

Annual Report 2000

The EPVR experienced a great sadness in 2000 with the passing away of Louis van Amelsvoort the much-esteemed General Secretary of the EPVR on . Louis played a key role in promoting co-operation amongst members of the EPVR. He will be greatly missed.

In memory of his contribution, the Steering Committee approved the establishment of the Louis van Amelsvoort Award for Excellence in European Co-operation. This will be announced at the General Seminar in 2001 and implemented as approved by the Steering Committee.

1. New General Secretary

Jan Spooren joined the EPVR in November 2000 as General Secretary.

2. Brussels secretariat

A new Executive Administrator will join the Brussels secretariat from the beginning of 2001. The EPVR office will also relocate to rue de Spa 15, 1000 Brussels at this time.

3. Strategy of EPVR

A Strategy Taskforce was established comprising of seven members of the Steering Committee. It met several times in 2000 to examine the aims and objectives of the EPVR. The result of their work was the identification of four categories of priorities.

The work of the Strategy Taskforce resulted in a handbook, which is an information tool for existing and potential members of the EPVR. This booklet shall be printed and disseminated to all members in 2001.

4. Centre Coordinators

The Centre Coordinators of full and affiliate member centres of the EPVR were very active during 2000. They met nine times during 2000 with a significant programme of work. One of the primary goals of the group was to re-activate the Staff Exchange Programme which is elaborated on further in this report.

Amongst other items in progress was the drafting of a programme for the General Seminar in 2001, monitoring the website of the EPVR, gathering nominations for existing and new project groups and the preparation of an Information Day for HR managers and new members of project groups.

5. General Seminar, Manchester, April 2000

The annual General Seminar of the EPVR took place in Manchester, U.K., in early April 2000. The theme of the seminar was Return to Work strategies with guest speakers from

the ILO, the Minister for Employment & Equal Opportunities, the UK Employment Service and Get Back – an Irish return to work initiative developed by Rehab Group.

The seminar was extremely well attended with over 150 representatives from all full and affiliate members.

6. Staff Development programme

The EPVR's Staff Development programme was reactivated in 2000, with centre coordinators working steadily on the collection of offers to host visiting staff in their centres. All offers can be viewed on the restricted area of the EPVR website.

7. Information Day

In response to the developments within the EPVR in the first six months of 2000, the Centre Coordinators organized an Information Day in Heidelberg in September. The aim of the event was to inform HR managers of the activities of the EPVR as a strategic allies in the implementation of all staff development initiatives (staff exchange programme, project groups, FTEP seminars, HMDC, General Seminar etc.) Also invited were those new participants in the EPVR – i.e. new members of project groups.

Over thirty people attended with very positive feedback gathered from participants. The result of the event was a decision by the Steering Committee to build on the success of the Information Day and host a one-day seminar in 2001 specifically for HR managers. This will take place in Hoensbroek in March 2001.

8. FTEP

The FTEP series undertook its second year of seminars with three seminars taking place in 2000. HELI in Finland organized a seminar on Employment Access, SRH Heidelberg ran a seminar on Distance Learning with CRM, Mulhouse hosting a seminar on Total Quality Management.

All three seminars were evaluated as very successful according to all participants. The remaining three seminars of the series will take place in 2001. After this time a full evaluation of the programme will occur.

9. HMDC

The pilot of the HMDC continued in 2000 with the delivery of the remaining four modules on various aspects of vocational rehabilitation. One course participant was unable to complete the course due to reasons of ill-health, leaving nineteen participants who will have successfully completed the course in June 2001. The Research Advisory Group is currently working on developing a second HMDC course with some modifications

10. Project groups of EPVR

Project groups form the basis for co-operation between EPVR members. The Steering Committee agreed that all full members should participate actively in project groups if they wish to be considered as key actors in deciding the policy and direction of the EPVR.

10.1 Existing groups

10.1.a Research Advisory Group (Chairperson, Gustav Rueckemann, SRH):

The RETURN project (which was awarded funding under the Fifth Framework for Research & Technological Development of the European Commission) commenced in February 2000. This is a two year project examining the return to work strategies in place in six member states of the EU.

The Delphi study of Disability Management also progressed in 2000 with the development of a questionnaire for delivery to employers, trade unions, insurance agencies, service deliverers and government bodies.

The Research Advisory Group also designed and delivered the modules of the HMDC as well as providing support to course participants in their capacity as Academic Advisors.

10.1.b Employment Access (Chairperson, Marjut Huttunen, HELI):

The Employment Access group expanded in size from three participants to seven in 2000. The group jointly prepared a programme for the FTEP seminar on Employment Access which took place in September in Helsinki and proved highly successful.

The group also commenced work on the production of a best practise guide to effective work experience and could be used as a staff development tool for professionals involved in organizing work experience placements for clients. This will be ready for distribution at the end of 2001.

10.1.c Information & Communication Technologies (Chairperson, Peter Ludwig, BBRZ):

The ICT group concentrated on the maintenance of the EPVR website as well as undertaking initial steps in developing a Virtual Learning Centre. The group liaised with most of the project groups as well as the HMDC participants to gain ideas on how this project could be mounted.

The group decided to concentrate on the following aspects in 2001:

- Upgrading of the EPVR website
- Development and implementation of a technology plan for the General Seminar in Heidelberg
- Design and implementation of strategies for encouraging the use of ICTs amongst colleagues in member centres

10.1.d Traumatic Brain Injury (Chairperson, Jim Weir, Rehab UK):

There are ten member centres of the EPVR represented in the TBI project group. This group progressed a variety of topics in relation to TBI during 2000.

- Preparation of an FTEP seminar on TBI to take place in February 2001
- Gathering of research related to the TBI population on a global scale

- Examination of standards in relation to vocational training for clients with TBI
- Co-operation with our American counterparts (NCSOCRC) to identify common issues in service delivery and development

10.1.e New Populations & Methodologies (Chairperson, Giuseppe Sarti, Opera Don Calabria):

This project group continued in its endeavours to capture innovation in service delivery. The group gathered data on all projects mounted by EPVR centres and will present a report to the Steering Committee in January 2001. The report is centred around themes relating to new client groups and new methodologies in vocational training.

10.2 New project groups

Four new project groups were established in 2000 as a result of proposals made by participants from member centres of the EPVR.

10.2.a Women in Vocational Rehabilitation (Chairperson, Ulrike Schneider, SRH):

This group will examine the barriers to participation faced by women in vocational rehabilitation services. The work programme of the group consists of undertaking research within all member centres of the EPVR. The results will be analysed and disseminated in 2001.

10.2.b Accreditation (Chairperson, Donal McAnaney, Rehab Group):

This project group has as its aim to undertake a feasibility study on the mounting of an EPVR accreditation system. The group will develop principles of excellence to which all EPVR members will subscribe. In addition, the group will examine the possibility of forming strategic alliances with existing accreditation bodies as an alternative to developing an independent accreditation system.

10.2.c Vocational Rehabilitation for clients with Mental Health difficulties (Chairperson, Deirdre de Burca, Rehab Group):

This group is charged with the preparing an inventory of services offered to clients with mental health difficulties by EPVR members. It will also identify areas of common concern around performance indicators, non-vocational outcomes and health and social gain indicators.

10.2.d Co-operation International project (chairperson, Josef Stockinger, BBRZ):

This group is researching the funding initiatives to which the EPVR could apply for monies to finance current and possible future activities. The group is also preparing an inventory on the interest and capacity of member centres in becoming involved in international projects as project promoters and/or consultants. The group will deliver a report to the Steering Committee in May 2001.

10.3 Supporting Supervisors appointed to all project groups

One of the new developments within the functioning of project groups is the establishment of the role of a Supporting Supervisor. Each director on the Steering Committee has responsibility for a project group. His/Her role is to report on the progress of their project group at each meeting of the Steering Committee. The Supporting Supervisor also has responsibility for devising evaluation criteria with the Chairperson of the project group against which the success of the group shall be measured periodically. This development ensures more regular contact between the Steering Committee and the project groups. Supporting Supervisors will rotate every two years

11. English Language Course

The English Language Course was run by Alpha College in Dublin during July and August 2000. Eighteen participants from four countries – Austria, Finland, Italy and Sweden attended the courses.

12. New members

Fundacion ONCE made an application to join the EPVR in 2000. A decision on their membership shall be taken early in 2001 after a delegation of the Steering Committee visits the organization to meet with members of the senior management team in Madrid in January 2001.

Theotokos Foundation in Athens, Greece became associate partners of the EPVR in November 2000. They will attend the first Steering Committee meeting of 2001 to meet the full members of the EPVR and make a presentation on their activities and services.

13. Co-operation with the USA

A co-operation agreement was signed by the EPVR and the NC-SOCRC in April 2000 at the General Seminar in Manchester. A number of subsequent meetings were held in Europe and the US to examine how the co-operation agreement should best be implemented.

The results of these meetings was the identification of a number of common areas in which collaboration could occur - TBI, Staff Development, New Technologies and Research. These activities will form the work programme of the Euro-American Platform for Rehabilitation Services which will be officially established on 1st January 2001.