



EPR EPSR Day Study Visit

Supporting people with autism; Autism Foundation

24-25th May 2023

Helsinki, Finland

Objectives of the meeting

To raise awareness of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), learn from each other's good practices in specific areas, to discuss the challenges and potential solutions, including the role of government, funders and the EU, EPR organises EPR-European Pillar of Social Rights study days. This meeting will focus on working with people on the autistic spectrum and will also discuss the implications and relevance of actions planned in the EU Disability Strategy.

Autism Foundation Finland (AFF)

AFF is a growing not-for-profit service provider, founded in 1998 by parents of autistic adolescents and the Finnish Autism Society. The main purpose of AFF is to provide high quality services for people on the autism spectrum. AFF provides individual supported living, group homes, counselling and coaching, including vocational services and employment support, rehabilitation and therapy, including animal therapy, and they run a farm for different activities. AFF also works to increase understanding of autism in society and supports research in the area. The trip will visit different sites and services.

Background

The European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR, sometimes referred to as the "Social Pillar" or just the "Pillar") is a key social initiative launched by the European Commission in November 2017 aimed at improving the promotion and protection of social rights of EU residents. It is structured in 20 principles divided in three categories, referring to equal opportunities and access to labour market, fair working conditions and social protection and inclusion. The Pillar does not give the European Union more power or competencies but is designed to be a tool that promotes social rights with joint collaboration and responsibility of the European institutions together with governments and stakeholders.

Services play a key role in the success of the Pillar. Many of the pillar's principles directly relate to the delivery of services, employment, education and rights of persons with disabilities. Affordable, quality, and accessible services are needed for the rights to become a reality in practice but service providers also have a role ensuring these social rights are met.

Principle 17. Inclusion of people with disabilities

People with disabilities have the right to income support that ensures living in dignity, services that enable them to participate in the labour market and in society, and a work environment adapted to their needs.

The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan

On the 4th of March 2021, the European Commission launched the Action Plan. The Action Plan is aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals to take firm steps in the implementation of the 20 principles included in the Pillar. It presents three targets to be achieved by 2030: equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, and social protection and inclusion. The targets are accompanied by clear actions and deadlines. The Commission adopted a new Strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities for the period 2021-2030 together with the Action Plan.





Draft Programme

Wednesday 24th May

Morning: arrival of participants

Session 1 13:30-17:30

Meeting at Mannerheimintie 117, 00280 Helsinki

13:30 Welcome coffee

14:00-15:00 Introduction to AFF and the participants, sharing an overview of services provided to people with autism

15:00-17:30 Visits & Q&A

20.00 Dinner

Thursday 25th May

Session 2 09:00-13:00

09:00-10.30 Visits

10:45-11:00 Break

11:00-12.00 Discussions about visits; commonalities, differences, key challenges

12:00-13.00 Reflection on learning, developing recommendations for the implementation of Principle 17 of the EPSR and next steps

Practicalities

EPR has subsidies of at least 113€ for one participant from each member to participate, please indicate if you wish to take the subsidy in the registration form and contact Laura Jones for further information.

To attend, please register [here](#) by 15th May. For more information, please contact Laura Jones, ljones@epr.eu

For more information about the European Pillar of Social Rights, Disability Strategy:

[Short Briefing on the EU Disability Strategy](#)

[The Position Paper of Social Services Europe 'The Role of Social Services in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights' \(2018\)](#)

[The European Pillar of Social Rights and service delivery for persons with disabilities – EPR Analytical paper \(2017\)](#)

[The Action Plan <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/european-pillar-of-social-rights/en/>](https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/european-pillar-of-social-rights/en/)

[Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#)

[Guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies \(2022\)](#)

