EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR REHABILITATION
Building Capacity for excellence in service provision for people with disabilities

ANNUAL REPORT 2016
The network of service providers to people with disabilities committed to excellence and innovation through mutual learning

EPR and its members contribute to a society where every person with a disability and persons in other vulnerable situations have access to the highest quality services that create equal opportunities for all and independent participation in society. EPR activities go beyond traditional mutual learning exchanges. EPR members co-create and pilot innovative products, tools and methods and to better meet the needs of clients, employers and funders. EPR offers numerous opportunities to network with leading service providers from across Europe. EPR members are committed to high quality service delivery in the fields of vocational education and training, employment reintegration, medical rehabilitation and social care. Through its public affairs activities, EPR enables service providers to contribute to the social and disability debate and to the strengthening of the social service sector. In addition, EPR training, employment reintegration, medical rehabilitation and social care. Through its public affairs activities, EPR enables service providers to contribute to the social and disability debate and to the strengthening of the social service sector. In addition, EPR facilitates access to EU funding through project development support, partner matching and training sessions.

I am pleased to present the 2016 Annual report of the European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR). After a three-year period as President, Jean-Paul Essers ended his mandate in autumn 2016. I had the privilege of being elected to take over the EPR presidency in the General Assembly of 24 November. This new role in the ‘EPR family’ is for me a real honour and true pleasure and the annual report of 2016 allows me to share and reflect on EPR activities in the past year. We particularly heard a lot of positive feedback about the EPR annual conference in Lisbon and the Public Affairs Event on Co-production for quality of services and quality of life – these events continue to get better. The same applies to EQUASS. 2016 saw the EQUASS 2018 system finalised, and we believe the new system even more effectively meets the needs of services providers seeking to improve the quality of their services. It emphasizes having clear approaches, but also focuses on how the approaches are put into practice and has a more result-oriented approach.

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Mutual learning is key to improving our own services, and is the core business of the platform. Exchange of knowledge took place in the four domains we identified and the seven thematic areas and I am very grateful for the many contributions from members and partners to the successful EPR activities over the last year. In 2016 several activities were organised as online seminars and training sessions, enabling an effective exchange of ideas and expertise in a time and cost efficient manner. 2016 also saw the launch of EPR’s presence on Twitter and Facebook; important for more visibility of the network across Europe, and keeping abreast of developments. Work progressed on the new EPR website, which will be launched in the summer of 2017.

In several European member states there will be elections in 2017. Will populism win? What kind of influence will there be on European communities? What will be the impact of any political changes for the EPR? We will monitor these and other developments at the European level and have to adapt to these changes, stay focused for the core business of our centres.

Of course I would like to thank former President Jean-Paul Essers, the EPR Board of Directors, Laura Jones as Secretary General of EPR and the staff at the secretariat for their hard work. And of course special thanks to the full and associated members for their contributions and commitment to the network in 2016. With your support in the next years we will co-develop a new strategic plan with ambitious goals, forming an even stronger platform. This also means continued cooperation with European Member States in implementing the UNCRPD, with all stakeholders. We will make EPR great in the next few years!

Frits Wichers
EPR President
Strategic Objective 1
Expanded and more balanced membership base
The network development strategy was implemented, with the secretariat introducing EPR to numerous organisations across Europe. EPR welcomed one new member from Germany. Mirko Miceli joined the EPR secretariat as Membership Officer, one of his roles being to work with the Secretary General on membership recruitment and satisfaction.

Strategic Objective 2
Developing the menu of services and activities
The Secretariat carried out individual needs assessments with members to understand interests and priorities and develop activities of common interest for the 2017 work programme. 2016 also saw the kick-off meeting for new cooperation in the domain of medical rehabilitation, drawing up a work plan for the years to come.

Strategic Objective 3
Towards a more product oriented approach
EPR developed a catalogue of innovative products and methodologies with the aim to help members to share and transfer their expertise within the network, as well as to identify initiatives that could be suitable for transfer and scaling up. EPR’s tool measuring quality of life outcomes in Vocational Rehabilitation tool was further developed and will be able to be rolled out into other fields of service provision.

Strategic Objective 4
A leading network of service providers
EPR developed its partnerships with a number of European Networks in 2016. This included co-organising the public affairs event with the European Disability Forum and engaging four other networks in the programme, as well as joining the EU Alliance against Disability Cuts led by the European Network for Independent Living. EPR presented at numerous conferences across Europe and the Disability High Level Group of experts from EU Member States.

Reaching our Goals

Our Strategy 2015-2017

2016 in Brief

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Conferences &amp; other high level events</th>
<th>Professional Development Activities</th>
<th>Exchange of good practices, benchmarking &amp; site visits</th>
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2.19 average pages viewed

332 Interactions
58 Interactions
Annual Conference 2016
“Evolving societies, evolving services: Through the looking-glass”

The EPR Annual Conference 2016 was hosted by AFID Foundation, in Lisbon, Portugal on 21-22 September. The conference featured AFID’s partners, including local and national government representatives. The conference offered a unique opportunity to imagine and plan the future of European rehabilitation institutions and thus contribute to improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Portugal and across Europe across the lifecycle. Participants took part in a joint reflection on what the future may be like in 20-30 years’ time and brainstormed about the relationship between innovation and funding, and on specific challenges.

Inspiring speakers invited participants to think about ways to concretize progress towards the future, about ways to innovate and ensure quality services. Initiatives developed by EPR members and partners for effective quality services across the life cycle were also showcased. Training workshops allowed participants to learn methodologies that they could apply in their work, on inclusive education, youth empowerment, strategies for quality of life in older age, fundraising and assistive technologies. Various group discussions facilitated reflections on how to apply conference learnings in their work and how EPR could support them in their implementation.

Public Affairs Event 2016
“Co-production for quality of services and quality of life”

EPR organised its Public Affairs event on 23 November 2016 in collaboration with the European Disability Forum (EDF). The participatory event “Co-production for quality of services and quality of life” launched the 2016 study focusing on co-production, prepared in collaboration with a senior researcher from the European Network of Independent Living (ENIL).

The event featured the intervention of the author of the study, EPR members presenting good practices included in the study, and representatives of other key stakeholders, Eurodiaconia, Mental Health Europe and EASPD. The presentations and interactive sessions with experts and EPR members actively engaged the participants and contributed to deepen the understanding of co-production principles, and how practices inspired by this inclusive approach can ensure the meaningful participation of people with disabilities in designing and delivering services, for the clear benefit for all stakeholders involved.

Participants found the meeting very informative and could see how they could implement some of the practices in their own organisations. The meeting and networking reception also facilitated connections amongst partners of EPR who will continue to work together on the topic in the coming years.
Strategic Workshop for Directors 2016
“Anticipating and engaging with future trends”

The Strategic Workshop for Directors was hosted by Danish EPR member, Marielhamn Foundation, on 11-12 May 2016 at the Disabled People’s Organisations House of Denmark, hailed as the world’s most accessible office building. “Mega-trends” of the future were presented by expert Thomas Geuken, and focused on the development of new styles of management and organisational structures, as well as the future of service delivery as a result of evolving demands of generations of young people joining the labour force and shifts, it is how societies and mentalities evolve that by expert "Anticipating and engaging with future trends”

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Geuken facilitated discussions among participants and EPR members identified two mega trends as having potentially the most impact. New generations of young people joining the labour force have different expectations and ambitions than their elders in how work is organised. Employers will need to adjust to this new concept of work, more collaborative and participative, and give freedom and flexibility for millennials to develop their competences, while supporting and nurturing their talents. Meanwhile, service users will expect service providers to provide more of a network or “hub” rather than a one-stop-shop of disability support services. The quality of that network is where the trust in the value of the service will be found.

Participants then took part in a reflective exercise, discussing how these trends would affect their organisations and the nature of rehabilitation services. The exercise concluded with each participant developing a plan to anticipate and address these trends, supporting their centres in embracing future developments.

Arad, Romania
“Quality in Social Services”

The EPR event on quality in social services, provided with support of the EaSI programme of the European Commission, took place on 8th June 2016 in Arad, west of Romania, and was attended by 34 persons. The event was hosted by EPR partner ASPIS Association, a non-government actor in services to adults with disabilities and vulnerable populations in Arad and Vladimirescu.

Participants came from various organisations in Arad County, NGOs providing disability services, disability advocates, as well as local representatives and professionals of the DG for Social Assistance and Child Protection, a national government funded programme of social services.

The morning session was focused on introducing the relevant European Frameworks for Quality in Social Services, as well as concrete tools for implementing the values behind them. The presenters also presented EPR’s own initiative for an internal and external assessment for Quality in Social Services.

The afternoon session focused on governance in social services, and how the annual planning process related not only to the mission and activities of the service provider, rather than a one-stop-shop of disability support services. The quality of that network is where the trust in the value of the service will be found.

National Awareness-Raising Events

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Riga, Latvia
“Rehabilitation & Employability of people with disabilities”

On 17th June 2016, over 60 people met in the Parliament in Riga at the Latvian national awareness raising in Arad, west of Romania, and was attended by 34 persons. The event was hosted by EPR partner ASPIS Association, a non-government actor in services to adults with disabilities and vulnerable populations in Arad and Vladimirescu.

The event featured a round table discussion where participants highlighted the intrinsic value of work for all people, and the importance of empowering all to be able to share their talents with society. The necessity of seeing all people as equal should be the starting point of discussions and actions. It was stressed that in the right position, a person even with more severe intellectual disability can be highly productive. Representatives of students in Riga proposed that students with disabilities be heard in such discussions and suggested more scholarships for such students.

The event was well-received and successfully brought the topic of employment of people with disabilities higher up the Latvian political agenda, including the supported employment model.
**Professional Development Activities**

**Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment**

**Vocational Education & Training**

**INDIVERSO project:** Inclusive diverse solutions for VET (Lisbon, 21 September, workshop at EPR Annual Conference)

**Focus:** Introduce the implementation and everyday use of some selected instruments of the project's "tool box", developed by the project, addressing in more detail: person-driven planning in services; collegial case-counselling; coach-training; providing information and training offers for firms; and developing regional networking.

**Medical Rehabilitation**

**Study Visit to the Don Gnocchi Foundation (Milan, 17 -18 November)**

**Focus:** Visit different departments carrying out advanced research in the field of rehabilitation and care services; share experiences and develop future collaboration among members.

**Social Care & Housing**

**Assistive technology: a key to inclusion** (Lisbon, 21 September, in the framework of the EPR Annual Conference)

**Focus:** Key issues involved in assistive technology (AT) assessment and provision, in the light of the latest technological advancement and legislation.

**Mental Health**

**Benchlearning on mental health recovery** (Heinrich-Haus Neuwied, 12 - 13 September)

**Focus:** Training on the Wellness Recovery Action Planning WRAP® model to improve the quality of life among professionals and clients.

Access to mental health services in rural areas (Online meeting, 14 December)

**Focus:** Address and raise awareness on the management of mental health services in rural areas.

**Outcome Measurement & Quality of Life**

**Benchmarking group:** Outcome Measurement in Vocational Rehabilitation

**French group (9 organisations) focus:** Pilot the QOLIS (Quality of Life Impact of Services) tool and interpret results. Improve the QOLIS tools with the integration of guidelines for a systematic, harmonized scorebook.

**International group focus:** Develop the new QOLIS versions and their scorebooks. Explore the possibility of using QOLIS in other settings and collect relevant demographic information.

**Quality**

**Benchlearning on Quality Culture** (Paris, 4-5 October)

**Focus:** Introduce the participants to the concepts of an organisational culture and a quality culture, and introduce the Quality Culture Survey.

**Benchlearning on partnerships with employers (Paris, 8-9 December)**

**Focus:** Explore strategies and good-practices to develop successful partnerships with employers and promoting diversity in the workplace.

**Exploring web-based tool for skills matching: PorTalento (Brussels, 19 April)**

**Focus:** Support interested organisations in understanding and potentially implementing aspects of PorTalento, an innovative website addressed to job-seekers as well as employers.

**Securing employment for job seekers, the role of job coach** (Online training seminar, 25-27-28 October)

**Focus:** Key principles and actions that can be implemented to increase the results of supported employment services; job-finding skills and marketing skills of the job coaches and supported employment managers.

**Assistive technology: a key to inclusion**

**Focus:** Assistive technology (AT) assessment and provision, in the light of the latest technological advancement and legislation.

**Benchlearning on Quality Culture**

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From Dublin to Athens, the EPR Innovation Prize flew to South-Europe

Every year EPR Centre Coordinators are called to score the candidate practices of the Innovation Prize Contest and every year the Prize flies around Europe. In 2016, the Prize was awarded to Theotokos Foundation in Greece for the project “Serious Games”.

The practice is about developing and using Serious Games as an interdisciplinary educational tool. Its aim is to promote the development of communication and social skills in individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Intellectual Disability (ID). Serious games have been designed in order to provide not only a useful and common tool for all therapists, teachers and parents, but also an attractive, motivating and pleasant game for students as well. A full description of the practice is available on the EPR website in the “Innovation Prize” section.

Chrisi Kotretou, Speech and Language Therapist at Theotokos Foundation, presented “Serious Games” at the AWARDING Ceremony which took place on 21st September 2016 during the EPR Annual Conference in Lisbon.

The practice was selected amongst 14 candidates as the most innovative one.

PESSIS 3 project

Steps forward in the development of European social dialogue in the social sector

The project, funded by the European Commission’s Programme on Industrial Relations and Social Dialogue, runs from November 2015 to November 2017. It brings together 4 European and 7 national organisations representing social and health service providers and the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU).

PESSIS 3 represents the third step of a longer term process aiming at establishing a representative platform for employers in the social services sector at European level. Project partners at national and European level are working hard to achieve this objective. Partners from Spain, Ireland and Czech Republic organised two rounds of capacity-building meetings (in February and June) with the aim of establishing a strong relationship between national employers and discussing their participation in European Social Dialogue.

The European report, drawing together the mapping of social dialogue in the social services sectors from each of the 17 national reports published so far, was updated with 5 additional country-studies: Portugal, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and the United Kingdom. EPR supports the project by leading the communication and dissemination activities designed to raise the visibility of the project outcomes.
In 2016, EPR led the working group on EU funding opportunities and developed a briefing paper on “Opportunities for Social Services in the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020”. EPR was actively involved in the task force on European Semester process and contributed to the publication of two letters addressed to the European Commission Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis in response to the Annual Growth Survey 2016 and in advance of the commencement of the 2017 European Semester.

EPR together with Social Services Europe invited the European Commission to emphasise the importance of undertaking reforms and promoting investment that supports the development of the social and health care sector in the 2017 AGS.

EU level partnerships

In 2016 the Platform published a “myth buster”, presenting arguments that are used against investing in social and health services followed by facts to debunk them. There is also a collection of case studies illustrating the positive impact that investment can have both economically and socially, with a specific section on integrated social and health care. The Social Platform also adopted a position paper with recommendations on quality employment, adequate income support and universal access to services.

EPR has been a member of the Social Platform, the largest civil society alliance fighting for social justice and participatory democracy in Europe, for a number of years. Consisting of 48 pan-European networks of NGOs, the Social Platform campaigns to ensure that EU policies are developed in partnership with the people they affect, respecting fundamental rights, promoting solidarity and improving lives. In 2016 the Platform prioritised social standards, investing in services and ensuring inclusion and equal opportunities in their advocacy and policy campaigns and positions.

Social Services Europe brings together eight Europe-wide networks of professional non-for-profit providers of social, health and care services. The European Platform for Rehabilitation has been a member of the network since its establishment and contributes to achieving its aims.

The network aims to strengthen the profile and position of social services, and to promote the role and impact of not for-profit social service providers in Europe. Social Services Europe member organisations intend to reinforce their activities on the impact of EU legislation on Social Services of General Interest (SSGI); staff and human resources issues; social innovation; structural funds; the social dimension of and human resources issues; social innovation; structural funds; the social dimension of the EU and contribution of social services to overall EU policy.

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The European Quality in Social Services (EQUASS) aims to enhance the personal services sector by engaging service providers in quality, continuous improvement and by guaranteeing quality of services to service-users throughout Europe.

Quality Recognition

EQUASS offers two recognition programme for quality assurance and excellence in quality in social services. These programmes enable social service providers to engage in an external independent assessment process by which they assure the quality of their services to service users and other stakeholders. All EQUASS recognition programmes are based on a Quality Framework (a set of quality Principles), quality criteria and performance indicators that are customised for the social sector. An international Awarding Committee oversees the certification process.

Overview of EQUASS certifications awarded in 2016

EQUASS 2018 System

In 2016, after a two-years process of evaluation and consultation with all stakeholders (EQUASS awarding committee members, service providers, auditors, licence holders, service user organisations), the EQUASS Unit finalised the new EQUASS 2018 system which will provide comprehensive services in the area of development, promotion, training, recognition and certification of quality in the social sector. The EQUASS 2018 recognition and certification programmes comply with the European requirements for quality in the provision of Social Services and Vocational Education and Training services.

The new EQUASS 2018 system is based on 10 Principles for Quality. The principles for Quality are derived from consultation of stakeholders, reports of research and impact studies of the EQUASS 2012 system. Each Principle for Quality is broken down into specific quality criteria. The 10 Principles for Quality express the core values of delivering quality services in the social sector. The Quality principles are strongly interrelated with each other. This is expressed in the graphic.

The EQUASS 2018 recognitions / certifications guarantee satisfactory performance on all EQUASS Principles for Quality. They also ensure satisfactory performance on the key elements of any operational Quality Management System.

The new EQUASS 2018 standard will be launching alongside the current system in the Spring of 2017. As of January 1st 2018, it will be the only quality system in use for the assessment and recognition of quality by the EQUASS department of the EPR.

The quality standard documents have been further refined into a version focusing specifically on EQUASS Assurance level requirements, and another one on EQUASS Excellence requirements. The documents are available on the EQUASS website. Translated versions of this standard will be made available in 2017 in Norwegian, French and Dutch.
The VET Learning Community (TVLC) Project

EPR is participating in the TVLC project, a two and half year project led by Reza College Pluryn and funded by the Erasmus+ programme - KA2 - Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices / Strategic Partnerships for vocational education and training. The project aims to contribute to the creation of sustainable partnerships between specialised VET providers and mainstream VET providers by creating a platform for systematic exchange, comparison and learning of quality topics derived from the EQAVET framework and learning of quality topics derived from the EQAVET framework and learning of quality topics derived from the EQAVET framework and learning of quality topics derived from the EQAVET framework and learning of quality topics derived from the EQAVET framework.

Project objectives:
- Improve the overall quality performance and quality culture of specialised and regular VET providers by systematic benchmarking and bench learning.
- Contribute to inclusive education by creating sustainable partnerships between specialised VET providers and regular VET providers for the benefits of all learners.

Board of Directors

The Board is the representative body of EPR. It is composed of up to 8 Chief Executives/Directors of the full member organisations. The members of the Board (including the function of president and vice-president) are nominated by the General Assembly for a period of two years which is renewable, and these positions cannot be delegated. All members of the General Assembly are entitled to attend the meetings of the Board as observers. Its main task is to supervise all EPR activities and to execute the decisions of the General Assembly. In 2016 the Board held four meetings to discuss and approve EPR policies and activities.

Centre Coordinators

Centre coordinators of full and associate EPR members represent the direct link between EPR and its member organisations. Their main role is to disseminate EPR information throughout their organisation and implement decisions taken by the General Assembly. Usually EPR Centre coordinators meet twice a year and hold additional bilateral meetings in the margins of other EPR activities they attend.

EPR Secretariat

The EPR secretariat is the main unit responsible for the development and implementation of the network’s activities. Based in Brussels, the Secretariat acts as the interface with EPR member organisations and with external stakeholders.

General Assembly

The General Assembly is the decision-making body of EPR. Its main task is to set the strategic, financial and organisational framework of EPR. The General Assembly consists of the Chief Executives/Directors of the full members. The associate members are invited to participate in the meetings of the General Assembly as observers. The General Assembly meets at least twice per year to discuss and approve EPR policies and activities, as well as issues of common interest. Directors also have the opportunity to reflect on strategic issues affecting the sector.

EQUASS Projects

The VET Learning Community (TVLC) Project

EPR Structures

Secretariat in 2016

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Jones</td>
<td>Secretary General</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jones@epr.eu">Jones@epr.eu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Laurence Meuret</td>
<td>Financial Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mirko Miceli</td>
<td>Membership Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Since October 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie Dubost</td>
<td>EQUASS Manager</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dubost@epr.eu">dubost@epr.eu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Since October 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinzia De Letis</td>
<td>Project, Communications &amp; Policy Coordinator</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cdeletis@epr.eu">cdeletis@epr.eu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Loredana Alen</td>
<td>EQUASS Assistant</td>
<td><a href="mailto:alen@epr.eu">alen@epr.eu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Claudia Delfosse</td>
<td>Project Coordinator</td>
<td><a href="mailto:delfosse@epr.eu">delfosse@epr.eu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Until October 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimitri Fatralis</td>
<td>IT expert (external)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Fatralis@epr.eu">Fatralis@epr.eu</a></td>
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## Full Members

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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>EPR Coordinator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelante, The Netherlands</td>
<td>Jean-Paul Essers</td>
<td>Paul Kurvers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre de Réadaptation de Mulhouse (CRM), France</td>
<td>Tom Cardoso</td>
<td>Jean-Claude Schreper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundación ONCE, Spain</td>
<td>Sabina Lobato</td>
<td>Ana Juviño</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREP GRENLAND AS, Norway</td>
<td>Thor Fjellvang</td>
<td>Anne Britt Holtren &amp; Helene Haukom Apeiland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heliomare, The Netherlands</td>
<td>Frits Wichers</td>
<td>Frank ’t Hart and Michel Edelaar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josefs-Gesellschaft, Germany</td>
<td>Manfred Schulte</td>
<td>Andreas Reiß</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pluryn, The Netherlands</td>
<td>Herma Veltman</td>
<td>Birgit Grimbergen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFID Diferença Foundation, Portugal</td>
<td>Domingos Rosa</td>
<td>Juvenal Baltazar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre, Estonia</td>
<td>Liina Teesalu</td>
<td>Minna Sild</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Associate Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>EPR Coordinator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RehabGroup, Ireland</td>
<td>Pauline Newnham</td>
<td>David Muldoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arbeid og Inkludering (AVRE), Norway</td>
<td>Kenneth Stien</td>
<td>Paal Haavorsen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berufsförderungswerk Köln gemeinnützige GmbH (BFW Köln), Germany</td>
<td>Frank Gottwald</td>
<td>Verena Hoheiser</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**RehabGroup, Ireland**
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