



6th European Forum of Citizens' Advice Services on the Exercise of European Citizenship Rights

in the framework of the project "Cascade Europe"

24-25 February 2009 - Brussels

ECAS and Citizens Advice International are grateful for the financial support of the European Commission

The 6th European Forum of Citizens' Advice Services will bring about more than one hundred professionals in the field of information and legal advice for the citizens, as well as interested general public. They will have an opportunity to share their experience, good practices in advice and evidence based social policy work, and make recommendations for the better application of the rights related to the European citizenship in the future. The following topics will be discussed:

- **Information and Advice Services to Citizens**
- **Quality Assurance Systems**
- **Enforcement of European law**
- **Social policy feedback**
- **EU migrants rights**
- **New tools for advice**
- **Social policy response to credit crunch**

Are you an information and legal advice professional looking to get updated with the latest developments in the field of citizens' access to their rights?

Are you working for the citizens either in the public or in the non profit sector?

Are you interested to find out how citizens' daily problems can reach the policy makers' agenda?

Then you cannot miss this event!

Objectives of the forum

- 1. To promote the exercise of the European citizenship rights and advice that can be provided in this field.**
- 2. To provide a meeting place for citizens advice practitioners**
- 3. To enable the exchange of information and good practice, informal learning and networking of citizens' advice professionals to benefit the advice service users – citizens across Europe.**
- 4. To extend the outreach and improve quality of information and advice services in Europe by exploring initiatives such as "one stop shop", "cascade system" and feedback mechanisms.**
- 5. To explore communication with citizens, in particular making the voice of citizens heard through citizens' advice social policy feedback based on client case evidence.**
- 6. To showcase the value of the work of the CAB service both to citizens and policy makers.**

The first day of the forum is about the practice of citizens' advice, the second day is about social policy work, i.e. how we take evidence from practice to the agenda of policy makers, ultimately to improve citizens' exercising of their rights.

**6th European Forum of Citizens' Advice Services
on the Exercise of European Citizenship Rights**

24-25 February 2009

Venues:

**European Parliament
(room no. A3E-2, rue Wiertz 60, Brussels)**

**Scotland House
(8th floor, Rond-Point Schuman 6, Brussels)**

PROGRAMME

* marks the speakers who have not yet confirmed their participation

24 FEBRUARY

VENUE: SCOTLAND HOUSE

10.00 – 12.30 **Citizens Advice International General Assembly –
Internal meeting of CAI members and friends**

12.30 – 13.30 **LUNCH BREAK**

13.30 – 14.00 **REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANTS**

14.00 – 15.00 **OPENING PLENARY SESSION**

Chair: **Tony Venables, Director, ECAS**
*The way we came from 5th Citizens' Advice Forum till now –
Cascade system in 2008*

Keynote speakers: **David Harker, CEO Citizens Advice England and Wales**
The citizens' ADVICE – the need, the concept and perspectives

**Pilar Rodriguez, Director Citizens Advice Bureau Gibraltar
and CAI Chair**

*Citizens' ADVICE in practice - meeting citizens' needs
Ideas Factory Introduction for workshops to follow*

15.00 – 16.45

IDEAS FACTORY

**Delivery of Information and Advice Services to Citizens
and follow-up mechanisms**

Three parallel workshops aiming to capture the systems and infrastructure of the different organisations- providers of citizens' advice and information services.

WORKSHOP 1: TOOLS FOR CITIZENS' ADVICE

How to take the pulse of the European citizens' problems and how we prove most effective advice.

Topics covered:

- Advice and information systems that write domestic / European law into plain language that is meaningful and understandable for citizens.
- All aspects of training/learning opportunities to ensure competent advising including use of electronic media for training purposes.
- Consolidation of advice services – the “one-stop shop” approach
- New technologies and advice giving.

Chair: Pilar Rodriguez, Citizens Advice International

**Speakers: Matthew Elton, Citizens Advice Scotland
Olimpia Neagu, National Association of Citizens Advice
Bureaux, Romania (NACAB)
Joe Forrest, Citizens Advice Direct UK**

Rapporteur: Dorothy Buchanan, Citizens Advice Scotland

WORKSHOP 2: QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

How to ensure the right piece of advice for the European citizen.

Topics covered:

- Different compliance systems, including audits – how we know the advice being given is appropriate/right advice?
- How do we train in quality assurance?
- Role of new technologies in ensuring quality

**Chair: Noirin Farren, National Association of Citizens Information
Centres**

**Speakers: Antoine Fobe, ECAS Citizen Signpost Service
Fran Targett, Citizens Advice England and Wales**

**Cristinel Neagu, National Association of Citizens Advice
Bureaux Romania**

Rapporteur: Chloe Clemmons, Citizens Advice Scotland

WORKSHOP 3: BEYOND ADVICE - SPECIALISM

How to take a citizen through the process of information, advice and beyond advice - with active help to the enforcement.

Topics covered:

- How citizens can obtain special advice and further support for specific problems?
- How to provide specialized advice in Citizens Advice Bureaux and when to refer to specialized mechanisms?
- How to ensure coordination?
- When referral to specialized structures is necessary, what is available?

Chair: Kaliani Lyle, CEO Citizens Advice Scotland

**Speakers: Derek Alcorn, Citizens Advice Northern Ireland
Vita Habjan, Legal- information centre for NGO- PIC, Slovenia
Paul Peralta, Citizens Advice Gibraltar**

**Rapporteur: Hynek Kalvoda, Association of Citizens Advice Centres, The
Czech Republic**

16.45 – 17.00 Coffee break

17.00 - 17.45 PLENARY SESSION- IDEAS FACTORY WRAP UP

Citizens Advice practices and resources required to develop the system.

Report on the key asks in workshop presentations and discussions

Speakers: Chairs of previous workshops

17.45 - 18.00 Multimedia session on social policy work in the UK – an introduction to the next day's work

Chair: Kaliani Lyle, CEO Citizens Advice Scotland

25 FEBRUARY

VENUE: SCOTLAND HOUSE

9.00 – 9.30 Welcome Coffee

9.30 – 11.00 PLENARY SESSION: CASCADE SYSTEM AND THE ROLE OF SOCIAL POLICY FEEDBACK

Chair: Derek Alcorn, CEO Citizens Advice Northern Ireland
Citizens' advice and social policy

Speakers: Jimmy Jamar*, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
How important is the social policy feedback to policy makers

Jana Špániková, Citizens Advice Bureau Bratislava
Making an impact - from advice to social policy

David Martin, Citizens Advice England and Wales
Feedback mechanisms related to citizens advice work

Sören Haar, Citizens Signpost Service
CSS feedback reports and their impact

11.20 – 13.20 WORKSHOPS ON SOCIAL POLICY THEMES

Three parallel workshops aiming to show the possibilities of advising the policy-makers in three selected problem areas of citizens advice.

WORKSHOP 1: DISCRIMINATION TACKLED BY CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAUX

Topics to be discussed:

- Discrimination issues dealt by Citizens Advice organisations
- Migrant workers case studies and analyses
- Organisation of services towards migrant workers – the idea of one-stop shop

Chair: Vita Habjan, PIC Slovenia

Speakers: Geralyn McGarry, Citizens Information Board Ireland
Olimpia Neagu, NACAB Romania
David Martin, Citizens Advice England and Wales
Bernadette McAliskey, South Tyrone Empowerment Programme

Rapporteur: Gerard Crofton-Martin, Citizens Advice England and Wales

WORKSHOP 2: CREDIT CRUNCH AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CITIZENS' ADVICE WORK

Topics to be discussed:

- The impact of credit crunch and of the financial turmoil on citizens
- What advice can be provided by Citizens Advice and other bodies

Chair: Olivera Mirković, PIC Slovenia

**Speakers: Derek Alcorn, Citizens Advice Northern Ireland
Susan MacPhee, Citizens Advice Scotland
Ija Ostrowska, Union of Citizens Advice Bureaux (UCAB), Poland
Jacques Delpla, Commission "Releasing Growth in France"**

Rapporteur: Mary Keane, Waterford Citizens Information Centre, Ireland

WORKSHOP 3: FAMILY LAW IN THE EU

Topics covered:

- Evidence of problems encountered by citizens in the cross-border exercise of family rights
- Marriages, divorces and child custody across the frontiers – what mechanisms of advice are available
- The case of making the cooperation in family law the area of reinforced cooperation

Chair: David Dumas, Citizens Advice Gibraltar

**Speakers: Alexandra Vicova, Citizens Advice Bureau Bratislava
Véronique Chauveau, International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers
Claire Genta, Citizen's Rights and Constitutional Affairs Policy Department, European Parliament**

Rapporteur: Izabela Henning, Citizens Advice Bureau Radlin, Poland

13.20 – 14.00 LUNCH

CHANGE OF THE VENUE: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

14.30 – 16.00 **Conclusions from the workshops and wrap-up of the workshop discussions**

Panel: **Tony Venables, Director ECAS**
Graham K Blount, Citizens Advice International

Rapporteurs from the previous workshops:
Gerard Crofton-Martin, Citizens Advice England and Wales
Mary Keane, Waterford Citizens Information Centre, Ireland
Izabela Henning, Citizens Advice Bureau Radlin, Poland

16.30 – 18.00 **Evening session - ENFORCEMENT OF THE EU LAW**
How to improve judicial and non-judicial remedies for the European citizen

Keynote speaker:

Chair: **Tony Venables, ECAS Director**

Speakers: **Fergal Ó Regan, Head of Legal Unit, Principal Legal Advisor to the European Ombudsman**
Monica Frassoni, MEP, Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
Emer Daly, European Commission, DG Internal Market and Services
Dr. Rodolphe Munoz, lecturer at Liège University

Questions for debate

- What are the problems related to enforcing new European legislation, particularly for the most vulnerable groups in the migrant community?
- Does the application of Directive 2004/38 have the potential to strengthen the position of the European citizens asserting his or her rights?
- How to bridge the gap between the fine principles of the Court of Justice case-law, the much improved, consolidated and simplified legal framework and what happens on the ground in everyday administrative practice?
- European Union- Market Place or Town Hall?
- Other questions coming from civil society organisations present at the Forum.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION:

At the Forum there will be exhibition space for Citizens Advice organisations, if you would like to use this opportunity please contact us by 31 January 2009.

Registrations forms must be sent to:

**Ms Laura Pipponzi
Tel +32 2 548 04 96
Fax + 32 2 548 04 99
laura.pipponzi@ecas.org**

The number of places is limited and the registrations are accepted on the "first in, first served" basis. This is why we advise prompt registrations.



Thanks to the European Commission's financial support, the assistance in travel costs and in accommodation for participants from the 26 EU member states (except Belgium) and from Croatia could be provided to up to 100 participants.

IMPORTANT!

We are no longer able to reimburse newly registered participants because the event is fully booked. However, if you are able to cover all travel and accommodation expenses by yourself, you are welcome to register to and attend the Forum. Thank you for your understanding.

For any further information please contact:

**Mr. Daniel J. Kaminski
Tel +32 2 548 98 21
Fax + 32 2 548 04 99
daniel.kaminski@ecas.org**

For more information on the project please visit:

**www.ecas-citizens.eu
www.citizensadvice-international.org**