the academic calendars of the respective faculties. The regional week and field education is integrated in the regular academic activities among all partner universities.

Special Merit:

There is an intention to combine this CEEPUS network with other programs/activities. For example, this Network will try to combine efforts and activities with other existing CEEPUS networks in the field, such as: Social Economy and Social Work Network (SOWOSEC). Synergies with other networks are also not excluded.

The network will also seek other possible partnerships with local and regional initiatives, such as: UNCIEF, UNDP, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and other organizations, who have an interest in advancing social work and social policy in the region.

Further information:

The Network presents a synergy of institutions and units that were previously cooperating under different projects and networks. These were mainly being coordinated by professors who have retired and are no longer active in the regional cooperation. Hence, the aim of the Network is to complement previously established cooperation activities undertaken by former generation of professors in the Central Europe, and to create linkages between new generation of professors in social work and social policy.

Network activities:

Type of instruction planned:

- a) Lectures: Each year a regional week is held at one of the partner units. Depending on the selected topic, the regional week will concentrate on specific challenging issues related to social work and social policy in the regions.
- b) Assistance with student thesis: Students choosing to concentrate on a regional dimension in their thesis will be supported by professors as mentors or co-mentors of their thesis;
- c) Other:
 - Student presentations: during the regional week students present and discuss their ongoing research and benefit from peer learning.
 - Field education/practice: during the regional week, students and professors visit a number of organizations in the social work and social policy field, to gain a direct experience with the specifics and ongoing initiatives in the social protection system of the country hosting the Regional week.
 - Regional platform: provides open resources for researching regional aspects of social work and social policy.

Language of instruction:

English

Joint Program Type: Other

This Network does not aim towards establishing a joint degree or joint programme curriculum. Taking into consideration institutional specifics, administrative differences and long bureaucratic procedures in most of the countries in the region related to accreditation of joint academic programs, the Network will focus on other more flexible forms of joint cooperation that were already described in more detail above, and involving:

- a) Regional week; b) Field-based education; c) Regional platform for social work and social policy d) Student presentations; e) Mentoring of PhD thesis.
- Possibility for creating jointly accredited PhD programme in social work and social policy will be discussed during the annual meetings of the Network.

Objectives:

- Broaden the capacities and enrich the skills of social work and social policy students to be able to respond to broader regional challenges, such as migration, economic and social cohesion, demographic aging etc.;
- Providing a regional approach of analysis in the social work curriculums and contributing towards macro analysis of important social risks and problems;
- Maintaining an online platform for enhancing capacities of social work students and professional to access recent data and research, as well as to share new research/thesis in social policy and social work.
- Indirectly strengthening countries capacities for cross-border regional social policies and social work responses;
- Advocating and indirectly contributing towards establishing regional mechanisms that will give citizens a voice to challenge social rights abuse.

Young researchers and women in science

Social Work is traditionally a female dominated occupation. In this respect the prevailing majority of students at all cycles of study including the PhD study at all PPU's in this Network are female. This can also be reflected in the profile of students participating in the network mobilities. Similarly, the current composition of the CESPASWON network consists of 80% female teachers. Such profile of both the students and teachers involved in this network is favorable for promoting more young researchers and women in science in the following academic year. However, it is crucial to emphasize that our network encourages and integrates diverse viewpoints in both teaching and research agendas. This commitment to inclusivity enriches the academic discourse and research outputs, positioning our network as a regional leader in the field of social work and social policy education and research.

Our Network actively engages and will continue to do so in the next academic year in promotion of the CESPASWON activities among the PhD students and young teaching assistants among all PPU's. So far, each year we have been successful in attracting PhD students and young colleagues to attend the annual Regional Week, and to present their PhD research. By offering a dedicated PhD day during the Regional Week, we provide them with a platform for constructive engagement and discussion with peer PhD students and teachers from this Network. Young PhD students are also supported in publishing their work in the international scientific journals which are published by the PPU's.

Biggest achievements:

- Joint publication “Social Policy and Social Work Transformation in Central and Southeast Europe”, published by Springer in 2024.
- Organization of six consecutive regional weeks from 2019 to 2024 (<https://cespaswon.net/regional-week>).
- 167% fulfilment of CEEPUS mobilities in 2023/24
- Organization of online webinar during the pandemic - May 2020 (<https://cespaswon.net/other/>)
- Maintaining and enriching the regional platform with resources from the regional week and other events (<https://cespaswon.net/regional-platform>)



Preface

This edited volume is a result of a joint effort of the members of the Central European Social Policy and Social Work Network – CESPASWON. The network was formed in 2019 under the Central European Exchange Program for University Studies (CEEPUS). It comprises of eight universities from seven countries from Central and Southeast Europe, including: Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North Macedonia (coordinator); Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, Austria; Charles University, Czech Republic; University of Ljubljana, Slovenia; University of Belgrade, Serbia; University of Zagreb, Croatia; University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the University of Banja Luka, Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hence, the focus of the chapters is on the countries represented in the CESPASWON network.

It must be acknowledged that the group of countries encompassed in this volume and analysed under the geographical scope of Central and Southeast Europe is by no means uniform or easily comparable. One aspect of categorisation of countries within this block can be associated with their European Union (EU) membership status. In this respect, the book covers four EU member states (Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Croatia) and three EU candidate countries (North Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina). Among these countries, Austria is well recognised in the welfare state literature as a conservative and familialistic welfare regime. Among the 'newer' EU members states, in the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Croatia, the transition from the socialist welfare model has translated into improved employment and poverty rates. Finally, the EU candidate countries, North Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, are still fragile welfare states and inconsistent in their welfare trajectory. By critically contextualising existing welfare state categorisations, the book aims to examine the link between the welfare state reforms and implications for social work in Central and Southeast Europe.

Biggest challenge:

Obtaining enough tendered months to secure the participation of at least one professor and one students from each participating unit during the annual Regional Week.

Background information:

The coordinator of this network (Faculty of Philosophy, Skopje) is already enraged as a partner in nine other CEEPUS networks, through which it has benefited in terms of teacher and student mobility and exchange of practice. Other University partners in this Network are also involved in different CEEPUS networks. Hence, all involved parties have significant positive experiences with CEEPUS so far, and want to be more involved in the CEEPUS, as direct contributors and beneficiaries of this program.

Participating Units:

Coordinator:

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of Social Work and Social Policy, Skopje, Macedonia

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje (UKIM) is a public higher educational institution and the first state university in the Republic of Macedonia. UKIM is a comprehensive and largest university in Macedonia, comprised of 23 faculties, 5 research institutes and 4 public scientific institutions. The University enrolls about 37 000 active students, 31 270 of whom are in the first cycle.

The Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje is the oldest higher education institution in the Republic of Macedonia. The first standardized studies at the Faculty of Philosophy were initiated in 1920, which marked the beginning of the university education in Macedonia. Nowadays, the scientific community of the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje is represented by 111 professors and associate personnel, and approximately 4000 students enrolled in the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral studies. The Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje consists of 12 departments, from humanities and social science disciplines, including: Philosophy, Pedagogy, History, History of Art and Archaeology, Classical studies, Psychology, Sociology, Social Work and Social Policy, Security Defence and Peace, Special Education and Rehabilitation, Gender Studies, and Family Studies.

In relation to its international cooperation, Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje, as part of the UKIM, has established cooperation and joint educational programs, double and joint degrees, including research projects in the European programs and bilateral partners, exchange, mobility, organization of scientific and other academic events. Faculty of Philosophy, as part of the UKIM is a member of the Academic networks: UNICA, ERA, CEEPUS, EUA, IAU, UNI-ADRION and other and has taken part in the Erasmus Mundus Networks: Basileus, JoinEUSEE, Eraweb and Euroweb. In the academic 2018/19, Faculty of Philosophy is coordinator of one Erasmus project (2018- 1-MK01-KA203-047104), partner in three international scientific projects (HORISON 2020 project RETOPEA, Visegrad Fund project, European Value System), three other bilateral projects, and is contributing to three CEEPUS networks (CIII-SI-0113-12- 1819: ARHEOPED, CIII-SI-0906-04-1819: Pedagogy and Andragogy in Central Europe (PACE) and CIII-HR-1107-03-1819: Philosophy and Interdisciplinarity).

The Institute of Social Work and Social Policy become part of the Faculty of Philosophy in 1984. Previously, as of 1960, it functioned as a College for Social Work. Nowadays, the Institute offers BA, MA and PhD studies in social work and social policy. It enrolls around 60 students per year on undergraduate studies and currently has 400 active students on all levels of study. The Institute offers one BA program in Social Work, two MA programs (MA in Social Policy, MA in Social Management) and one PhD program in Social Work and Social Policy. It also

offers one specialization in Social Work in the Health sector. The Institute's staff is highly engaged in international activities and networks. The Institute and its teaching personal are currently members of: East European Sub-Regional Association of Schools of Social Work, European Association of Schools of Social Work, European Social Policy Network, LSEE Research Network on Social Cohesion in SEE, Southeast European Social Policy Initiative, Eastern European Social Policy Network. The Institute staff also coordinate the work of four candidate and pre-candidate countries (Bosnia, Monte Negro, Albania and Kosovo) within the European Social Policy Network.

Partners:

CUAS - Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, Austria

Since its foundation in 1995, CUAS has made history. Back then we started with 2 programs and about 70 students; currently we offer 30 study programs that educate almost 2000 full- and part-time students. About the same number of CUAS graduates is impressive proof of the necessity and importance of this academic institution.

Through ever growing acceptance of the programs as well as the high demand for our graduates in industry, the programs will be further developed in the coming years.

CUAS has developed into a unique educational institution in Carinthia. Through constant further development of the degree programs at CUAS and intensive cooperation with the worlds of business and science, those studying at the university can be certain of a progressive education with its finger on the pulse of time. CUAS lives the vision of direct practical experience. Full- and part-time lecturers, as well as guest speakers from industry and business ensure an interdisciplinary, internationally oriented education. Degree programs are offered in the fields of civil engineering and architecture, engineering, as well as management, healthcare and social issues.

The quality of our education is emphasized through the development of innovative teaching and learning methods, such as, blended learning, which offers students and professors greater flexibility in the creation of a suitable learning environment. Furthermore, the CUAS library offers educational support through state of the art facilities. On all sites CUAS libraries administrate 33,000 media.

Diversity Charta: In February 2015 Carinthia University of Applied Sciences together with companies from the region of Carinthia has signed the Diversity Charta.

The Diversity Charter is a public, voluntary commitment by Austrian companies, institutions and organisations that enables them to declare their appreciation of the diversity of people, regardless of their gender, age, background and skin colour, sexual orientation, religion and world view, or of their physical and mental capacities.

School of Health Sciences & Social Work

The School of Health Sciences and Social Work includes 9 Bachelor- and 2 Master Degree Programs. Common to all programs is a combination of basic scientific teaching und high practical knowledge. With this practical orientation our graduates have good career opportunities.

Kindly note that all programs are mostly taught in German. Thus only those with a solid knowledge of the German language will be considered for the application process.

Bachelor:

Biomedical Science; Disability & Diversity Studies – DDS; Healthcare and Nursing; Healthcare Management; Midwifery; Occupational Therapy; Physiotherapy; Radiologic Technology; Social Work; Speech and Language Therapy

Master:

Health Management; Social Work.

Charles University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Social Work, Prague, Czech Republic

Department of social work is an integral part of the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague. This faculty is one of the original faculties which were founded in 1348 by the Roman emperor Charles IV. It is one of the biggest and most important humanistic institutions, which has more than 8 thousand students and more than 7 hundred employees. There are three key study branches at the faculty – philological, historical and humanities.

The department was established after the Velvet Revolution in the very early 90s of the 20th century. Nowadays there are two undergraduate degree programmes realised as well as the PhD study programme. It is the bachelor, Master and PhD level of social work. In the BC and MA study group there are around 25-30 students in each group. In the PhD level there are only individual students each year (2-5). BC programme is structured for 3 years and master programme for 2 years. The PhD lasts four years.

Undergraduate study plans are made up by compulsory subjects, compulsorily selected subjects and freely selected subjects as well as compulsory trainings in different social organizations each semester (50/60 hours).

Research at the department is aimed at this topic:

- professionalisation of social work, models of education in social work and qualification prerequisites for the performance of social work;
- evaluation of psychosocial interventions, multidisciplinary teams in care of persons with long-term mental illness, care for the elderly - support for informal carers;
- role of probation officer, social work in criminal justice in the field of assistance to victims of crime;
- state intervention in the interest of the child during divorce, effective forms

- of assistance to the child during divorce proceedings, programs for risk youth;
- the potential of a social and solidarity economy in the development of local communities

The department also issues biannually a scientific journal Social Work Forum which focuses on the theory and practice of social work, social policy and related disciplines. The core part of the journal is formed by peer-reviewed academic papers. Further section presents examples of good practice or work methods that could serve as an inspiration or model. It also contains a section dedicated to abbreviated versions of final student theses. Full articles are available on the internet to all readers immediately upon publication. The journal is indexed in SocIndex EBSCO and no fees are charged for the manuscript submission, processing, and publication.

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Work, Ljubljana, Slovenia

The core tasks of the Faculty are education and research. Through undergraduate, graduate and permanent education, the Faculty offers knowledge and training for professional tasks and performances in social care and other fields where the knowledge and skills of social workers are needed. Through research it contributes to the science of social work and advances the profession. It conducts basic and applied research and developmental projects, publishes research findings, implements them in practice and proposes pertinent policies.

The School for Social Workers was established in 1955 as a two-year diploma programme. In the 1970s it was integrated into the University of Ljubljana. It developed a four-year university-level programme and launched postgraduate specialisation programmes in 1992. From 1995 it was a four-year degree programme and in 2003 it became a faculty and introduced graduate study programme (master and doctoral). Ever since its establishment the faculty has been a pillar of the development of Slovenian social work and the field of social care in general.

Teaching is based on scientific research. The Faculty has produced basic forms and methods of contemporary social work such as counselling, group work, community work, and work with families. Its achievements in voluntary work, action research, and qualitative research in general have played an important part in Slovenian social sciences. It has developed work with older people, women, young people, people in mental distress, disabled people, and ethnic minorities and contributed to innovations such as social first aid, home help, group homes, safe houses, and others.

A significant part of study at the Faculty involves practical work and training in social work methods and skills. Students are involved in practical, research and developmental projects throughout their studies.

Through its network of contacts across the world the Faculty has coordinated or participated in many international projects. It is a member of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW), the initiator of the Eastern European Subregional Association of Schools of Social Work (EEsrSSW) and European social work research association (ESWRA).

The Faculty of Social Work has 500 students in all 3 cycles of the study programme, 28 permanent pedagogical staff and 20 part time teachers and assistants. It offers a regular programme for Bachelor degree in Social work and master degree in social work. It also offers a doctoral degree in social work, which is fee based programme. It is possible for students to get a grant from the Ministry of education and science.

Faculty of Social Work also offers 4 MA programmes for part-time students, each year 2 of them are offered for enrolment.

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law, Department of Social Work, Zagreb, Croatia

The University of Zagreb is the oldest Croatian university and also the oldest university in South East Europe. The university was officially founded 23 September 1669 by Emperor and King Leopold I Habsburg. As a comprehensive public Central European university, University of Zagreb offers education and research and in all scientific fields (arts, biomedicine, biotechnology, engineering, humanities, natural sciences and social sciences) and a broad spectrum of courses at all study levels, from undergraduate to postgraduate. With 29 Faculties, 3 Art Academies and the University Centre for Croatian Studies it is the flagship educational institution in the country, a place where more than 7900 teachers and 72480 students develop knowledge and acquire skills.

The Faculty of Law is one of the oldest institutions of the University of Zagreb. The Faculty traditions are related to the beginning of higher education in Croatia. When in 1773 Pope Clement XIV had dissolved the Jesuit order, Queen Maria Theresa undertook comprehensive reforms in the system of education and by her decree of 1776, the Royal Academy of Sciences (Regia scientiarum) was established as the highest educational institution. The Academy consisted of three faculties: the Faculty of Philosophy, the Faculty of Theology and the Faculty of Law (Facultas iuridica). The earlier Political-Cameral Studies (established in 1769 in Varaždin) for the education of the Croatian administrative personnel were merged with the Faculty of Law. The first professors of legal sciences were elected upon applications to the announcements, and the Queen officially confirmed their appointment. At the first formal session held on October 11, 1776 it was determined that the academic year would start on November 4, 1776 and therefore

this date is regarded as the day of establishing the Faculty of Law. The final extensive curriculum (Ratio educationis) was issued a year later, i.e. in 1777. After the establishment of the Republic of Croatia, the Faculty of Law in Zagreb, the oldest of the four faculties of law in the country, has strengthened international scientific co-operation. Its members participate in the work of foreign scientific institutions and cultivate co-operation with scientists in other countries. In its third century of existence, the Faculty of Law in Zagreb has proved to be the source of Croatian nation-building spirit and free thought, the guardian of the Croatian culture and the representative of the Croatian legal school as one of the centres of the Mid-European legal tradition, and as such it is distinguished in the country and abroad. Its members, being aware of the role which the Faculty had in the past, in the present social environment act in the spirit of the rich tradition of the school of law they belong to. They greatly contribute to the creation of the Croatian legal system, establishment of the rule of law and education of new generations of lawyers on the best European legal traditions.

The Social Work Study Centre is an organizational unit with the legal status of the Faculty branch. The Centre conducts scientific research and highly professional work in the sphere of social work and participates in the conduct of the social work study programme. The education of social workers in Croatia started in the year 1952 and continued until today. The study is organized as four year bachelor study and one year graduate study of social work and graduate study of social policy. Five postgraduate studies are also provided as well as one joint doctoral study of social work and social policy. Total of 35 employed teachers are included in the education along with numerous of field instructors and collaborative teachers from other high school institutions. Annually 160 students enroll to the bachelor study and 130 students to the graduate studies of social work and social policy.

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Political Science, Department of Social Policy and Social Work, Belgrade, Serbia

The University of Belgrade (BU) is the oldest, the biggest and the best ranked university in Serbia. It consists of 31 faculties, 11 institutes and 13 centres. It is a state-owned university.

The Faculty of Political Science (FPN) is one of the faculties from the group of the University of Belgrade. It started its work in 1968, as the first teaching and scientific institution of that kind in Yugoslavia. Today it consists of four departments – for Political Science, International Politics, Journalism and Communication Studies, Social Policy and Social Work.

The Department of Social Policy and Social Work is the oldest institution educating social workers at the level of BA, MA and PhD studies. Currently MA studies are organized within two modules Social policy and Social work. PhD studies are integrated studies of Social Policy and Social Work. Studies are organized in line with the Bologna Declaration standards, including

the European Credit Transfer System.

The Faculty organizes undergraduate and graduate – specialized, MA and PhD studies, development and applied research, specialized innovative courses, trainings and workshops. The number of undergraduate students accounts for 500 per year. The number of master and PhD students accounts for app. 300 and 100 per year respectively.

International cooperation, on a very diverse basis, is a high priority. The Faculty has been closely cooperating with many foreign academic institutions, such are the School for East-European and Slavonic Studies of the University of London; French National Foundation of Political Sciences (Sciences Po), Faculty for Health Education and Social Work of the University in Trondheim, Norway, University of Atlanta in the field of journalism; EHHES, Paris; London School of Economics, University of Rome “La Sapienza”, etc. FPN participated in Tempus programmes “Example of Excellence for Joint (Degree) Programme Development in South Eastern Europe” coordinated by the University of Graz, “Developing Human Rights in the Heart of Higher Education” coordinated by the University of Roehampton, UK, and was the coordinator of Tempus programme „Development of Policy-Oriented Training Programmes in the Context of the European Integration”. It was a consortium partner in graduate studies “Joint European Master in Comparative Local Development for the Balkans and other areas in transformation” - University of Trento / Erasmus Mundus Program. In addition, FPN was a consortium partner in the EU New Neighbourhood Program project "Social Inclusion of Immigrants", financed jointly by EU INTERREG IIIA and CARDS Programmes and in a FP7 project MeCoDEM coordinated by the University of Leeds.

At the moment it is a partner in two ongoing EU-funded projects: Erasmus K2 with the University of Stirling, UK, and Jean Monnet Network with the SEERC, Thessaloniki, Greece, and consortium partner in two joint MA programmes carried out entirely in English – Interdisciplinary Joint MA Programme in South-Eastern European Studies and Regional Peace Studies.

The Faculty closely cooperates with the OSCE Mission to Serbia, foreign foundations and embassies.

Within the cooperation with OSI/HESP and the Fulbright Foundation, the Faculty hosted international professors and provided international experience to its own staff. Besides, a large number of distinguished domestic and foreign professors visited the Faculty and gave lectures on various topics.

The Faculty also has publishing activities, appropriate library and documentary funds. Within the Faculty there are several research centers for specific research fields.

University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Political Science, Department of Social Work, Sarajevo, BIH

The Faculty of Political Sciences, one of 24 bodies of the University of Sarajevo, was founded in 1961. Its half-century in academic education makes it one of

Bosnia and Herzegovina's oldest public academic research institutions in the field of the social sciences. The Faculty has five teaching departments: Political Studies, Sociology, Communication and Journalism Studies, Security and Peace Studies, and Social Work. The Faculty has four organizational units devoted to teaching, academic research, publications, and professional and administrative affairs. More than one hundred academics (teaching and ancillary staff) are involved in the Faculty's teaching programme, which now includes more than 130 undergraduate and graduate-level syllabi. The bachelor's degree courses last three years (180 ECTS) and the master's degree courses last two years (120 ECTS). The Faculty also offers third degree-level doctoral studies, lasting three years (180 ECTS).

In line with the reforms being introduced at the University of Sarajevo guided by the spirit and ideas of the Bologna Declaration and other key documents relating to the European academic world, the Faculty of Political Sciences carried out a radical, innovative reconstruction of the curricula, designed to respond to the challenges of our time. The Faculty has a diverse student body of about 3,500 students of all types and years of study, including full-time students, students funding their own studies, and external students, in addition to almost 1,000 students completing their studies according to pre-Bologna curricula.

The Faculty of Political Sciences offers students a solid basis for the professional abilities they will require for their careers in various government bodies and institutions, corporations, the media, cultural and education institutions, and further studies at the Faculty or at similar faculties. To date, more than 40,000 students have enrolled at the Faculty of Political Sciences, of whom about 10,500 have already gained a degree in one of our study programmes. More than 300 students have defended their master's thesis and almost 200 have defended their doctoral dissertation.

In the light of the experience and positive achievements of similar faculties in the region and beyond, the Faculty of Political Science's teaching staff, researchers and associates are determined to provide current and future generations of young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a range of acknowledged, high-quality study programmes comparable with the majority of advanced studies in Europe. In this transitional period currently taking place in in Bosnia and Herzegovina, whereby higher education is focused on an interdisciplinary academic approach, the Faculty of Political Sciences will continue to develop the practical, applicative aspects of knowledge in the wider context of the social sciences and the humanities.

Since 1985, the department of social work is an integral part of the Faculty offering bachelor, masters and doctoral study programs in social work. Nonetheless, social work education dates back in 1958 as the College of Social Work has been established offering two years study program. Today, study program is organized as three years bachelor study, two years masters program (three study programs) and an interfaculty doctoral program. The department staff consists of nine teachers and 2 teaching assistants, in addition to collaborative teachers from other

university institutions. In the academic year 2018/2019 in total 294 students have been enrolled at the bachelor study level and 138 at the masters study level.

University of Banja Luka, Faculty of Political Science, Department of Social Work, Banja Luka, BIH

University Education in Social Work in Republika Srpska started at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University in Banja Luka in 2000 and by the establishment of the Faculty of Political Sciences in 2009, the Social Work Study Program became one of the four study programs at this Faculty.

Over the past 17 years, 1191 students enrolled in this study program, and during the same period 496 students were graduated.

During a four-year study, students acquire various theoretical and methodological knowledge from a wide range of sociological, legal, political, psychological and pedagogical disciplines. A key place and special attention is given to disciplines from the scientific field of social work, which are classified into three major areas of study: Social Policy, Theories and Methodologies of Social Work and Social Work Areas.

The social work curriculum at the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Banja Luka was licensed in 2010. The first change of the mentioned curriculum and study program according to the Bologna Declaration (for 4 academic years - 240 ECTS points) was completed in 2013, within 20 ECTS points and included the introduction of subjects whose contents followed the changes in the legislation on social protection and harmonization names objects with subject contents. Other changes were made in 2016 within 60 ECTS points, with prior consultation with interested parties (competent ministries, social welfare institutions, social workers' associations and students).

At the end of four years of studies, a graduate social worker is eligible, whose academic education can continue on the second cycle of study and the third cycle of study.

The second cycle of the study program Social Work was licensed in 2011 as a unique social work program and in 2018 a new four-directional program was licensed (Contemporary Social Work with Children and Family, Social Sector Management, Social Policy and Mediation in Social Work) .

Doctoral study on social work is part of a unique PhD program in the field of Social Work and Social Policy, licensed in 2016.

The Social Work Program program has also enriched its programs with a special program for the socialization of social workers with higher qualifications since 2015.

The study program involves 37 teachers and associates working in the University of Banja Luka. Choice in scientific field Social work has 9 teachers and associates (5 associate professors, 1 docent, 3 senior assistants).

University ELTE, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Social Studies, Budapest, Hungary

website: <https://tatk.elte.hu/en/units/institute-of-social-studies>

The special programme in Social Work and Social Policy established within Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in 1982. This special programme joined to other departments (such as Theoretical Sociology, History of Social Theory, Social Research Methodology, and Social Psychology) and transformed into the Institute of Sociology and Social Policy. The Institute was a pioneer at the time, as it was here that Hungary's first ever courses in Social Policy and Social Work were organised. In 2003, the Institute was joined by other departments of ELTE University to form the new Faculty of Social Sciences.

Nowadays the Faculty of Social Science covers the wide range academic fields such as sociology, economics, social policy, international relations, political sciences, social psychology, cultural anthropology, health policy, statistics, community development and minority studies. The Faculty considers the academic and professional activity equally important. We encourage the critical thinking and support tolerance and openness. We respect the human rights and multi-culturalism.

The Institute of Social Studies consists 1 BA programme on social work and 4 MA programmes on: social policy, social work, civil and community development studies, and social pedagogy. The ELTE university and the Institute of Social Studies have a leading role in the higher education and research in the social field in Hungary. (The Faculty has a doctoral programme on social policy and social work as well. There is a strong relation between the PhD programme and the Institute of Social Studies.) The Institute of Social Studies has 2 departments (Department of Social Work, Department of Social Policy) and has app. 110 BA students and app. 150 MA students, app. 20 full-time teacher/researcher and app. 25 part-time ones. We combine the theory and practice. It is important to involve the students into field work, research and developments.

The Institute is deeply involved in research and development of the social sector in Hungary. The teachers and researchers are recognised both at national and international levels. The main research interests are: theory, history and contemporary problems of social policy, child- protection, poverty and social exclusion, employment policy, theory and practice of social work, disability policy, minorities, other social problems of the different social groups.

Faculty of Law, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia

The Faculty of Law was officially established on 22 December 1975 and is one of the oldest higher education institutions within the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek. Study Programme of Social Work of the Faculty of Law in Osijek was established in the academic year 2017/2018. It offers BA and MA in Social Work. The Study of Social Work cooperates in conducting classes with the University of Ljubljana, University of Belgrade, University of Mostar as well as the Indiana University in the USA.

More info:

<https://www.pravos.unios.hr/university-undergraduate-study-programme-in-social-work/>

University of Mostar, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Study of Social Work, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The University of Mostar is the second largest university in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the headquarters in Mostar, founded in 1977. The university has ten faculties and one Academy of Arts with 50 different studies, 46 specializations, 70 study groups, 1,000 teachers and 12,000 students (<https://www.sum.ba/>). Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences has more than 2,000 enrolled students, 108 full-time employees and more than 150 external associates. In the undergraduate and graduate teaching cycle, 17 study groups offer 45 study programs. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is involved in several mobility programs for both students and teaching staff. Since the signing of the contract at the state level in 2008, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences has joined the CEEPUS III program, and since 2009 it has been participating in the Erasmus Mundus JoinEU-SEE project. For several years, there has been successful cooperation with DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), KAAD (Catholic Academic Exchange Service) and OeAD (Austrian Academic Exchange Service), and since the academic year 2016/2017 mobility through the Erasmus+ program began (<https://ff.sum.ba/hr/stranice/o-fakultetu>).

The study of Social Work combines theoretical knowledge, practical skills and personal development to prepare students to solve complex social problems and provide support to vulnerable individuals, groups, families and communities. The study of Social Work is realized through three cycles of higher education: undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate. The undergraduate cycle includes the basic theoretical principles and concepts of social work, providing students with the basic knowledge and practical skills necessary to understand and participate in work with beneficiaries and communities in need. The graduate cycle builds on the undergraduate level with a deeper theoretical and research approach to specific areas of social work. The interdisciplinary approach in the

degree program encourages critical thinking and research work, enabling students to become experts in their chosen areas of interest. The third cycle of education provides a platform for the development of high-quality researchers, experts and academics who contribute innovations to the theory and practice of social work and on a wider academic and societal level. At the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Studies within the module Society and Culture in academic year 2023./2024., the Social Work course was launched with the support of professors from the University of Ljubljana. (<https://ff.sum.ba/hr/stranice/o-studiju-12>).

Babeş-Bolyai University (UBB), Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, Romania

Babeş-Bolyai University (UBB), located in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, is the oldest, largest, and one of the most prestigious universities in the country. With roots tracing back to the 16th century, UBB embodies the multicultural and multilingual heritage of Transylvania, fostering academic excellence in a European context. The university offers a diverse range of educational programs and is a model of multiculturalism, recognized both nationally and continentally.

The Faculty of Sociology and Social Work at Babes-Bolyai University is a dynamic institution with a mission to train professionals who can contribute to solving complex social issues. The faculty comprises approximately 1,200 students and over 50 dedicated professors and researchers, ensuring an engaging and supportive academic environment.

Within the Social Work study-programs (offered both in Romanian and Hungarian) at the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work the focus is on educating students in both theoretical and practical aspects of social work and social policy. The curriculums are designed to provide students with a deep understanding of the social, economic, and cultural contexts that influence community welfare. The faculty emphasizes critical thinking and problem-solving skills, preparing students to address the diverse needs of communities.

Courses in social policy aim to familiarize students with key concepts and historical developments in the field, particularly in European and Eastern European contexts. Through these courses, students gain insights into the theoretical foundations and practical applications of social policy, enabling them to analyze and evaluate social programs effectively. The teaching approach is interdisciplinary, integrating perspectives from sociology, public administration, and economics. Students are encouraged to critically assess social policies and develop strategies to influence community well-being. The programs also highlight the role of social workers in advocating for and implementing policies that enhance quality of life.

The faculty is committed to fostering innovation and collaboration, engaging students in research projects, and providing opportunities for internships in social services and policy-making organizations. This holistic educational approach ensures graduates are well-prepared for careers in social work, public policy, and community development.

Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Studies, Brno, Czech Republic

Masaryk University is one of the top public universities in the Czech Republic. It is ranked # 408 in QS World University Rankings 2025. Masaryk University, located in Brno, is the second-largest Czech university. At present, it comprises ten faculties with over 200 departments, institutes, and clinics. Recognized as one of the most important teaching and research institutions in the Czech Republic and a highly-regarded Central European university, it has been infused with a strong democratic spirit ever since its establishment in 1919.

Masaryk University offers degrees in a wide range of traditional as well as newly-emerging disciplines and is currently one of the fastest-growing higher education institutions in Europe. Placing a great deal of emphasis on international cooperation with prestigious foreign universities and research institutions, Masaryk University supports the continuous exchange of knowledge, ideas and information as well as researchers, instructors, and students on a worldwide scale, assuring equal educational and research opportunities for all.

One of Masaryk University's top priorities is scientific research. In addition to attaining a leading position in research grant competitions, the university has made considerable financial investments in order to enhance research and teaching capacity, facilitate the development of tools for the transfer of knowledge and improve support for research and innovation. Total number of students: 34,874, total pedagogical Staff 2,912 .

Faculty of Social Studies comprises seven departments, four research institutes, specialized units of IT support, and a comprehensive library. It educates more than 3,500 students. Total number of teachers: 282. The faculty is undergoing dynamic development; instruction currently focuses on fields such as Sociology, Political Science, Psychology, Social Policy and Social Work, Media Studies and Journalism, Environmental Studies, International Relations, European Studies, Gender Studies, Psychotherapy Studies, Social Anthropology and Security and Strategic Studies.

FSS currently offers seven Master's degrees taught in English (three of them in international cooperation as joint or double degrees) and three bachelor's programs. All doctoral programs can also be studied in English.

[Department of Social Policy and Social Work FSS MU](#) offers two bachelor level programmes, in Public policy and human resources, and in Social work, two corresponding master level programmes, the former with two specialisations: Public and Social Policy, and Personnel management. Next, it offers international master level programme Social policy and labour market policy in English. Lastly, postgraduate programme Social Policy and Social Work in Czech and English. The research covers a broad range of topics in social work, social policy and social services. In social work a special focus is on problems and interventions related to children and families, disability and ageing, professionalisation and social, cultural and organisational conditions of social work practice. In social and employment policy a special focus is on comparative research, evaluation research and intersections of family policies, employment policies and social inclusion.