

ANNUAL REPORT

2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS



<i>Introduction</i>	02
<i>EPR Board, Secretariat & Members Update</i>	03
<i>EPR Strategic Priorities 2026 - 2029</i>	04
<i>EPR Commitment to Gender Equality</i>	04
<i>Staying Ahead of Trends</i>	05
<i>European Pillar of Social Rights & Rights-Based Approach</i>	09
<i>Work on Employment</i>	13
<i>Work on Mental Health</i>	13
<i>Digital Skills & Technology</i>	15
<i>Work on Youth</i>	17
<i>Contributing to Policy Development</i>	18
<i>Work on ICF</i>	22
<i>QIAT for Members</i>	23
<i>Communication Highlights</i>	24
<i>Online Resources</i>	25
<i>European Funded Projects</i>	26
<i>EQUASS</i>	29

INTRODUCTION



Dear EPR members and partners,

As we look back on 2025, I am proud to share with you this Annual Report — a reflection of what we have built together over the year. We continued to strengthen our organisation, in March we approved our new Strategy guiding us till 2029 and in June our General Assembly elected a new Board of Directors, composed of nine representatives from EPR full member organisations. We welcomed Furio Gramatica as our new Chairperson. In our Secretariat, in Brussels, Clara Beser Ramada joined as our Policy Officer.

It has been a busy year where we took firm steps to bring forward the know-how and expertise of our members to contribute to EU policy developments and to the deliverables of the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030. We can happily say it made an impact as our organisation becomes ever more visible and influential at EU level.

Our community of members grew with i Arbeid from Norway joining us as members in December.

In 2025, we stayed ahead of trends by organising our Annual Conference 'Leading the Change in Rehabilitation: Towards Future-Proof Services', held on 5-6 June in Antwerp, Belgium, in collaboration with our member GTB. The conference brought together the EPR community, people with lived experience, experts, policymakers and professionals to share experiences, learn from good practices, and co-develop strategies for a more resilient and impactful sector. Ahead of the conference, EPR members had the opportunity to join four study visits in Belgium showcasing innovative approaches to rehabilitation, employment and social support for persons with disabilities.

Quality of life and quality of services remained key topics for our organisation. Our work on the revision of EQUASS continued, a public information session presented the key updates including a stronger emphasis on rights, dignity, empowerment and person-centredness. We are excited about how much the renovated EQUASS can achieve.

Our National Awareness Raising Event (NARE) on quality and excellence in services for persons with disabilities took place in Athens. Our Public Affairs Event, focused on Independent Living, brought together experts, other EU organisations like ENIL and Inclusion Europe, policymakers and EPR members. It was supported by the launch of our Study mapping policies, practices and barriers to independent living across Europe, and showcasing good practices from EPR members. We also continued to contribute actively to EU policy processes on employment of persons with disabilities and on preparedness, through a dedicated Task Force and a publication providing recommendations for disability-inclusive preparedness planning.

Artificial intelligence remained high on our agenda. We organised capacity-building workshops on AI in grant writing and quality assurance in projects, hosted a public webinar on AI for the delivery of services for persons with disabilities, and published a guidance sheet on integrating AI responsibly in service delivery.

I whole heartily recommend to read our published papers on women and girls with disabilities in digital and tech professions, on mental health and well-being of young people, high-quality rehabilitation through technologies, and more!

EPR Working Groups provided our members with rich opportunities to mutually learn from each other on mental health, digital skills, return to work, youth, ICF, and INTEREHA. Study visits brought members to Fundación Rey Ardid in Zaragoza, Fundación INTRAS in Valladolid, and Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre in Estonia. Our Policy Network and Communications Network continued to offer valuable spaces for exchange, and our six Newsbulletins kept members informed on EPR activities and EU policy developments throughout the year.

We marked the successful completion of three Erasmus+ projects and continued our work on IDEA, NewWorkTech, SPACE, InDiCo, GOLD, and our new project SUPPORT.

A big thanks to all our members and partners for this excellent year of collaboration, and to the committed EPR Secretariat team for their dedication and hard work throughout the year.

EPR Secretary General,
Alicia Gomez Campos

EPR BOARD, SECRETARIAT & MEMBERS UPDATE



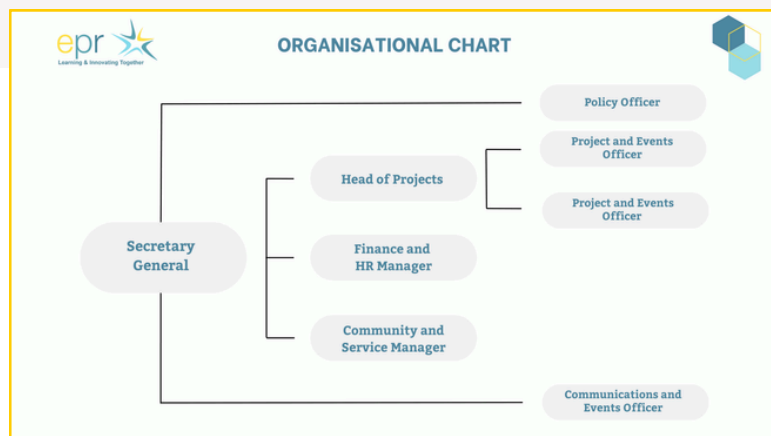
On 4 June, the EPR General Assembly elected a new Board of Directors, composed of nine representatives from EPR full member organisations, for a renewable term of four years. The current members of the Board are:

- Furio Gramatica (Fondazione Don Gnocchi), Chairperson
- Timo Heiskala (Autism Foundation Finland), Vice-Chairperson
- Sabina Lobato (Fundación ONCE), Vice-Chairperson
- Patrick Ruppol (GTB), Treasurer
- Anne Marie McDonnell (Rehab Group), Human Resources Contact Point
- Tom Cardoso (CRM)
- Veronika Kaska (Astangu)
- Pablo Sánchez (Fundación Intras)
- Nektaria Sifaki (Theotokos Foundation)



EPR Secretariat

In 2025, EPR welcomed a new team member to the Secretariat: Clara Beser Ramada, who took on the role of EPR Policy Officer.



EPR Membership

In December, we welcomed iArbeid as a new EPR member from Norway.



EPR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

2026 – 2029



1

EPR enables Innovation in Service Provision

2

EPR is a consistently growing, stable and sustainable network

3

EPR promotes technology as an enabler of effective and efficient services that ensure inclusion, independent living, and rehabilitation

4

EPR demonstrates leadership in supporting transitions in education, employment, independent living, and rehabilitation

5

EPR is a point of reference for Quality Standards across Social Services of Excellence for persons with disabilities

6

EPR grows its policy influence through targeted contributions and strategic partnerships

Read the full EPR Priorities and Strategic Objectives [here](#).

EPR COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY



In 2025, we developed a **Gender Equality Plan**. It ensures our policies and practices actively promote diversity, equity, and respect. We are committed to equal opportunities, fair treatment, and an inclusive culture in every aspect of our work and as an employer. Check it out [here](#).

STAYING AHEAD OF TRENDS



Annual Conference

On 5-6 June 2025, we organised our Annual Conference ‘Leading the Change in Rehabilitation: Towards Future-Proof Services’ in Antwerp, Belgium, in collaboration with our Belgian member GTB. Over a day and a half, participants focused on the changes the rehabilitation sector and services to people with disabilities are undertaking, and how service providers can play a leading role in shaping them for the better.

The Conference brought together the EPR community of members, partners, people with lived experience, experts in the field, policymakers and professionals to share experiences, learn from good practices, and co-develop strategies for a more resilient and impactful sector. The diverse range of topics demonstrated the multifaceted nature of the rehabilitation sector and the need for collaborative, long-term strategies to address the evolving needs within the field.

The first day set a clear and compelling tone around the need for values-driven leadership and collective responsibility in shaping the future of rehabilitation services. Speakers emphasised that leadership today goes beyond managing change and scarce resources; it requires inspiring resilience, fostering shared vision, and maintaining humanity at the core of all actions. The overarching message was that building “future-proof” services is not an individual effort, but a shared commitment across the sector. A central theme throughout the day was the transition from institutional care to community-based, person-centred support.



The second day focused on how to translate vision into action, with a strong emphasis on evidence-based change, meaningful innovation, and policy reform at both national and European levels. The sessions highlighted that achieving future-proof rehabilitation systems requires not only ambition, but also structured approaches, critical reflection, and alignment between practice and policy.



Inspiring, really learning about leadership approaches and how to lead the change in an organisation and among peers.

- Conference participant



Access the Annual Conference report [here](#).



Pre-Annual Conference Study Visits (Antwerp, Belgium)

Ahead of the our Annual Conference 2025, EPR members had the opportunity to join four study visits aligned with the principles of active support to employment and inclusion of persons with disabilities, offering practical insights into innovative rehabilitation and social support services in Belgium.

These visits showcased diverse approaches: from RevArte Rehabilitation Hospital's integrated, person-centred model bridging clinical care and community reintegration (including employment pathways), to Rising You's creative use of sport and vocational training to support vulnerable groups - particularly asylum seekers - into the labour market. EPR members also explored the ZAS Multidisciplinary Pain Center's holistic, biopsychosocial approach linking healthcare with return-to-work strategies and Jeugd zorg Emmaüs Antwerp's comprehensive, community-based support for vulnerable children, young people, and families. Together, the visits highlighted the importance of cross-sector collaboration, personalised support, and innovative pathways to inclusion and participation across health, employment, and social care systems.

Online Awareness Raising Campaign: Quality of Life and Quality Services

Our EPR Online Campaign 2025 highlighted the essential link between the provision of high-quality services and attaining a higher quality of life in persons with disabilities. Through a series of eight engaging graphics, the campaign showcased various resources to promote quality in service provision both in theory and in practice. It featured detailed information on Quality Assurance Systems and tools, EU policy developments with a focus on the upcoming European Commission Framework on Social Services of Excellence for Persons with Disabilities, the opportunities and risks of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and good practices from EPR members in implementing AI within their service delivery.



Capacity Building Workshops

In December, we organised two capacity-building workshops for project managers, with the aim to equip them with tools that better support their work.

AI in Grant Writing

Designed to support project managers in using ChatGPT and other AI tools in a more effective and reliable way in their daily work. Led by AI implementation expert Kristjan Zemljic, the session addressed common challenges, including inconsistent outputs, AI hallucinations, and uncertainty around practical applications for project management. The training also introduced simple AI workflows and prompt libraries to support more efficient project management and proposal development.



Quality Assurance in Projects: From Principles to Practice

A workshop highlighting Quality Assurance (QA) as a strategic and proactive tool for ensuring quality, stakeholder alignment, and continuous improvement throughout the project lifecycle. Led by QA expert Igor Jojkić, the session combined practical insights with established methodologies drawn from EU-funded and cross-sector projects. It aimed to strengthen participants' understanding of key QA principles, exploring different QA approaches and requirements, and providing practical guidance on developing measurable quality indicators aligned with project objectives.



Public Webinar: AI for the delivery of services for persons with disabilities

On 17 December, the webinar brought together EU-level experts and EPR members to explore the opportunities and challenges Artificial Intelligence (AI) brings to disability services, and how it can be used ethically, safely and effectively to support both service users and staff. Experts from the European Disability Forum, Social Services Europe and EPR provided a European overview on how AI policies are evolving in the EU, and on the challenges and opportunities that AI brings to social services, and in particular, services for persons with disabilities. Finally, experts from Fondazione Don Gnocchi and Arbeid & Inkludering shared good practices on how service providers for persons with disabilities can use AI to overcome resource and staff shortages.

EPR Paper: Women with Disabilities in Digital and Tech

In an increasingly digital world, women with disabilities face specific barriers to work in the digital and tech sectors. In 2025, EPR published the paper “Women and girls with disabilities in digital and tech”, shedding light on the experiences of women and girls with disabilities in digital and tech professions. It includes a state of play of available data and research, including an analysis of the barriers women and girls with disabilities they face in the sector, EU-level policies, the role of service providers in supporting them, and an EPR member’s good practice on the topic. Finally, the paper presents practices by tech companies that foster the inclusion of women and persons with disabilities at work.



Access the Paper [here](#).

EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

& RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

EPR Study Visit: Inclusion of people with disabilities at AFID, Portugal

On 16 -17 October, a Study Visit was organised at EPR member AFID Diferença Foundation (Portugal) for a lively day-and-a-half meeting on inclusion of persons with disabilities through vocational education and training (VET) and employment. The visit aimed to raise awareness on principle 17 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, “inclusion of persons with disabilities”.



During the Study Visit, dedicated AFID professionals organised a guided tour around their facilities and presented their services “Centre for Activities and Inclusion” and VET. An expert from the European Commission’s Directorate General for Employment introduced the Disability Employment Package, followed by and an exchange of views among participants on employability and inclusion.

Public Affairs Event on Independent Living of Persons with Disabilities: The Role of Quality Services

Our Public Affairs Event 2025 focused on advancing independent living for persons with disabilities, framed by the UN CRPD and European policy developments, and highlighted the essential role of high-quality, person-centred services in enabling autonomy and inclusion. A key feature of the event was the presentation of our study mapping policies, practices, and barriers to independent living across Europe, alongside strong examples from EPR members demonstrating innovative approaches such as community-based housing, personalised support systems, supported employment pathways, and digital safety initiatives.



Winner of the EPR Prize 2025, Fundación ONCE

The event also highlighted intersectional challenges, particularly the heightened risk of gender-based violence faced by women with disabilities, illustrated through the **EPR Prize 2025** Winner “Women in ON Mode” programme by Fundación ONCE, which combines recovery, empowerment, and employment support. Policy discussions reinforced that while progress is being made at EU and national level, significant gaps remain, including ongoing institutionalisation, fragmented support systems, and limited access to personalised assistance. Overall, the event concluded that independent living depends on sustained political commitment, adequate investment in personalised supports, and the meaningful involvement of persons with disabilities in shaping the policies that affect their lives.

Study on Support for Independent Living of Persons with Disabilities

Presented during the Public Affairs Event, our Study on Independent Living examined policies, practices, and barriers shaping the autonomy of persons with disabilities, based on a review of key policy documents and EPR member practices. Grounded in Article 19 of the UN CRPD and **European Commission Guidance on Independent Living**, the study outlined the essential elements needed for an enabling framework for independent living and situated these within the broader EU policy context, including recent Council Conclusions on social inclusion.



Access the Study [here](#).

It showcased 10 good practices from EPR members across Europe, highlighting common success factors such as person-centred approaches, community-based support, and cross-sector collaboration, with the EQUASS Framework presented as an example of how to implement quality assurance. The study also identified structural, political, and societal barriers that continue to hinder independent living and concluded with recommendations for action at EU and national, regional, and local levels.

EPR Paper: Active Inclusion & Equal Opportunities for Women and Girls with Disabilities

In 2025, we published the analytical paper “Active Inclusion and Equal Opportunities for Women and Girls with Disabilities”, which takes stock of developments that have taken place in the EU since our 2019 Analytical Paper “Women and girls with a disability – Active Inclusion and Equal Opportunities”. It includes key data and research on violence experienced by women with disabilities, as well as access to education and skills development, employment, and healthcare. It also evaluates the evolution and remaining gaps during this period by looking into the existing EU and international policy frameworks and provides recommendations for EU policy makers.



Access the Paper [here](#).

EPR Briefing – Guidance on Independent Living: one year after publication



Access the Briefing [here](#).

This Briefing published in 2025 aims to help readers navigate the “Guidance on independent living and inclusion in the community of persons with disabilities in the context of EU funding”, a document published by the European Commission to support the realisation of the right of independent living and inclusion in the community in the context of EU funding, in line with Art. 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This EPR Briefing also aims to further support its dissemination and implementation.

Task Force “Pathways to Preparedness”

The Task Force Pathways to Preparedness gathered EPR members and experts on the topic to exchange and elaborate a mutual understanding on preparedness in the sector of services for persons with disabilities.

At a first meeting in November, EPR members met with experts from the Red Cross EU Office and the European Disability Forum, who presented the **EU’s Preparedness Union Strategy**, the role of social services in preparedness and how services for persons with disabilities and persons with disabilities themselves can be involved in preparedness planning. At the second meeting in December, a Policy Officer from the European Commission Directorate General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations shared with EPR members an update on the EU Preparedness strategy, on a set of accessible guidelines for persons with disabilities on how to act in case of an

emergency. At these meetings, EPR members were able to share and exchange from their work experience on preparedness, and to present good practices and projects on the topic.

➤ **Publication: Pathways to Preparedness: Services for Disability-Inclusive Preparedness**

The outcomes of the Task Force on Preparedness formed the basis of the publication “Pathways to Preparedness: Services for Disability-Inclusive Preparedness”. The paper outlines the EU and international policy context on preparedness, including the EU’s Preparedness Union Strategy, and provides insights and recommendations to ensure persons with disabilities and service providers are actively included in relevant policies and plans at national and European level.



Access the Publication [here](#).

NARE event on ‘Quality and Excellence in services for persons with disabilities: Aiming at a European, but locally meaningful, Quality Assurance in Greece’

In 2025, a National Awareness Raising Event took place in Athens on quality and excellence in services for persons with disabilities, bringing together stakeholders from Greece and across Europe to explore how to build a European-aligned but locally meaningful quality assurance system. The event, hosted in collaboration with the NET, a national network of service providers to persons with disabilities in Greece, and kicked-off by the Greek Minister of Social Cohesion and Family Affairs, Domna Maria Michailidou, focused on a shared understanding that quality in disability services is not optional but a rights-based obligation rooted in the UN CRPD. Opening contributions from national and European actors stressed the evolution of disability policy in Greece from a charity-based model to a rights-based system, and the growing need to ensure that this shift is reflected in practice through consistent, measurable improvements in services and outcomes for persons with disabilities.



A major focus of the event was the role of quality assurance frameworks as practical tools for embedding rights, person-centred approaches, and continuous improvement into service delivery. EPR and EU perspectives underlined ongoing initiatives such as the EU Framework for Social Services of Excellence and the Guidance on Independent Living, both aimed at strengthening rights-based,

community-oriented support systems. Case studies from Portugal, Slovenia, and Greece demonstrated how quality systems move from formal certification to organisational culture change, improving staff development, user participation, transparency, and measurable quality-of-life outcomes.

WORK ON EMPLOYMENT



Return to Work & Partnerships with Employers Working Group

In a series of two online meetings throughout the year, the Return to Work and Partnerships Working Group exchanged expertise and good practices on improving employment pathways for persons with disabilities and strengthening employer engagement. Under this workstream, members examined key barriers and success factors for return-to-work processes and reflected on evidence and policy developments at European level, including the European Commission's study on alternative employment models and Inclusion Europe's report "Job first – Examples and ideas for employment and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities".

The group also contributed to discussions on the EU Quality Jobs Act and related consultation processes, highlighting priorities such as the participation of workers with disabilities in social dialogue and collective bargaining. In addition, members engaged directly with employer perspectives through exchanges with industry representatives, exploring practical success factors for creating large-scale employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

WORK ON MENTAL HEALTH



Mental Health Working Group

Throughout the year, the Mental Health Working Group exchanged updates on key organisational initiatives and emerging developments in mental health policy and practice. Members reviewed recent World Health Organization (WHO) and European Union reports, using these insights to inform discussions on strengthening mental health and well-being support across services.

The group also contributed to the development of a forthcoming Guidance Note on maintaining good mental health and well-being, sharing practical approaches and good practices from their own organisations. These included initiatives supporting mental health in rural areas and providing targeted support for care workers.

Study Visit to Fundacion Rey Ardid



On 7-8 May, the EPR Mental Health Working Group was hosted by our member Fundación Rey Ardid in Zaragoza, Spain for a 2-day study visit. During the stay, the group took part in a guided tour through a variety of Rey Ardid's facilities dedicated to mental health services, such as the Mid-Stay Unit, the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Center and social club. They met with both service workers and service users to explore the developed approaches and good practices in the field, and exchanged experience from their own countries of Greece, Malta, Slovenia and the Netherlands.



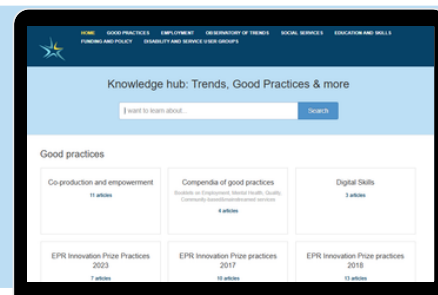
➤ Paper: Mindful Mondays: Good practices in maintaining “good” mental health & well-being in services for people with disabilities

Building on previous work addressing mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic and other service challenges, in this paper the Mental Health Working Group members share insights from the daily work in their organisations and debates in the group.

Access the Paper [here](#).



From trauma-related interventions and support services to return to work processes, EPR members share their experience on what approaches effectively work. Explore good practices on topics related to mental health on the EPR Knowledge Hub [here](#).



DIGITAL SKILLS & TECHNOLOGY



Digital Skills Working Group

Throughout 2025, the EPR Digital Skills Working Group, co-led by Theotokos Foundation, continued its work on strengthening digital inclusion and advancing the responsible use of technology in social services. The group focused on improving access to digital and tech-related professions for women with disabilities, drawing on national experiences and practical initiatives from member organisations. It also explored the broader transition of disability services towards the integration of digital tools and artificial intelligence in service delivery, with particular attention to opportunities, risks, and conditions for safe and effective use.

Throughout the years, members contributed to the development of a paper on digital and tech careers for women with disabilities and revisited collaboration opportunities with technology partners, including joint initiatives such as virtual learning environments with industry actors like Google.org.

INTEREHA Working Group

The INTEREHA Working Group, led by EPR member Fondazione Don Gnocchi, aims to share practices among tech-based (or willing-to-be tech-based) organisations, and works to establish a metric to evaluate practices in the fields of rehabilitation and training, to bring the respective voices to policy makers' level, as well as to consider related project developments.

INTEREHA Study Visit to Fundacion INTRAS



On 13-14 November, the EPR INTEREHA Working Group came together in Valladolid, Spain for a Study Visit hosted by EPR member Fundación INTRAS.

With a shared commitment to advancing tech-based solutions in rehabilitation, the group was introduced in detail to INTRAS' work in the field through a multisensory experience session, an in-depth presentation of their Living Lab, and hands-on technology testing and demonstrations.

During the visit, members worked to finalised a set of policy recommendations shaped by the Working Group's activities throughout 2024–2025. These recommendations, targeting European, national, regional and local decision-makers, reflect the key messages that emerged over the years, structured around five perspectives of technology adoption in rehabilitation.

➤ INTEREHA Report: Enabling High-Quality Rehabilitation Through Technologies

Members of the EPR INTEREHA Working Group worked together to analyse a set of technology applications in rehabilitation and social services that were selected based on the level of interest of all participants. Medical, social and organisational aspects were addressed, as well as existing challenges and future opportunities.

The resulting report showcases the good practices and experiences of EPR members that have been gathered within the Working Group and provides a set of policy recommendations based on the key challenges that emerged from the discussion.



Access the Report [here](#).

Guidance for Integrating AI in Service for People with Disabilities



Access the Information Sheet [here](#).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly involved in many aspects of living, learning, working and communicating. Persons with disabilities and professionals working in services and support observe that knowledge of and proficiency with AI tools is becoming important in daily activities. As this trend continues, it is recommended that service providers be proactive with regards to integrating AI in learning and working.

This information sheet provides guidance on how to do so.

WORK ON YOUTH



Youth Working Group

The Youth Working Group brings together social workers, therapists and other professionals in services and support for young people with disabilities. They are involved in education and training, independent living and employment support, vocational and social rehabilitation.

The Working Group assembles three times throughout the year, including two online meetings and one in-person site visit. Members share news and updates on integrated services for young people transitioning from teenage to adulthood, from school to work, and from family to independent living, and more.

Study Visit to Astangu

On 29 and 30 September 2025, EPR Estonian member Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre hosted seven representatives of other EPR members for a study visit to learn more about their courses, services and support offered to students in the Centre.



The goal was to explore creative therapies for young people with disabilities, and how different approaches can foster self-awareness, self-expression, and confidence, thereby promoting better mental health, emotional wellbeing, and the development of essential skills for independent living. The group was welcomed by the students, therapists and managers at Astangu, and had the chance to try different creative activities, while also learning from therapists how they reach out to young people in individual and group sessions.



➤ Paper: Happy and calm – most of the time: Improving the living conditions affecting the mental health of young people in transition

This paper explores the mental health and well-being of young people – both with and without disabilities – during critical transitions from adolescence to adulthood.

Central to the paper are the voices and experiences of young people themselves, gathered through interviews alongside perspectives from social workers, therapists and trainers.

Access the Paper [here](#).

CONTRIBUTING TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT



Policy Network

The EPR Policy Network is an online space where EPR members learn and exchange on EU policies and discuss key policy matters at the national and EU level. Three meetings were organised in 2025, aiming at informing EPR members of related updates and to provide a space for exchange around key policy matters and supporting public consultations. Members engaged in fruitful exchanges on updates from their organisations and their national contexts and on EPR's key messages on core topics such as: EU institutional updates, including the priorities of the new Council of the EU Presidencies (Poland and Denmark), the Union of Skills, the Quality Jobs Roadmap, the European Semester process, the EU's long-term budget post-2028 (also known as MFF), the EU Disability Strategy, and the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Contributing to Written Public Consultations

In 2025, EPR submitted input to 6 written consultations from the European Commission and European Parliament.

EU Institution	Consultation topic	Date
European Commission's Joint Research Centre	DigComp 3.0	Apr 2025
European Parliament	Equal treatment Directive	May 2025
European Parliament (MEP Maria Walsh)	Mental Health	Jun 2025
European Commission	Quality Jobs Roadmap	Jul 2025
European Commission	Employment Equality Directive implementation	Jul 2025
European Commission	European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan	Sep 2025



Participation in stakeholder consultation meetings

EPR participated in 5 stakeholder consultation meetings organised by the European Commission:



EU Institution	Consultation topic	Date
European Commission's Joint Research Centre	DigComp 3.0	Apr 2025
European Commission	IT implementation of the European Disability and Parking Card	May 2025
European Commission	European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan	Jun 2025
European Commission	New actions of the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	October, December 2025

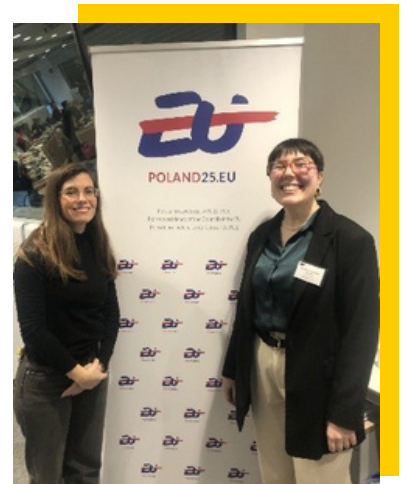
Disability Platform

EPR is an observer member of the Disability Platform, a European Commission Expert Group with the objective to establish cooperation between the EU institutions, Member States and civil society. In 2025, EPR has been present in all in-person and on-line meetings of the Disability Platform, in which EPR has been able to provide input on the new actions of the Disability Strategy. Through the Disability Platform's Employment Subgroup EPR has also contributed to defining key topics for new employment-related actions within the Disability Strategy.

High-level conferences by Council of the EU Presidencies

In 2025 EPR attended two high-level conferences organized by the Polish Presidency and Danish Presidencies of the Council.

The Polish Presidency organized the conference “Raising awareness of the potential of persons with disabilities in various areas of social life and professional activities”, in March in Brussels, Belgium. This event was an opportunity to learn about Polish service providers for persons with disabilities and to network with other EU-level partners.



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Zero Platform Conference



EPR attended the Zero Project Conference in Vienna, Austria. Focused on employment and innovative projects including awards received by EPR members Chance B and Fundación ONCE. The conference was a good opportunity to network with new contacts from USA, Japan, Luxembourg, Greece, Canada, Poland and Iran.

Strategic Partnerships



As members of the European Disability Forum (EDF), EPR attended the EDF Annual General Assembly in Vilnius, Lithuania, organised around the topic of supported decision making.



Through EPR's membership of Social Services Europe, of which EPR held the vice-presidency in the second half of 2025, EPR collaborated with partners including Eurodiaconia, Feantsa, EASPD, Red Cross EU Office, Caritas Europa, CEDAG, EAN and CECOP in publishing joint responses to consultations and joint statements e.g. on Public Procurement, on the EU long-term budget (aka Multiannual Financial Framework), the EU Social Economy Action Plan, State Aid, and the European Pillar of Social Rights.

As part of the Inclusive Labour Market Alliance (ILMA), EPR spoke at the ILMA webinar on the launch of the Study on Alternative employment Models for Persons with Disabilities in which the European Commission, DG Employment, and Empirica, the consultancy leading the study's research, presented the Study's content and outcomes.

EPR Briefing – The Union of Skills Strategy

In 2025, EPR published the “EPR Briefing - Union of Skills Strategy”, which aims to help readers navigate the European Commission's Communication on the Union of Skills, and its policy deliverables. Published in March 2025 by the European Commission, the Union of Skills presents an EU-level strategy “to support the development of quality, inclusive and adaptable education, training and skills systems to increase the EU's competitiveness”. The EPR Briefing begins by outlining the policy context under which the Union of Skills was developed. It then provides an analysis of its four components and their key deliverables, and concludes with a description of the next steps in the delivery of the strategy.



Access the Briefing [here](#).

WORK ON ICF



ICF Working Group

Throughout 2025, the ICF Working Group advanced its work on strengthening the practical application of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) within rehabilitation and support services. Members exchanged updates on the use of ICF across their organisations and national contexts, fostering a shared understanding of different implementation approaches in medical and vocational rehabilitation settings.

Building on these exchanges, the group began developing practical guidance on the appropriate use of ICF, aiming to support service providers with limited experience in the system by highlighting both its benefits and potential pitfalls. Members also shared insights from their work with service users and discussed priorities for future activities, including the transition towards continued collaboration as the ICF Network in 2026.

ICF for Beginners: Training Session

On 18 May, EPR organised an online training session on 'ICF for Beginners'. Led by EPR member and expert on the topic Inkendaal Hospital, the session was developed for staff with limited or beginner knowledge of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), with a focus on understanding its background, concept and approach, as established by the World Health Organization (WHO). Amongst else, participants learned about different definitions of health vs. disease and the idea of ICF to have a shared taxonomy, language, improved reporting and better communication, including with the patient.

The ICF in Services and Support Info Sheet



The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) is a practical framework developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) to describe how people function in everyday life. It helps professionals and decision-makers understand not only a diagnosis or impairment but what matters for a person's daily life.

This EPR fact sheet explains the main aspects and aims of ICF. Access it [here](#).

QIAT FOR MEMBERS



QIAT, the Quality-of-Life Impact Assessment Tool, is our service for practitioners in the development and delivery of services for persons with disabilities. It offers a web based resource to measure the impact of services on the Quality of Life with service users and their service workers. QIAT is a dynamic and interactive tool that guides participants through a defined set of questions to provide information which service managers can use to develop more inclusive and effective services.

Service areas:

- Vocational Education and Training (VET)
- Specialised VET (vocational education and training for persons with disabilities)
- Community Care (CC)

In September, EPR held an online workshop to introduce EPR members to QIAT, the Quality of Life Impact Assessment Tool.

Explore the QIAT [here](#).

COMMUNICATION HIGHLIGHTS



Communication Network

In September, the Communication Network held its annual online meeting, focusing on strengthening messaging around disability rights and services, as well as addressing common communication challenges. Members exchanged good practices from their organisations, including experiences with producing a successful podcast and launching a public consultation on the right to personal assistance. The group also explored a case study and took part in a follow-up activity on key success factors for communicating disability and service-related topics in an impactful, inclusive, and accessible way. The meeting concluded with a lively discussion on emerging communication trends and tools, including ChatGPT, SlidesAI for professional presentations, and Syllaby as an easy-to-use video creation platform.

Access the meeting report [here](#).

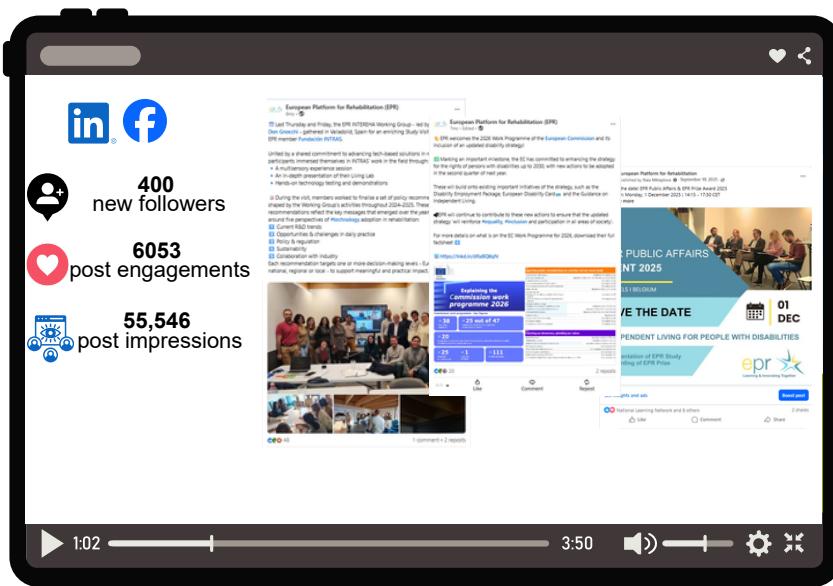
EPR Newsletter

EPR produced and circulated six Newsbulletins to its members to keep them informed on EPR activities, European policies and developments relevant to their work, EPR members' news, EU-funded project updates, and upcoming events and activities that could be of interest to them.

To better meet members' needs, in 2025 EPR focused on delivering EU policy news through drafting our own, original articles explaining different policy developments in an easy to understand language and linking them to the relevant EC publications.

Access the 2025 EPR Newsbulletins [here](#).

Social Media Statistics

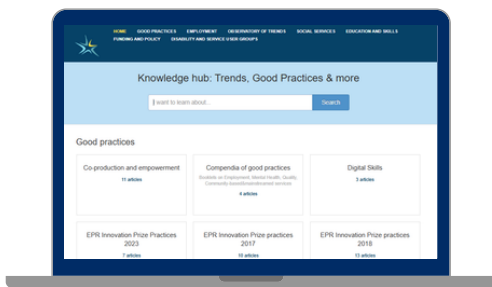


ONLINE RESOURCES



Knowledge Hub

EPR updated the website hosted by HelpScout and added glossaries (focusing on supporting non-native English-speakers) for the areas of services EPR is active in, as well as key EU concepts and initiatives. New projects, good practices from other activities and dedicated pages addressing the EPSR Action Plan and related initiatives were also updated.



GOOD PRACTICES

- [EU-funded projects](#)
- [Mental Health](#)

Policy

- [AI Glossary](#)
- [Independent Living](#)
- [Employment](#)

Trainings

- [EU-funded projects](#)
- [Digital Skills](#)

EUROPEAN FUNDED PROJECTS



Projects concluded in 2025



Final Conference: Co-Creating Inclusive Education: Empowering VET Staff and Learners through Video'

On 6 February, partners of the Video Online Learning and Training (VOLT) project, together with key stakeholders, gathered in Brussels to mark the successful completion of the project and present its main results. Under the theme “Co-Creating Inclusive Education: Empowering VET Staff and Learners Through Video”, the final conference showcased the fully accessible [VOLT platform](#) featuring co-created videos developed by service users with the support of trainers, alongside a [Staff Guide](#) for vocational education and training professionals and a [Toolkit for learners](#). The event also included contributions on related European initiatives, including the European Disability Forum’s research supported by Google.org [on Digital Skills, Accommodation and Technological Assistance for Employment \(DATA\)](#), as well as the IFM-SEI E-MPACT [Youth for Inclusive E-Education project](#), highlighting broader efforts to advance inclusive digital learning and skills development across Europe.



AETHERAPIES

Final Conference: Advancing Inclusive and Evidence-Based Therapies for Autism in Europe

The final conference of the AETHERAPIES project, an Erasmus+ initiative focused on improving access to inclusive and evidence-based therapies for autistic individuals across Europe, was held on 26 June in partnership with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). The high-level event brought together policymakers, researchers, practitioners, autistic people and their families, and civil society organisations to reflect on how Europe can strengthen more informed, inclusive, and accessible therapeutic support for autism. Key outcomes included the presentation of project findings drawn from three years of research, consultation, and cross-European collaboration, as well as policy and practice perspectives on developing a more coherent European approach to autism across Member States. Partners also presented policy recommendations aimed at improving the availability and accessibility of information on evidence-based interventions.



Final Conference: Fostering Inclusive Communities and Healthy Ageing for People with Intellectual Disabilities

On 26 June, EPR and project partners presented the results and impact of the Erasmus+ funded Particip.Age project at the conference “Fostering Inclusive Communities and Healthy Ageing for People with Intellectual Disabilities”, which brought together stakeholders, service providers, and advocates to explore inclusive and forward-looking approaches to ageing. The event highlighted the “double vulnerability” faced by people with intellectual disabilities, who often experience age-related health and social challenges earlier than the general population, underscoring the need for inclusive, community-based responses that promote dignity, participation, and support throughout the ageing process.

Key outcomes included the presentation of the project’s final results, the launch of innovative online training courses for both people with intellectual disabilities and the professionals supporting them, and the introduction of policy recommendations aimed at improving inclusion and quality of life. Participants also discussed practical ways to develop more age-inclusive services and communities, complemented by testimonials from service users and staff on their experience with the Particip.Age training courses.



EPR-led Equal Treatment Project announced as a Zero Project Awardee

In December 2025, the Equal Treatment Project was announced as a Zero Project Awardee 2026 for its work in advancing cross-sector partnerships to improve healthcare access for people with intellectual disabilities!

The 2026 awards focus on Accessibility, Inclusive ICT, and Crisis Response, with Equal Treatment standing out for tackling one of the most persistent inequalities in Europe today: the lack of equal access to secondary and tertiary healthcare for people with intellectual disabilities.

Awardees will be recognised during the 2026 Zero Project Conference #ZeroCon26, taking place at the United Nations Office at Vienna from the 18-20 February, 2026.

Ongoing Projects



The Inclusive Design Empowerment Action (IDEA) Project

The project brings together partners from six European organisations with the aim to develop a European training model that enables people with disabilities to become “digital makers” by combining FabLab methodologies with inclusive adult education. Through this approach, the project seeks to foster creativity, expand employment opportunities, and promote greater social inclusion by equipping participants with both manual and digital skills relevant to smart manufacturing and digital production. In 2025, project partners developed The Toolkit for Adult Educators - a structured collection of educational resources, practical methodologies, tools, and reflective guidance designed to provide educators with structured pathways to guide inclusive educational processes.



NewWorkTech Project

The NewWorkTech Project engages in research-based enhancement of the work-related capacities of a) people with disabilities and b) the general workforce, with particular focus on technologically mediated tasks and interaction. The project covers the entire arc of development, from empirical research into how people with disabilities – as forerunners of technology use – perform tasks and interact at work, to theoretical innovation regarding the nature of socio-material factors, as well as what constitutes technology, policy recommendations, and to the development of new technological solutions, including AI-based technologies.



Social Prescribing and Civic Engagement (SPACE) Project

The project aims to bring together social prescribing and volunteering to create an environment and approach that supports the health and well-being of people with health and rehabilitation needs, with a special focus on cancer survivors. The project will address Education and Training needs of health, social care and rehabilitation professionals, NGO/Civil Society leaders, as well as policy makers, making a direct impact on the EU Cancer Mission contributing to the National Cancer Plans.



Increase Digital Competences to Promote Inclusion (InDiCo) Project

The project was initiated to better foster the inclusion of persons with learning difficulties into the digital age. To do so, the project aims to first understand the challenges they face in acquiring relevant competences, such as the ones identified in the EC Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp). Based on the gained insight, several resources will be created to support the development of digital skills of persons with learning difficulties.



Getting Older with a Disability (GOLD) Project

The project aims to develop a methodology and tools to enhance the skills of professionals (EQF 4 to 6) and volunteers working in the disability and/or older people's sectors, so that they are better able to provide quality services in the care and support of ageing people with disabilities.

New Projects



The Supported Employment for Reducing Long-Term Unemployment Among Persons with Disabilities (SUPPORT) Project

The project is co-funded by the European Social Fund and aims to tackle the persistent issue of long-term unemployment among persons with disabilities in the open labour market. The project will scale up and transfer socially innovative Supported Employment practices across various EU regions, addressing the significant employment barriers persons with disabilities face through immediate job placement and ongoing support.

EQUASS



In 2025, EQUASS regular certifications continued and a new training framework was being developed.

Information Session

In the lead-up to the launch of the revised European Quality in Social Services (EQUASS) Framework, in December EPR organised a hybrid public information session in Brussels to present its key updates, features, and improvements.

The session provided an overview of the new principles, criteria, and requirements designed to better support organisations in continuous improvement and achieving excellence. The revised EQUASS Framework puts stronger emphasis on 'rights and dignity' and 'empowerment and person-centredness'.

EQUASS Certified Organisations in 2025



Certified Organisations



THANK YOU!



The EPR TEAM



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