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## **FROM A STATE IN PROGRESS TO A STATE OF COMPLEXITY**

For two centuries Europe was driven by the idea of progress. Progress in industry and science as well as in wealth and wellbeing. The social mission was to fight against poverty, illiteracy and the lack of civilization. The States in progress build their national systems of education, health, social housing, social security and social services. Gradually, the focus shifted from an idea of progress to a state of complexity and uncertainty about direction, values and progress itself. The State got great difficulties in managing complexity. The social quest changed into anxiety about social behavior and social relationships. Tensions between different groups in our societies, fear for radicalism, fear for increasing criminality and the fact that in all European countries mental health institutions, youth care institutions and prisons got a lot more 'clients', gave rise to an awareness of the problem of social disfunctioning.

After a period of new management making social work to a delivery of products, projects and services, the economic recession creates a new threat to the social work. On the other hand, there are good reasons to invest in social work and to strengthen its capacity. The first one is, this problem of dealing with complexity in an open and uncertain society. The second one is the cost consuming fact of treating people in specialized institutions. Social work as supporting and intervening in the concrete and direct social environment is more effective and less expensive. Not only because of the rather low salaries of social workers and the maybe preventive interventions but for all because local social workers are able to mobilize networks and volunteers and to deal with schools, workplaces, families, clubs to support people with difficulties in social competences. We know from research that participation, activation, mobilization and social relationships decrease the use of health care and increase employment rates.

The question to ask is if Estonia is in transition from a State of progress (building up its systems) into a state of complexity. Social work is re-invented only from the early nineties and the social security system is compared with West European states rather poor. Estonia is in Europe one of the countries with the least people in mental health, however first in Europe on people in prison. It is an intriguing issue for most East European countries how to develop a social service and mental health and punitive system that is effective and payable. In my feeling, investing in local easy accessible social work is the best thing to do.