

# European Platform for Rehabilitation

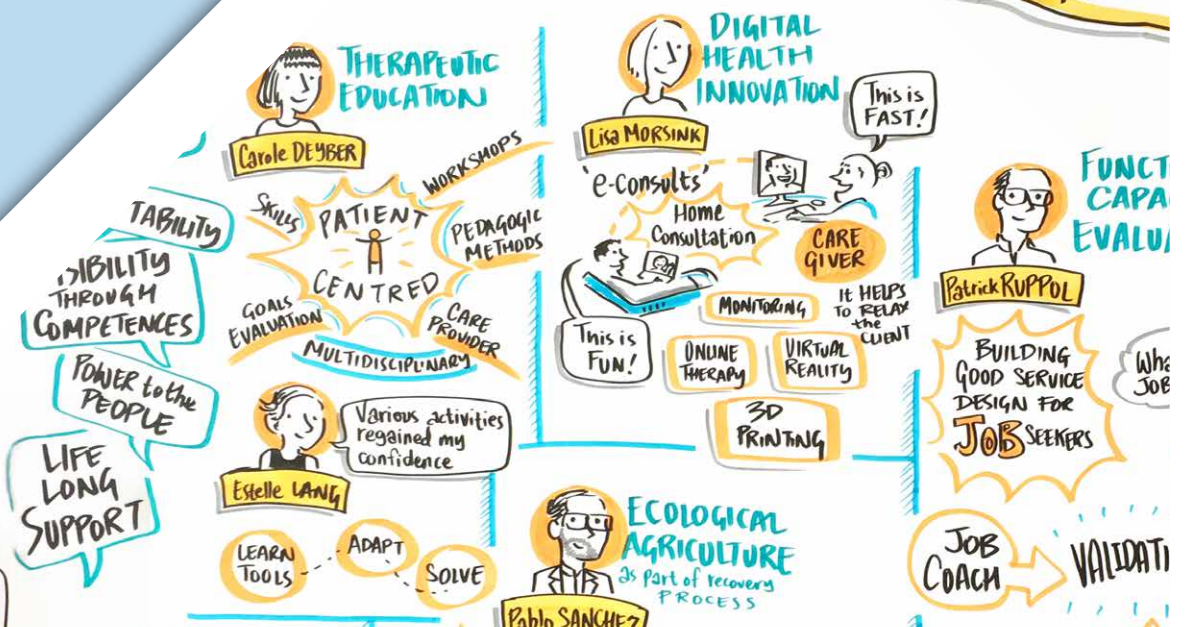
epr

european platform for rehabilitation



## ANNUAL REPORT 2017

### EXPERIENCES & PRACTICES from EPR MEMBERS



We need to be PRO-ACTIVE



**Frits Wichers**  
President of EPR

2017 was an important and busy year for EPR. One of our most relevant highlights was the co-development of new strategic objectives for our organisation to best meet the needs and interests of our members, coming out of an inspiring Workshop for Directors held in Milan. Mutual learning and the provision of high quality services for people with disability for improved quality of life remain our main drivers.

2017 also saw the release of EQUASS 2018, a revised version of our quality system tailored to the social sector. This version of the accreditation system is designed to be more user-friendly, more flexible and support continuous improvement.

EPR delivered four successful national awareness-raising events bringing together many different actors working with people with disabilities and service delivery to

discuss inclusive employment and education and community-based mental health services in social service provision in four corners of Europe. Key workshops of the year were on person-centred planning and partnerships with employers which inspired participants to learn from each other's good practices.

Our annual Public Affairs event saw partners and members debate ethics and rights in social services accompanied by a study highlighting inspiring practices on the topic. Combining technology, expert input and examples of quality services, we brought partners and resources together into an online learning module on mental health and co-production, which was welcomed very positively by our membership and stakeholders.

In 2018 we look forward to celebrating our 25th Anniversary and bringing the strategy to life in the activities and services we provide to our members, to make sure our network keeps leading in service provision for people with disabilities.



**Laura Jones**  
Secretary General of EPR



EPR is a network of service providers to people with disabilities committed to high quality service delivery

## VISION

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.

## ACTIVITIES

EPR activities go beyond traditional mutual learning exchanges. Professionals from EPR members gather to benchmark and analyse effectiveness in service provision; improving quality of services and quality of life for clients, as well as positively impacting their daily work experience. EPR members co-create and pilot innovative products, tools and methods to better meet the needs of clients, employers and funders.

## MISSION

To build the capacity of our members to provide sustainable, high quality services in a competitive environment through mutual learning and training.

## Expanded and more balanced membership base

The secretariat introduced EPR, its services and activities, to organisations in the National Awareness-raising events and in one-to-one meetings across Europe. Mariaberg from Germany decided to join the network in 2018. EPR was happy to welcome back Centro de Reabilitação Profissional de Gaia (CRPG) as a full member. Both Mariaberg and CRPG bring many years of expertise and experience from a wide variety of services.

EPR conducted an in-depth online consultation with members on their interests, challenges and needs. The outcomes fed into the discussions that developed the strategy for 2018 onwards – more information on page 11. For the 2018 work programme EPR working groups of EPR members developed concrete activities for social inclusion, VET, employment, medical rehabilitation and mental health based on the outcomes of the consultations.

## Developing the menu of services and activities

## Towards a more product-oriented approach

In 2017 EPR added to its database of inspiring practices through the call for submissions to the Innovation Prize and study on Rights and Ethics in social services. There were numerous presentations and Q&A for practices from members and external organisations in the Centre Coordinators meetings, with a focus on using International Classification of Functioning and working with people with a migration background.

EPR continued to increase its partnerships and profile cooperating with other networks and actors in different activities. Six partners engaged in the study and public affairs event on rights and ethics and the e-learning module on mental health and co-production. EPR was accepted as an Observer member in the European Expert Group on Deinstitutionalisation and provided key input to Social Services Europe's work.

## A leading network of service providers

## 2018 and beyond...

Keep supporting our members to co-create high quality services to help improve the lives of people with disabilities

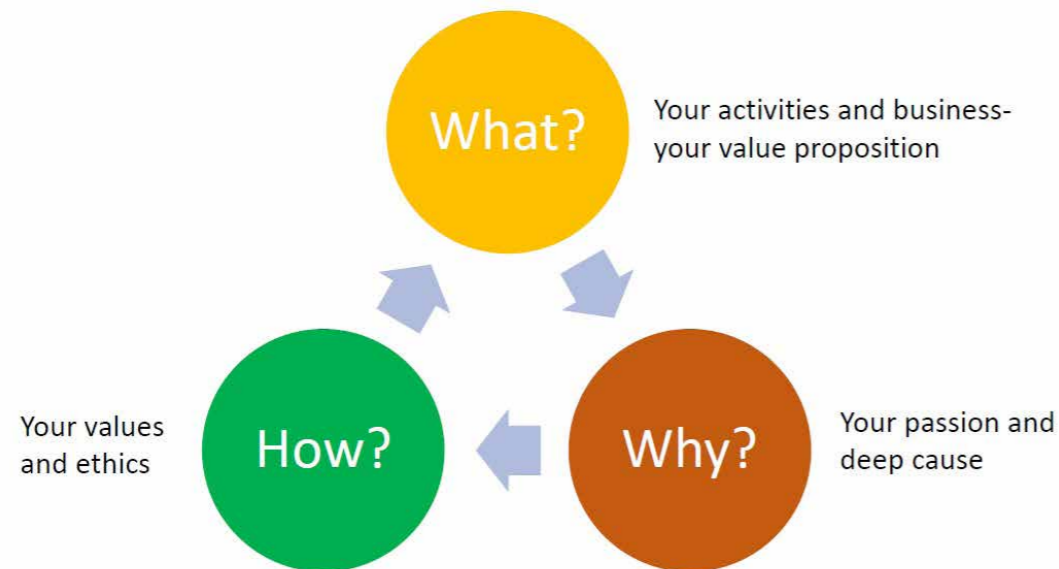


# Strategic Workshop of Directors 2017

## Fit for the future – co-creating the EPR of tomorrow

Based on the outcomes of the consultation with members, Directors came together in Milan to participate in an interactive workshop to develop the future strategy. The sessions were led by expert facilitator and management consultant Roger Greene. Participants engaged with concepts and methods which both supported the process to develop EPR's strategy and provided them with tools to apply back in their own organisations for strategic improvement or to address challenges.

### Start with WHY?



The proposals for the strategic objectives from 2018 onwards developed by members are:

EPR facilitates valuable learning and development opportunities

EPR equips members to address trends impacting service delivery

EPR network of innovative organisations grows

EPR contributes to policy discussions based on members' expertise

National Awareness-Raising Events

**30 March 2017, Valladolid, Spain.**

**Mental health services in rural areas**

The awareness-raising event on services to people with mental health conditions living in rural areas was organised by EPR and its member Fundación INTRAS, in collaboration with the regional social services of Castilla y León. A member of the European Expert Group on Transition from Institutional to community-based care presented EU funding opportunities to support de-institutionalisation and a representative of NLN, part of the EPR member Rehab Group, presented their expertise on community-based services for people living in rural Ireland. The speakers and participants shared ideas and some conclusions were that promoting more employment opportunities in mainstream companies is needed, creating a catalogue of social enterprises would also help, as would boosting investment in rural areas and specific training on skills.

**13 October 2017, Ljubljana, Slovenia**

**Work Place Adjustments to support the employment of people with disabilities**

Over 90 people came together in Ljubljana at the Chamber of Commerce to hear about international initiatives and discuss different practices to ensure all people have a work environment that enables them to work to the best of their abilities. Speakers explained the key role of occupational health professions in this field, the importance of psychological support for staff and the need to remember that mental health issues are often invisible disabilities. The event keynote speech was delivered by expert Graeme Whippy on Workplace Adjustments: Helping people be their best at work, which was particularly well received by participants.

**30 November 2017, Tallin, Estonia**

**Making VET systems inclusive**

This event discussed and promoted inclusion and the implementation of person-centred approach in vocational education. Organised by EPR together with its Estonian member Astangu and their partner Innove, Marjut Huttunen, from Luovi Vocational College in Finland, introduced the audience to the Finnish model based on joining the labour market after VET and an individual approach to inclusive education. Herma Veltman from EPR member Pluryn in the Netherlands talked about job-based learning opportunities, emphasising that if people are not able to learn from the way we teach them, we need to change the method of teaching. Participants worked in groups identifying challenges, potential solutions and ideas for future cooperation.



Each year, EPR organises professional development activities such as training seminars, webinars, and workshops for its members

and their professionals, providing them with new skills, knowledge of trends, mutual learning opportunities and innovation.

## ILO Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN) webinar with the International Labour Organisation

5/07/2017

Ivana Ivandic presented how the ILO Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN) works, goals, main areas of interest and presented some of the practices collected for this online knowledge database on workplace mental health strategies.

## How to make inclusive education a reality

12/12/2017, Nijmegen

This mutual learning workshop co-organised with member Rea-College-Pluryn in the Netherlands was an opportunity to share experiences on making inclusive education a reality. Building on EPR members' expertise and accompanied by a graphic facilitator, members identified common interests and led to an Erasmus+ KA3 application for the structured dialogue submitted by 9 EPR members and EPR.

## Person-centred planning, thinking and approaches

03/10/2017, Oslo

About twenty participants from five countries attended the workshop on person-centred planning (PCP) hosted by Næringslivets Hovedorganisasjon (NHO) and led by an expert in Oslo. In addition to deepening their understanding of the PCP model and thinking, participants had the opportunity to use specific tools and work on real-case scenarios with international like-minded colleagues.

## Promoting cooperation between employers and VR providers benefits all: From the right to work to the business case

27-28/11/2017, Cologne

Berufsförderungswerk Köln gGmbH, BFW Köln, hosted the partnership with employers' event, which attracted more than thirty participants from twelve countries. In addition to the study visit of BFW-Köln, participants actively engaged in discussions and reflection on how to best create solid relationships with companies. Representatives of German companies brought in the perspectives of employers and trainees were also invited to share their own experience in their pathways towards employment. All participants had the chance to present successful practices from their own organization.

## Webinar on customised employment

25/09/2017

This web meeting, co-organised with the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) from the United States, examined the concepts of customised employment and job carving, pointing out benefits of such models for service providers, companies and people with disabilities.





## Innovation Prize

The Innovation Prize allows EPR members to highlight best practices related to their fields of work and aims to stimulate the development of innovation. The 2017 Prize was awarded to URI, University Rehabilitation Institute, Slovenia, thanks to the activities they carry out to improve the life of people with disabilities through socio-cultural activities in their vocational rehabilitation program. Through this program, URI proved how interaction with music, arts, poetry or musical performance have a positive impact on people. Evalda Bizjak, an occupational therapist in Maribor, collected the prize from the hands of EPR President at the Annual Conference.

Mutual learning is embedded in the spirit of EPR. Thanks to the free online platform Teachable, EPR developed an e-Learning module on Mental Health and Co-production. With the support and collaboration from partner organisations Eurodiaconia, Mental Health Europe and the European Disability Forum the module examines what Mental Health is and what it means to apply a co-production approach to Mental Health. Practical resources and videos from experts support learning on these topics. The e-Learning module can be consulted through our website at:

[www.epr.eu/e-learning-module-on-mental-health-and-co-production/](http://www.epr.eu/e-learning-module-on-mental-health-and-co-production/)



## e-Learning Module on Mental Health and Co-production

## PESSIS III

In 2017 EPR was involved in the project PESSIS III, the continuation of PESSIS II and PESSIS - funded by the European Commission and aimed at the creation of a European network to represent employers in the social sector. In October the project reached its final step with a conference at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels. EPR Secretary General, Laura Jones, facilitated one of the panels where employers from different EU member states presented their organisations and their future involvement on the recently created Federation of European Social Employers. Employers' representatives joined civil society and non-profit organisations and representatives from the European Commission and the EESC to debate about the main outcomes of the project.

The Federation of European Social Employers aims at bringing together the major employer

## PESSIS 3 Promoting employers' social services in social dialogue

organisations in the field of social services in Europe. It will strive to provide social services' employers with an effective voice at European level, to find common solutions to the sector's challenges with both representatives of workers and the European institutions and to lead the European Union towards more social and inclusive policies. A report was presented, focusing on the state of play of social dialogue in the social services sector in Europe and analysing the challenging conditions within which social services operate.

For more information about the project, visit Social Services Europe website at :

[www.socialserviceseurope.eu/peسسis-iii](http://www.socialserviceseurope.eu/peسسis-iii)

## Be RIGHT

EPR and Fundación INTRAS together with EKP&PSY, Pro Mente, VRC and EASP kicked off a project on human rights of persons with mental health issues in November, funded by the EU Erasmus+ programme. When it comes to vulnerable groups such as people with mental health problems and their human rights, national legislation cannot always assure a human rights-based approach is put into practice in the delivery of care services. Well informed, trained and sensitized professionals who work with a human rights-based approach in their everyday practice can improve that.

BE RIGHT proposes to provide a quality training programme on Human Rights for professionals and



organisations working with persons with mental health problems. To make this possible, over two years the project's partners will jointly work on the development of a custom made, sector specific vocational training tool on the human rights of persons with mental health issues.

[www.beright-mh.eu](http://www.beright-mh.eu)

## Talentoscoop

The Talentoscoop project aims at increasing the employment rate of individuals with special support needs in the non-profit sector. The project will realise this by firstly carrying out a literature survey on the employment situation for the disadvantaged or people with disabilities jobseekers in Flanders, Belgium, especially in the non-profit sector; interviews with managers from different segments of the non-profit sector such as health care, disability care, older persons and child care. The project will then work on setting up a new service design to implement diversity management into non-profit organisations. It



will test the model by in cooperation with transnational partners, three other EPR members and create the new service in a pilot of five non-profit organisations based in two regions in Flanders.

## EU Funding Training

European Funding is an important topic for EPR and its members as accessing European funding programmes allows ideas and projects to improve the life of people with disability to be put in place. EPR informs members of Calls for Proposals, supports finding partners and advises on application processes. Thanks to the expert Nikolaos Floratos, in November 2017 EPR delivered a training on EU funding to its members, who over two-half days learned the key recipe for a successful project application. How to plan the proposal's writing, how to partner up with the right stakeholders and what steps to follow were some of the tips shared.

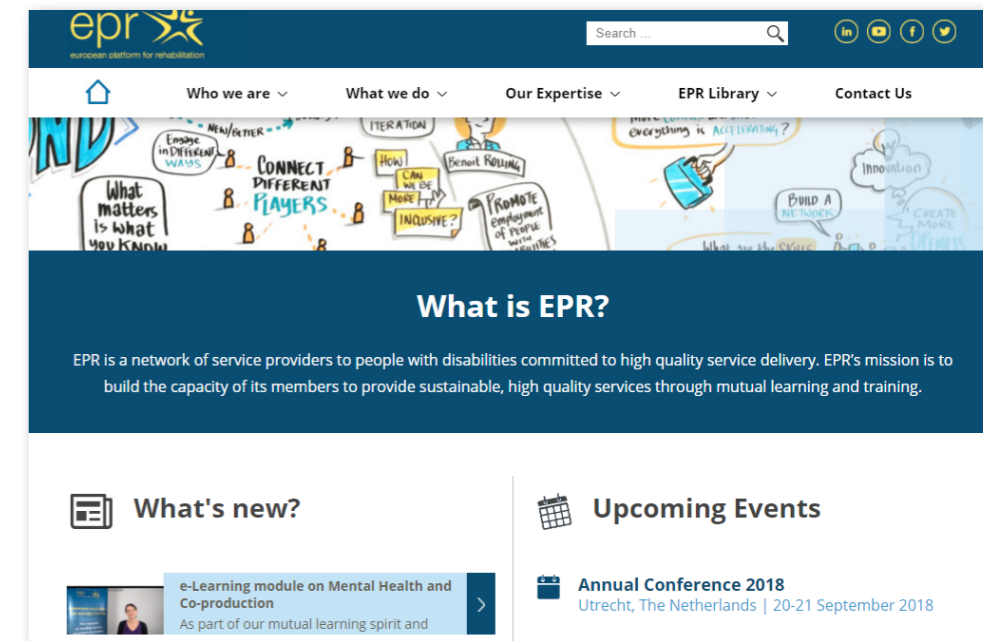


This year EPR updated its communication tools moving towards online formats. A new and fresh design accompanied this transition on its website and main communication products

### Website:

The new website was finalised and EPR has now a modern and user-friendly presence online.

[www.epr.eu](http://www.epr.eu)



### e-Bulletins:

Tailored made EU information for our members looking at the latest European initiatives touching our sector, events and publications.

### Newsletters:

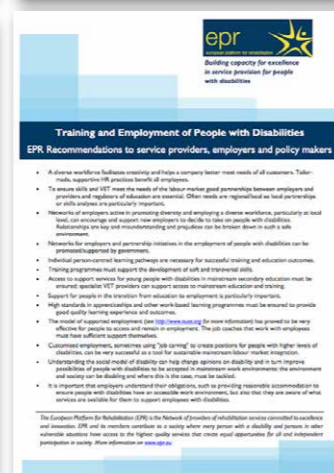
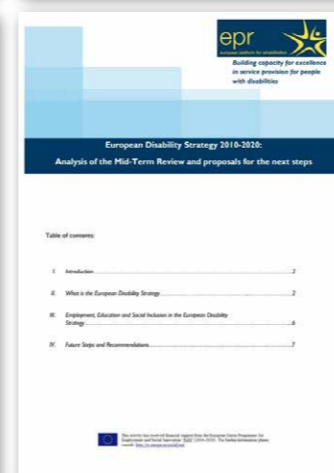
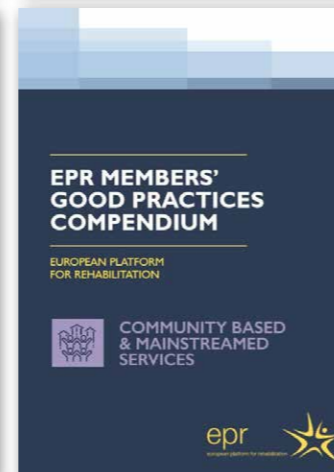
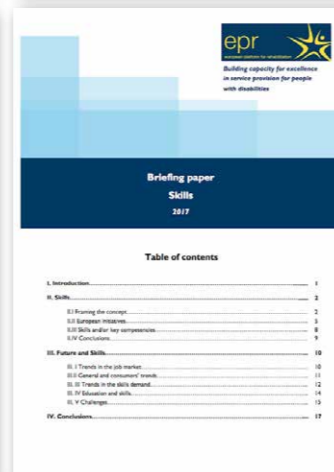
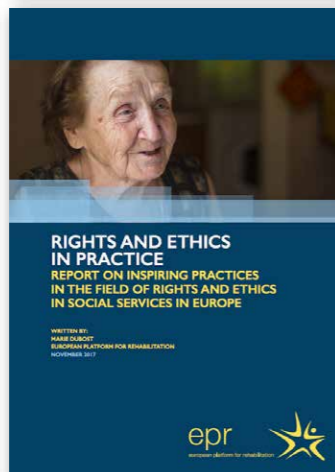
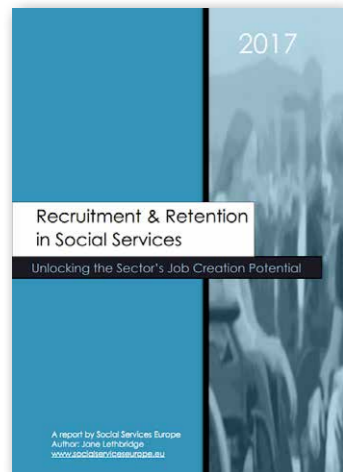
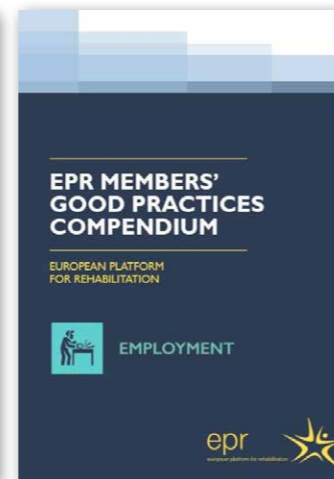
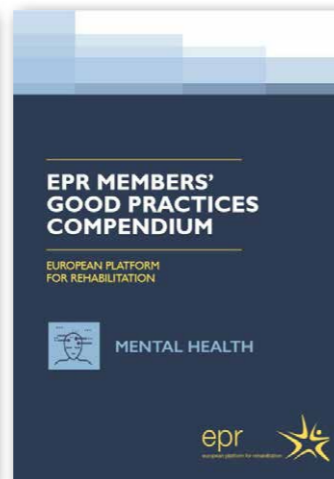
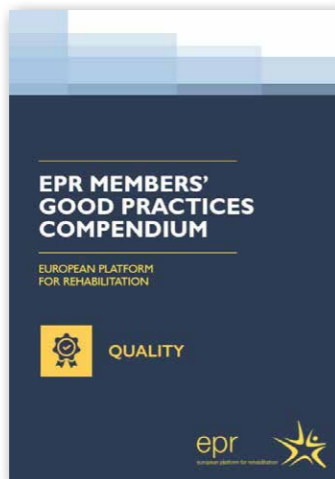
A dedicated space to share news from EPR members, EPR professional development activities, European projects and any other updates about the Secretariat's work in promoting a better environment for rehabilitation service providers.



### Social Media:



EPR is flying high... EPR's social media channels broke its records on Twitter in 2017, doubling the number of followers. EPR continued disseminating information through its LinkedIn and Facebook channels.



### Social Services Europe

Social Services Europe brings together eight Europe-wide networks of professional not-for-profit providers of social, health and care services. EPR has been a member of the network since its establishment and contributes to achieving its 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 Europe and contribution of social services to overall EU policy.



In 2017, EPR led the work of Social Services Europe on the implementation of the European public procurement directive. Job creation, recruitment and retention was one of the main focus topics of the network in 2017. EPR contributed to a research study and to putting together recommendations drawn from it to improve the sector together with co-organising an event at the European Parliament where the study was presented.

### Social Platform

EPR is an associate member of the Social Platform, the largest civil society alliance fighting for social justice and participatory democracy in Europe. 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.



sure the European Pillar of Social Rights, the latest and ambitious EU social initiative, will deliver in improving the service provision and life of people with disabilities. We worked with the Social Platform to advocate for sufficient funds for included in the post – 2020 EU funding period

### European Commission

EPR is a member of the European Commission's Disability High Level Group.

The aim of the DHLG is to establish close cooperation between the national governments, the European Commission and civil society on issues relating to disability and to facilitate the exchange of information, experiences and good practices. The implementation of the UNCRPD across the

EU is often a topic addressed. EPR regularly attends meetings and has presented outcomes and recommendations from its activities and good practices from members.

From 2014-2017 EPR had a partnership agreement with the European Commission un-



der the European Union Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme. Many EPR activities have been financially supported by the Commission and EPR is consulted regularly on policy issues. The aim of EaSI is to promote a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working conditions.

EQUASS is an initiative of the European Platform for Rehabilitation, launched 15 years ago. It aims to enhance the social services sector by engaging social service providers in continuous improvement, learning and development. EQUASS and its network want to guarantee service users a high quality of services throughout Europe.



### Quality recognition

The EQUASS recognition programme is based on a Quality Framework (a set of quality Principles), quality criteria and performance and results indicators that are customized for the social sector. EQUASS certification offers impartial and formal recognition of meeting the European quality requirements. EQUASS Assurance and EQUASS Excellence are based on the same Principles for Quality, with EQUASS Assurance being a stepping

stone towards achieving the EQUASS Excellence level. EQUASS Assurance and EQUASS Excellence 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. An international Awarding Committee oversees the certification process.

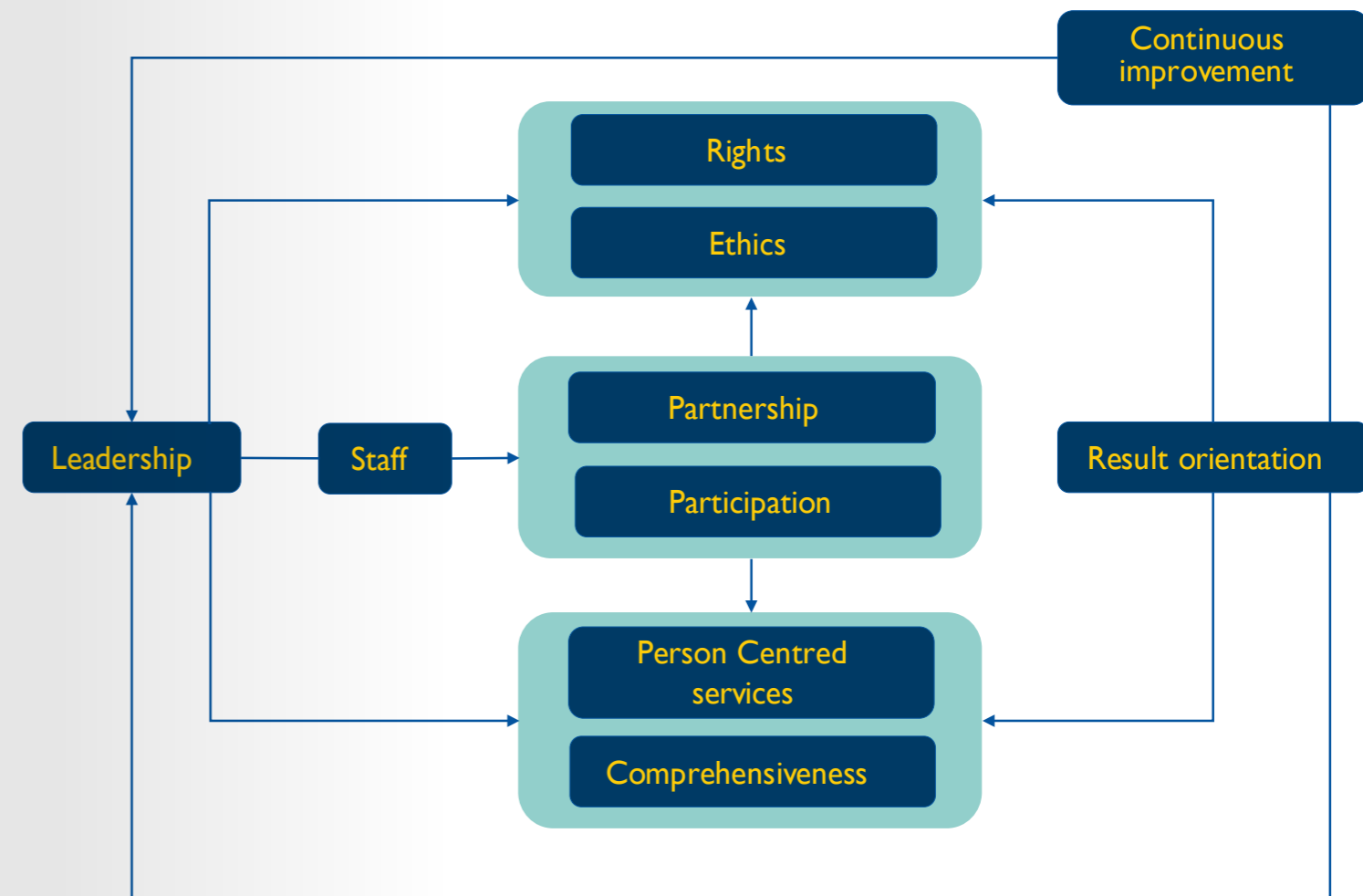


### Unveiling the new EQUASS 2018 system in Europe

In 2017, EQUASS released the EQUASS 2018 system in Europe and organised multiple events to introduce the system changes and promote its new objectives. The new EQUASS 2018 system provides comprehensive services in the area of development, promotion, training, recognition and certification of quality in the social sector. These recognition and certification programmes comply with the European requirements for quality in the provision of Social Services and Vocation Education and Training services.

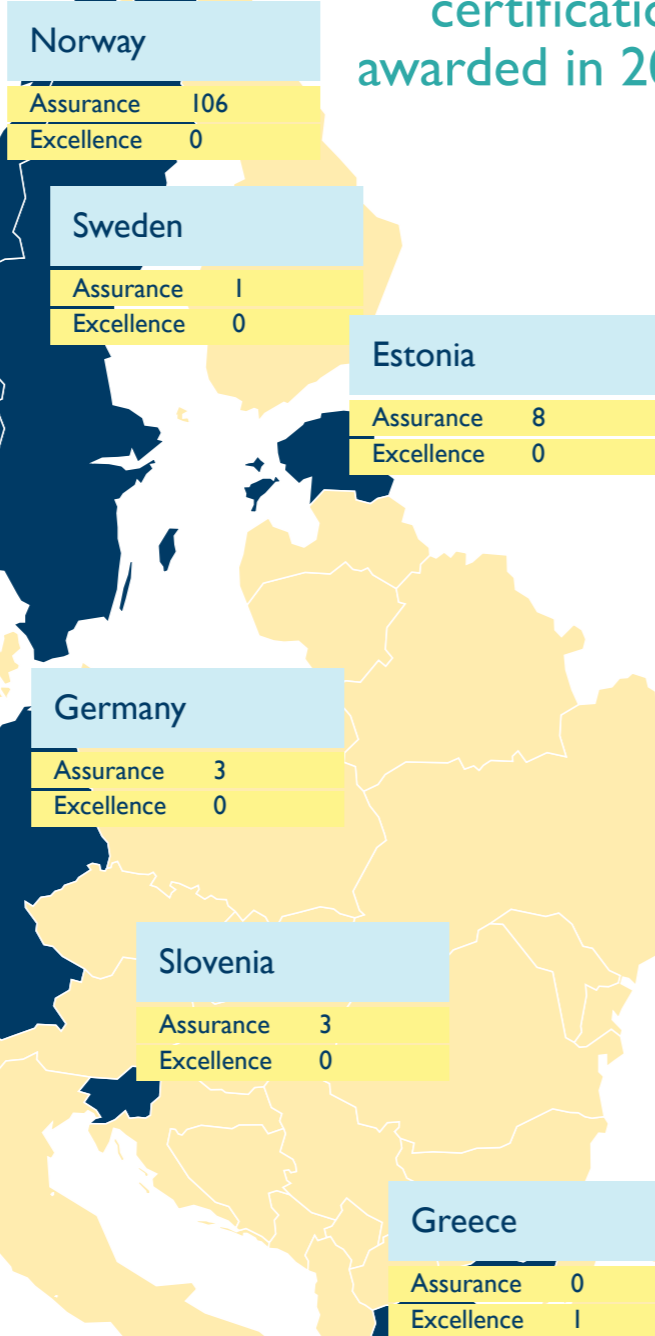
The EQUASS 2018 system is based on 10 principles for Quality. They express the core values of delivering quality services in the social sector. The Quality principles are interrelated with each other. In 2017 EQUASS also held the first ever EQUASS Annual Conference, in Vilnius. EQUASS 2018 was presented together with other topics related to quality assurance. The conference had participants from 13 different countries.

Find out more in our website [www.equass.be/index.php/certif-system/equass-2018](http://www.equass.be/index.php/certif-system/equass-2018)



### Overview of EQUASS certifications awarded in 2017

Total awarded	
Assurances	148
Excellences	2



### General Assembly

The General Assembly is the decision-making body of EPR. Its main task is to set EPR's strategic, financial and organisational framework. It is formed by full members' Chief Executives/Directors with voting rights. Associate members are invited to take part in meetings as observers and participants.

### 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 are nominated by the General Assembly for a renewable period of two years. All members of the General Assembly are entitled to attend the meetings of the Board as observers.

### Centre Coordinators

Centre coordinators of all members are the direct link between EPR and its member organisations. Their main role is to disseminate information related to EPR throughout their organisation and implement decisions taken by the General Assembly.

### EPR Secretariat

The EPR secretariat is 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. All together, the members of the EPR secretariat speak most major European languages: English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and Dutch.

A few staff members of EPR and EQUASS have changed in 2017. EPR welcomed its new Financial and Human Resources Manager, **Ronald Schollaart**. Ronald has a long experience working in Finances and as a Human Resources Manager.

EPR also welcomed its new Policy, Communications and Projects Officer, **Alicia Gómez Campos**. Alicia has more than five years of experience working in Brussels in different non-for profit organisations, mostly on human rights and social issues. EQUASS welcomed **Sarah Vansimpson** as the new EQUASS Officer. Sarah has many years of experience in teaching, customer service and speaks four languages. Lisbeth Wille also assisted EQUASS and EPR on communications, events organisation and translation.



Full Members



Adelante, The Netherlands  
www.adelante-zorggroep.nl



CRPG  
www.crbg.pt



Heliomare,  
The Netherlands  
www.heliomare.nl



Josefs-Gesellschaft, Germany  
www.jg-gruppe.de



Centre de Réadaptation de Mulhouse (CRM), France  
www.arfp.asso.fr



Fundación ONCE, Spain  
www.fundaciononce.es



GREP GRENLAND AS,  
Norway  
www.grep-as.no



RehabGroup, Ireland  
www.rehab.ie



Plurn, The Netherlands  
www.plurn.nl



Adelante, The Netherlands  
www.adelante-zorggroep.nl



Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre, Estonia  
www.astangu.ee



GTB, Belgium  
www.gtb-vlaanderen.be



The Social Integration State Agency, Latvia  
www.siva.gov.lv

Associate Members



Arbeid & Inkludering i NHO Service (Work & Inclusion) Norway  
attforingsbedriftene.no



Berufshilfswerk Köln gemeinnützige GmbH (BFW Köln), Germany  
diakonie-michaelshoven.de



Fundación INTRAS, Spain  
www.intras.es



Theotokos Foundation, Greece  
www.theotokos.gr



University Rehabilitation Institute (URI), Slovenia  
www.ir-rs.si



Don Carlo Gnocchi Foundation, Italy  
www.dongnocchi.it



Fagerh, France  
www.fagerh.fr



Mariehjemmene Foundation, Denmark  
www.mariehjem.dk



Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre (VRC), Lithuania  
www.reabilitacija.lt



Durapart AS, Norway  
www.durapart.no



EKON, Poland  
ekon.org.pl



LOS – Private Social Services, Denmark  
www.los.dk



Workshop "Panagia Eleousa", Greece  
www.ergpanel.gr

# JOIN US

Mutual learning, EU project support, stay on top of trends, Innovation, networking, influence EU policy...

## Where to find us?

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