

## **Abstract for the 2017 IFSW Conference in Iceland**

### **"From privilege to pauperism: The plight of the elderly in the post-socialist realm"**

The collapse of the Soviet Union has led to cataclysmic changes in the social protection system of the countries formerly comprising the Soviet Block. The impact was particularly hard on the elderly whose golden age was basically secure through the relatively generous retirement arrangements under the socialist regimes. As a result of dismantling of the socialist welfare state, many pensioners became destitute, ill for the lack of medical care, and even homeless. The existing systems of elder support are often insufficient to prevent neglect, abuse, and exploitation. The increasing population portion of the elderly in society presents another challenge to their welfare. This paper is a meta-analysis of literature on the challenges that afflict the elderly in the post-socialist space. It also contains a review of best practices, policy recommendations, and discussion of prospects for international social work collaboration in this area.

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