



# 17th European Social Services Conference

*Supported by the Czech Presidency of the European Union.*

**Prague, 22 – 24<sup>th</sup> June 2009**

## **‘Quality and performance in Social Services in Europe’**

Developing social services of the highest quality and performance is the ambition of all those responsible for meeting the needs all citizens, especially those most at risk, vulnerable and disadvantaged.

‘Quality and performance’ can include a range of issues including the setting and measuring of service standards, commissioning and contracting local services, ensuring value for money, establishing sensitive complaints procedures, evaluating service effectiveness and monitoring outcomes for people. Overall quality is about designing and managing services that people want and need and involving them and other stakeholders in this important process.

With considerable current debate as to what constitutes a quality social service, the European Social Network has responded by organising, probably, its most comprehensive event on Quality and Performance in social services in Europe, to date. The event will involve the widest range of experts and interests from the public, voluntary and commercial sectors and from central and local government; from commissioners, planners and inspectors to providers and user groups.

The conference will pose a number of key questions including: what systems of quality exist today in different parts of Europe and how can we evaluate their outcomes? In an increasingly mobile Europe, should we move towards common standards or principles? How can those who use social services be involved in monitoring their quality? What should be the balance between cost, performance and quality and how can contracting or ‘commissioning’ act as a lever to raise standards and deliver better services for people?

This important and timely event is part of the **‘Official programme of the Czech Presidency of the European Union’** and is supported by the Czech Government as well as the Committee of the Regions and the Council for European Municipalities and Regions.

As such it will provide a unique learning opportunity for those with a commitment to the future of social services, whether at the local, regional, national or European level, to improve their understanding and improve social policy and practice in this important domain. We welcome your participation and contribution.

ESN will be interested in receiving proposals which present examples of quality standards and evaluated outcomes (including performance indicators where possible) in social, employment, health and education services. Examples of the involvement of service users will be particularly welcome.