

Aila-Leena **Matthies** is a professor of social work at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland since 2007. Previously she had a professorship of social work in Germany, at the University of Applied Sciences in Magdeburg (1996 -2007). Together with her research team she is involved in the global debate interconnecting social work with the environmental issues and sustainability. Her international research on ecosocial approach and participation extends all the way back to the 1980s, including her master thesis in social work at the University of Jyväskylä, and practice research projects. Currently she is leading an EU-Commission-funded H2020-MCSA-ASTRA (2020-2024) research and training program “Applying Sustainability Transition Research In Social Work”, employing 15 social work doctoral students in 7 countries. She was an elected member in the Executive Committee of the EASSW 2013-2021. She has published 69 peer-reviewed publications and together with Kati **Närhi** she edited the volume “The Ecosocial Transition of Societies: The contribution of social work and social policy” (2017, Routledge)

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION AT THE FORSA 2021:

Social Work and Sustainability – from greenwashing towards ecosocial work

Social work is one of the promising disciplinary newcomers entering the transdisciplinary research field on the question, how to transfer societies towards sustainability. Social work is a practice-based profession and academic research that is in the first instance confronting the consequences of unsustainable development in the life of individuals and communities. The overexploitation of the Planet’s resources is inherently linked with issues of social justice and ethical codes of social work. Thus, sustainability paradigm in social work - called environmental, ecological, ecosocial or green SW – is growing worldwide. Nature-based interventions, ecosocial innovations and climate actions offer new impulses for practice and attract social work students. However, issues of sustainability are not simply additional topics, where social work has a stake to hold. Moreover, it will be discussed, how the transition to sustainability urgently challenges social work to critically rethink its own functional position and dependences regarding the systems of neo-liberal governance of welfare states and growth-oriented economy.