

EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR REHABILITATION
The network of leading service providers to people with disabilities

NEWSLETTER

Special:

- **Calendar of EPR Activities in 2011**
- **Projects on Assistive Technologies**
- **Research and Development Forum**
- **EPR Innovation Prize 2011**

Editorial



Dear EPR members,

During the first quarter this year EPR has focused on the design and preparation of the Centre Action Plans (CAPs). The EPR has managed to slightly increase the service package available to its members with 22 joint actions and 35 individual activities to be implemented during 2011-2012. The overall programme strives for a thematic balance in which vocational reintegration, medical rehabilitation and social care services to people with disabilities find their place. Also the training formats are diverse and include traditional seminars as well as benchmarking groups and action learning groups.

The Dinner Debate in the European Parliament on the cross-border dimension of health and social care services exposed the external dimension of EPR in enhancing the disability sector. The overall conclusion was that EU legislation opens, in this respect, more possibilities in enhancing and collating cross-border care and services that most people would expect providing a valid argument to the continue in this area. EPR and its members believe that this leads to a win-win situation where more cross-border services improve the quality of services for people with disabilities and open a window of opportunities for service providers to valorise their expertise.

The expiring of a three years Grant with structural Funding from the European Commission obliges

the EPR to generate more revenues via its members and external activities to keep up its volume and level of activities. The decisions of the EPR Board allow our network to manage this new situation, and I hold the view that it will strengthen the EPR as an independent and sustainable organisation. At the same time, the staffing of the EPR Secretariat is subject to various changes, which brings along some transition issues, but equally involves new skills and fresh ideas.

The near future of EPR will be reflected in the new strategic plan 2012 – 2014 which will be developed during the current year. The first step is to develop a strategic framework which will present overall objectives in relation to the scope and activity fields of EPR, as well as formulate aspirations about the internal organisation and working methods. A key moment in the process will be an extensive brainstorming session in June with directors from all EPR members. On that basis, the strategic framework will be turned into a more comprehensive and detailed strategic plan, including actions and KPIs.

The essence of every European sectoral network is the interaction between the members, and the co-operation with external key actors. In this light, I hope to meet many of you at one of the many activities and events that will take place during 2011.

Yours sincerely,

Jan Spooren
Secretary General

Calendar of EPR events 2011

May

International Classification of Functioning (ICF), *Benchmarking group*, 4 May 2011, Hasselt, Belgium

Active Inclusion of young people with disabilities or health problems, *Training seminar*, 30-31 May 2011, Brussels, Belgium

Outcome measurement in vocational rehabilitation, *Benchlearning group*, 31 May-1 June 2011, Brussels, Belgium

June

Leadership in rehabilitation, *Strategic workshop for Directors*, 16-17 June 2011, Taormina, Italy

September

Coordinators meeting, 14 September 2011, Leuven, Belgium

EU-funding opportunities, *Training seminar*, 15 September 2011, Leuven, Belgium

Services to people with mental health problems, *Training seminar*, 21-22 September 2011, Valladolid, Spain

Engagement of staff in internal change processes, *Training seminar*, exact date TBC, Brussels, Belgium

October

Research & Development forum, *Meeting*, 12-13 October 2011, Brussels

November

Outcome measurement in medical rehabilitation, *Benchlearning group*, 10 November 2011, Athens, Greece

Board of Directors meeting, 10 November 2011, Athens, Greece

EPR Annual Conference, 10-11 November 2011, Athens, Greece

List of meetings and events as known at the moment. In case of any changes you will be duly informed. It is advised to always confirm details of events with the Secretariat prior to attending.

For further information or registration, contact the EPR Secretariat: Tel: +32 2 736 54 44, E-mail: claudedelfosse@epr.eu, Website: www.epr.eu

News from the members

Mobility Visit

Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre (VRC)



In March 2011, a group of Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre's (VRC) specialists visited Bartimeus in the Netherlands. A five-day visit was organised in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects.

During the visit the specialists were introduced to the Dutch social inclusion and rehabilitation system for people with visual and hearing impairments and to the processes in various departments of Bartimeus, including the vocational training centre REA-college, the daycare Centre in Doorn, the employment office for blind and deaf, "Werkpad", the sheltered workshop for the blind "Proson" and more.

As the Lithuanian specialists had a particular interest in the vocational diagnosis and training of persons with visual impairments, they acquired more instruction in vocational skills assessment, vocational guidance, vocational training and employment of people with visual impairments.

The feedback from the specialists demonstrates that the visit was very interesting and fruitful.

Pluryn merges with Hoenderloo Groep (DHG)

Pluryn

At the beginning of 2011, the EPR member organisation "Pluryn" merged with "De Hoenderloo Groep" (DHG). DHG is a highly specialised Dutch service provider to youngsters with complex and multiple behavioural issues to address. Their expertise covers Conduct Disorders (CD), Autism and Hyperactivity (ASS/ADHD) and Oppositional Defiant Disorders (ODD). DHG offers services to 420 clients nationwide in residential settings in the province of Gelderland, in the Eastern part of The Netherlands where most of the services of Pluryn are also located. Both the DGH and Pluryn aim at providing quality service to client

groups who display signs of both intellectual disability and disruptive behaviour. The combination of the expertise provided by both groups is especially beneficial to these clients.

Pluryn and DHG wish to offer one portal to all young people with behavioural problems irrespective of the background and cause of these problems. Pluryn and DHG both have a strong drive to keep these youngsters out of prison and to support them on their path to full participation in society by offering them a safe environment, education, coaching and vocational training.

Luovi hosted European Agency study visit

Luovi

The Luovi Vocational College is involved in a development project coordinated by the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. The aim of the project is to compare the practices in organising vocational education and training (VET) for learners with SEN (special educational needs) in European countries. Each country chose two national experts to represent them, and Tarja Mänty, the director of Luovi, was appointed as national expert representing service providers.

The participants familiarised themselves with the Finnish system with a focus on transition to the labour market. The main aim was not only to understand what works but to get a deeper understanding of the way it works. Presentations, discussions and visits were included in the programme of the study visit which was organised in Oulu in February 2011.

The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education is an independent and self-governing organisation established by member countries to act as their platform for collaboration regarding the development of provision for learners with special educational needs.

The EPR welcomes a new Spanish member: Fundacion INTRAS



The Fundacion INTRAS joined the EPR network in 2011. Based in Spain, INTRAS is a non-profit organisation founded in August 1994 and dedicated to high quality research and intervention in the field of mental health. INTRAS aims at offering a professional integral assistance to people suffering from mental illness, whereby the organisation also performs activities and offers a wide range of services to the disabled, the elderly and young people with learning difficulties or/and behavioural disorders. For an extensive presentation of INTRAS and their activities, consult the "[News from members](#)" section of the EPR website.

TBG Learning delivers New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP)

TBG Learning

TBG Learning has been delivering the New Deal for Disabled People by working closely with the Shaw Trust, a national charity that provides training and work opportunities for people who are disadvantaged in the labour market due to a disability, ill health or other social circumstances. The partnership was formed in 2009 to deliver a programme for people across the Colchester and Tendring districts who are disadvantaged in the labour market due to their disability.

Some of the targeted participants may have been unemployed for many years and the aim is to get these people into part or full time work through personalised

support and assistance dependent on the needs and goals of the individual.

TBG Learning has links with various other organisations to ensure these people have the support and training they need to gain them the job they desire. For example, TBG works with Dress for Success who provides suitable clothing for participants for interviews and Working Links who helps with travel arrangements.

So far in Essex TBG has seen over 370 people over the past year where 59% of these have found sustainable jobs.

News from the Theotokos Foundation

Event dedicated to the Volunteers

On the 7th of April 2011, Theotokos organised a special event in its facilities in order to express gratitude to the people who offer their services voluntarily and attract new ones. Apart from the existing volunteers, there was participation of many representatives of the local authorities, other similar institutions, universities, schools, the association of "Friends of Theotokos" and employers and parents of trainees.

Action Project Plan for the Information Society and Digital Convergence

"Theotokos Foundation" has included in its development strategy (for the period 2010 - 2012) a comprehensive Action Project Plan for the Information Society and Digital Convergence. This project

includes a single, integrated set of closely related developmental activities, which included two development axes:

(A) Development of Perception and Knowledge skills in specific population groups, making information, education and lifelong learning accessible to everyone (even to those that have the same problems but are not members of the Foundation) in an effective way.

(B) Strengthening of equality, accessibility and improvement of living in special groups of people with mental retardation and other developmental deficiencies, by developing - offering electronic services, which make these people equal members in society and labour market and bridge the digital gap to the rest of the population that does not face these kinds of problems.

The actions included in the proposed Project are as follows:

Action 1.1. Create and manage electronic clinical documentation

Action 1.2. Electronic remote recording and investigation of the original problem of mental retardation or other developmental inefficiency

Action 1.3. Electronic transaction services to the trainees and associates of the Foundation

Action 2.1. Online education / training through educational games and other methods

Action 2.2. Identify a labour market for people with disabilities in using modern electronic media

Action 3: Digitisation of documents of foundation documents

Action 4: Scientific Support, guidance in developing educational / training educational games.

News from CRPG – Centro de Reabilitação Profissional de Gaia

CRPG launches a new website

CRPG launched its new website at the end of last year. With a more customer focused approach, the website intends to be the main external communication tool of CRPG. It provides information on services and products delivered by CRPG, as well as in depth information regarding subjects and themes related with CRPG's areas of intervention, such as accessibility, assistive devices or employment. Currently, the website is only available in Portuguese, but it is expected that in the future some menus will also be available in English. The CRPG website can be found at: www.crpq.pt

CRPG hosted a visit from a Belgian delegation under the project "ICF and job seeking for persons on a large distance from the labour market due to MMPP impediments"

CRPG is participating as an international reference partner in a Flemish ESF project on the use of ICF as a common instrument and language in activation programme that combines cure/care, empowerment, vocational training and job guidance actions. Under this project, CRPG recently hosted a visit from a Belgian delegation aimed at gaining in depth understanding of the ICF approaches used by CRPG and the good practices of job integration for people with disabilities.

CRPG will assist the Romanian government in the development of a national network of centres of excellence for professional integration of people with disabilities

CRPG will cooperate with the Romanian government and disability related organisations of Romania under the project EXCELNET, which aims to enhance the quality of specialised professional rehabilitation services, through the implementation of a network of centers of excellence for professional integration of people with disabilities. The project will last until March 2014 and will focus on analysis and research regarding professional integration of people with disabilities, increase of vocational training services aimed at people with disabilities, and definition of models for the rehabilitation and work integration services.



The kick off meeting of EXCELNET took place at the beginning of March, in Bucharest (Romania).

Mobility Scotland Office Minister Visits Hillington Social Enterprise Firm Momentum



The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, David Mundell MP, visited Haven Products, a social enterprise firm based in Hillington and part of Momentum, that

predominantly employs people with disabilities in February.

During his visit, he spoke with several employees and saw Haven Recycle in operation, a new business venture specialising in waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) recycling.

He also learned about Haven's Complementary Workforce, an initiative which enables its employees to work with partner organisations on their premises to provide further employment opportunities.

Following the visit Mr Mundell said: "Haven Products is a great example of the social enterprise that this Government is keen to encourage; providing sustainable employment for people with disabilities. The employees themselves left me in no doubt of the value that a realistic work environment provides to their lives. I was very impressed by their commitment and enthusiasm."

“Mythical Greek Routes :The return of Odysseus to Ithaca”

Panagia Eleousa

PANAGIA ELEOUSA of the Etoloakarnania Prefecture in Greece, in the framework of its policy to promote the intellectually disabled service users' participation in community based activities, put on successfully the theatre play “Mythical Greek Routes: The return of Odysseus to Ithaca”. 30 service users and 7 members of the staff took part in this theatrical play that was implemented in cooperation with the Municipal Theatre of Agrinio city. The first performance was given in the city of

Messolonghi and the second one in Agrinio and the attendance of the public was really great! All this effort contributed to the fact that the service users were given a chance to express themselves creatively through drama and their self-confidence was boosted as well because of the very encouraging and positive comments they received. At the same time, the awareness of the community was achieved with the public embracing and heartily supporting this performance. PANAGIA ELEOUSA's

goal is to empower the service users through innovative activities that aim at their social rehabilitation and integration into society.



The play was a real success for the actors and for Panagia Eleousa.

SUB-SCRIPT: Supportive User Base for Social Return Coordinated (web based) Re-Integration ProTocols

Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre (VRC)

The Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre (VRC) in partnership with Job-Link (Belgium), Stichting Reflexion (Netherlands), the European Centre for Quality (Bulgaria), Starfsendurhæfing Norðurlands (Iceland) and Zavod Prava poteza (Slovenia) started the project “SUB-SCRIPT: Supportive User Base for Social Return Coordinated (web based) Re-Integration ProTocols”.

The main purpose of SUB-SCRIPT is to transfer good reintegration and training

practice from the previous Social Return project to other countries. The project aims is to implement a web based system to support the reintegration or rehabilitation of clients in need of such services. The system will actively sustain the previously developed Social Return approach and will make use of the personal development protocol (PdP) as a central point of information and experience exchange.

The purpose and the goals of the project are directly related to promoting social inclusion. The project will be the very first attempt to introduce a web based interactive system serving the re-integration needs of disadvantaged job seekers within the EU territory. This innovative and efficient system will offer the clients the possibility to access external (learning) services and get (online) support from coaches.

Lords Batter MPs and Media in the Rehab Parliamentary Pancake Race

Rehab Group



Lord Redesdale crossing the finishing line to win the Rehab Parliamentary Pancake Race

The Rehab Parliamentary Pancake Race saw the victory of the Lords team this year. The race is organised every year as part of efforts to raise awareness for Rehab, in Victoria Tower Gardens, Westminster.

Speaking following their win, Lord Redesdale commented: “ we are all just pleased to play our part in supporting the great work of Rehab. Highlighting the really important issue of disability and those who are marginalised in our society and the need to support them in achieving their goals and in fulfilling their potential is vital.”

Knowledge Management Centre

Launch of the EPR Innovation Prize 2011



The EPR Innovation Prize is back in 2011 for a new edition to encourage the circulation of information on innovation and best practice within the network. The past editions have proved to be successful and popular events, and this year's should be no exception.

All professionals from EPR members are eligible to participate. Applicants can submit a practice of any type (a service, a programme, a methodology, a tool, etc...) and related to all areas of service provided by EPR members. EPR member organisations are invited to enter as many applications as they wish.

The winner of the EPR Innovation Prize 2011 will be chosen according to a series of predefined criteria on the quality and innovative aspects of the practice (such as needs drive, systematic approach, direct impact...).

The winner(s) will receive a voucher of 1.000 Euro for travel and participation to EPR activities, and will also be

invited to attend the EPR Annual Conference 2011 to receive the Prize and present the practice to a wide audience of rehabilitation professionals.

All the best practices inserted in the KMC between **1 April 2011** and **31 May 2011** will be eligible to win the Innovation Prize. For more information, visit the "[Knowledge Management](#)" section of the EPR website. The KMC is accessible at <http://epr.eu/kmc>.

The contest is only open for a period of two months, do not miss your chance to insert a best practice!

Centre Action Plans (CAPs)

Launch of the Research and Development Forum

Following a request from a number of EPR members to give R&D and Innovation activities a higher priority on the EPR agenda, a survey on on-going and planned activities in this field was conducted and presented to the Board of Directors on 16 June 2010. It was concluded that the majority of EPR members were actively engaged in the research and development activities, that the diversity of themes and topics reported was impressive, and that in many areas potential synergies could be identified. R&D is a fundamental condition for innovation, and that innovation is in its turn a key success factor for being competitive and sustainable as a rehabilitation service provider.

Last November, the EPR Board of Directors officially approved a line of action to explore this issue further, and it was agreed to set up an R&D Forum. The kick-off meeting; attended by nine participants from seven members, took place in Brussels on 24-25 February and can be seen as a first step for an enhanced focus on R&D in the coming years.

The forum focused on benchmarking strategies and approaches on how to organise and finance R&D, and on research methods used in the rehabilitation sector. Participants notably explored innovative options for resourcing and supporting the R&D function and areas for possible cooperation in and specific R&D partnerships. The participants produced guidelines and recommendations on how to evaluate R&D, the rationale for R&D and ways of communicating results. They also reflected on how EPR could best foster its members R&D activities and identified common areas of interest in R&D for possible future co-operation.

The presentations given during the meeting are available in the "[Professional Development](#)" section of the EPR website.

Dinner Debate at the European Parliament

The cross-border dimension of health and social services



On 2 March 2011, the European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR) organised in collaboration with Mrs. Frieda Brepoels, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and member of the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance, its first Dinner Debate in the prestigious premises of the European Parliament in Brussels. The theme of the event was the cross-border dimension of health and social services.

Facilitated by Mr. Jan Spooren, EPR Secretary General, the event was built around a dinner punctuated by three presentations on issues relating to cross-border service provision. Each speech was followed by a short informal debate whereby participants were given the opportunity to exchange views and ask questions. Jan Spooren introduced the debate stressing the fact that service providers in the European Union are increasingly facing the cross-border dimension of their activities. They receive indeed more and more clients from other

countries and, on the other hand, an increasing number of service providers set up branches or partnerships across borders to valorise their expertise on a wider scale. It is therefore of great importance for service providers to acquire a better understanding about financing mechanisms and regulatory frameworks of cross-border service provision.

This introduction paved the way for the first speech presented by MEP Frieda Brepoels who introduced the newly approved Directive on the protection of patients' rights in cross-border health care. As there had been up until now no European law for patient's mobility or cross-border healthcare, this new regulation represents an important achievement both for patients and politics. The text neither promotes cross border health care as such nor medical tourism; in fact the authorisation given for treatment abroad and the modalities for reimbursement are framed by a set of objective criteria. She concluded underlying that Member States remain fully competent in the field of healthcare and they bear the main responsibility for promoting the highest quality of healthcare for their citizens. Mr. Paul Kurvers, Senior Business Consultant from Adelante, one of EPR members located at the border between the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany, took the floor to shed light on the contextual framework of cross-border service provision from the viewpoint of a service provider. On the basis of Adelante's experience, he gave an informative overview of the rationale, the objectives and strategies for setting up cross border service provision, and highlighted the role played by cultural differences between countries. The last speech was delivered by Dr Yves Jorens, Professor at the University of Ghent. His presentation was dedicated to the exploration of the implications of the EU Regulation 1408/71 on the coordination of social security systems across Europe.

The dinner debate was preceded by a short visit of the European Parliament. Participants had the opportunity to sit in the famous plenary room, where Mrs. Katrien Uyttersprot, assistant of Mrs. Frieda Brepoels, provided them with an interesting insight into the functioning of the Parliament.

All documents related to this event can be downloaded from the EPR website, in the "[Public Affairs](#)" section.

Projects

EPR Promotes Assistive Technologies and Inclusive Solutions for All

ATIS4all project



Since the beginning of 2011, EPR is part of a new exciting European project in the field of assistive technologies: ATIS4all, a European Thematic Network partially funded by the Programme ICT-PSP (Information and Communication Technology - Policy Support Programme) of the European Parliament as part of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme.

ATIS4all aims at facilitating everyone's access to the most suitable AT or accessibility device and service according to their needs, preferences and contextual characteristics (e.g. ICT solution, environment constraints, user device, language, etc.). For this purpose, ATIS4all will start and maintain an open, collaborative portal offering reliable

information on AT and inclusive products and services, and cutting-edge technological trends. ATIS4all will contain Web 2.0 participation tools in order to encourage online discussion exchange of knowledge and expertise, and the sharing of information among key actors and end users.

The project is led by Technosite, a technology and consultancy company belonging to the business corporation of ONCE Foundation (EPR full member). The EPR was brought into the project consortium as a representative of the professionals working in the disability sector, and for its expertise in the field of research on assistive technologies, thanks to the AEGIS project.

The ATIS4all network is working in close cooperation with another network of leading institutions in

assistive solutions: ETNA (European Thematic Network on Assistive Information and Communication Technologies). ETNA will mainly work at the Portal's search engine application, enabling all the stakeholders to access the data and resources available through a multilingual interface.

The ATIS4all kick-off meeting took place on 14 and 15 of March 2011 in Madrid, Spain, and was attended by Jan Spooren and Julie Buttier. The participants had the opportunity to exchange ideas and perspectives, enriching the research activity and at the same time getting an overview of the project. Debates and discussions allowed for the definition of the next steps in the project research.

For more information, contact julie.buttier@epr.eu or visit the project's website: <http://www.atis4all.eu/>

EPR to Organise the AEGIS 2nd International Conference

AEGIS Open Accessibility Everywhere: Groundwork, Infrastructure, Standards



The EPR Secretariat is already hard at work with the preparations of the AEGIS final Workshop and 2nd International Conference, scheduled to take place in Brussels, Belgium on **28-30 November 2011 (new dates)**.

The workshop on 28 November will focus on the realisations of the AEGIS (Open Accessibility Everywhere: Groundwork, Infrastructure, Standards) project and will give attendees the opportunity to try out all outcomes of the project.

The conference on 29-30 November will gather a wide array of experts and users in the area of Assistive Technology to

discuss scientific and policy developments in accessible technology; showcase relevant projects and initiatives in the area of assistive technology.

Professionals are invited to take an active part in the event by submitting scientific and/or technical papers via the conference website on a variety of relevant topics. The Conference will also be the opportunity for professionals to hold a trade stand or poster stand.

For more details and to register, visit the conference website <http://www.epr.eu/aegis/> or contact Julie Buttier, julie.buttier@epr.eu.

Upcoming Changes: EQUASS 2012

Based on the Common Quality Framework for Social Service of General Interest and the Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services of the Social Protection Committee, the EQUASS Awarding Committee of the European Quality Assurance of Social Services decided to adopt the new principles and quality criteria in its certification programme, so that all EQUASS certification programmes will comply with these Quality Frameworks.

The EQUASS Core Group is studying and implementing the consequences

of this decision by including these new principles and criteria into the core documentation of the EQUASS certification programmes. The last Core Group meeting, held on 6 and 7 April 2011, saw a lot of discussions and developments on that issue.

On 17 May 2011, the EQUASS Awarding Committee will discuss and decide on the new draft of the EQUASS Assurance and EQUASS Excellence certification programmes. The core documentation of the 'new' EQUASS-2012 will be available in June 2011. Stakeholders, social service providers, certified organisations,

auditors and consultants will be informed about the upcoming changes in both certification programmes via the EQUASS Newsflash in July 2012.

All organisations applying for EQUASS certification before 31 December 2011 will be audited according to the current standard. All organisations applying for EQUASS certification after 1 January 2012 will be audited according to the 'new' (EQUASS 2012) standard.

EQUASS is truly adapting to the changing demands of stakeholders and changing context in the rehabilitation and social sector.

Training Events New Format

EQUASS aims to enhance the social service sector by engaging service providers in quality and continuous improvement, and by guaranteeing service-users quality of services throughout Europe. One of the measures which contribute to this mission are the auditor trainings (Excellence and Assurance) and the consultancy trainings regularly organised throughout the year.

In the past, the trainings lasted for two days; the feedback given by the participants was very positive, but showed that the length of the training was too short. Therefore, EQUASS decided to extend the number of training days to **three days** so participants will be better prepared for their role as auditors and consultants. All EQUASS auditor and consultant trainings will last for three days. The auditor trainings will therefore offer more opportunities to exchange and to calibrate individual performances of potential auditors but also practical training session in writing the audit report, preparing the site visit and interview techniques. The consultancy training will pay more detailed attention to all phases of implementation of the EQUASS Excellence and the EQUASS Assurance: self-evaluation process, writing an implementation plan, supporting the implementation process, internal auditing, organising test audits and reporting and preparing the final external audit.

Brusseler Kreis event



On 23 March 2011, the Brusseler Kreis, EQUASS Local licence Holder in Germany, organised an evening for the German Members of

Parliament and other key stakeholders in the Rehabilitation Sector. The event was organised at the National Representation of 'Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg' in Berlin.

Guus van Beek was invited to give a keynote speech on the European perspective of Quality in the Social Sector. He gave an overview of the current challenges the social sector is facing and the latest developments on Quality: the Common Quality Framework for SSGI (Prometheus, 2011) and the Voluntary European Quality Framework for SSGI (Social Protection Committee, 2011). He also stressed that the EQUASS certification programmes will be compliant with both frameworks.

Estonian ESF project



Stakeholder information event

The current ESF project aims to pilot the EQUASS Assurance system to seven rehabilitation service providers in Estonia. Moreover, the project intends to raise awareness on quality of rehabilitation services to a wider sample of sectoral stakeholders, and to build capacity for a further roll-out of EQUASS approach on quality throughout Estonia in case of a positive evaluation.

In the framework of awareness raising among stakeholders, the project organised an information event on 30 March 2011. Guus van Beek, EQUASS Key expert, informed representatives of the ministry of social affairs, funder organisations, user organisation and project pilots about the EQUASS Approach on quality and latest developments at the European level. During that meeting the pilots presented the state of the play and the challenges they faced in the implementation of the EQUASS assurance criteria.

Pilot meeting

EQUASS does not only measure and certify quality, but it also offers a framework for benchmarking and quality improvement. At the meeting 31 March 2011, the project

pilots exchanged their experiences and the results of implementing the EQUASS Assurance criteria. During very intense and interactive sessions the pilots site exchange information regarding possible answers and solutions in meeting the EQUASS Assurance criteria. This benchlearning experience has been greatly appreciated and has given all the pilots a unique opportunity to prepare themselves on the first test audits which will be carried out in April 2011.

Induction training for Local Licence Holder

On 1 April 2011, Guus van Beek discussed the role and responsibilities of the Local Licence Holder with Astangu Rehabilitation Center and a representative of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The training clarified not only role and responsibilities of the LLH but also the need for a national Stakeholder committee and the process of communication and certification.

At the meeting it was agreed that the project will inform the Ministry of Social Affairs about the process and results of the project in May 2011. (interim evaluation report) The information of evaluation is crucial for the Ministry to take decisions about a further roll-out of EQUASS approach on quality at the end of the project.

EQUASS upcoming events

27 to 29 April 2011: EQUASS Excellence Auditor Training, Lisbon, Portugal

17 May 2011: EQUASS Awarding Committee, Brussels, Belgium

23 & 24 May 2011: EQUASS Auditor training in Tallinn, Estonia (only on invitation; ESF-project)

27 to 29 June 2011: EQUASS Assurance auditor training, Oslo, Norway



Veneto Investimenti Sociali is the result of a synergy between the experience of different companies who have joined forces and efforts. The company places itself on the local, regional and national market as a modern answer to complex needs, thanks to an entrepreneurial approach which is rooted in ethics and respect for the individual.

On 20 January 2011, VIS organised an information event on the EQUASS approach on quality for its shareholder organisations. Participants have been informed about the EQUASS approach on quality and the opportunities to prove their quality in providing social service via EQUASS certification. The information event resulted in a contract between EQUASS/EPR and the Italian Automotive Academy for implementing EQUASS Assurance criteria.

News from the Secretariat

EPR now VAT-compliant

As of 1 January 2011, EPR is registered as a VAT compliant organisation in Belgium. This means that all incoming and outgoing invoices will need to register the VAT numbers of both EPR and the other company involved. In order to ensure smooth running of our invoicing with your organisations, please be sure to inform your financial department of our official contact for invoicing purposes:

Jan Spooren

European Platform for Rehabilitation

15, rue de Spa

1000 Brussels, Belgium

VAT - BE0864 922 670

For any questions, please feel free to contact us at epr@epr.eu.

EQUASS Recruits New Coordinator



Following Eleanor Brown's departure from the EQUASS Secretariat, Marie Dubost was hired as the new EQUASS Coordinator in March 2011.

With a background in international trade and consultancy to the European Union, Marie is responsible for the facilitation of all certification processes and quality activities of

the department. She is also in charge of monitoring the commercial and financial results of the EQUASS Unit.

She will be working part-time (mornings) until September 2011, when she will take up the position as a full-time member of staff.

Marie can be reached at: mdubost@epr.eu

EPR Recruits Two New Interns

Following Martial Reyners's end of internship, EPR recently recruited two interns to reinforce the current Secretariat staffing capacities, starting at the end of April.

While both interns will provide horizontal support to the team and will contribute to the overall functioning of the Secretariat, their respective competences will also be used for more specific topics. **Clare Sturla**, from the United Kingdom, will focus on EPR Public Affairs activities and on the CAPs. **Jonathan Coyle**, from Ireland, will contribute to Communications activities as well as to supporting the EQUASS unit in various tasks.

As native English speakers, they will also provide the Secretariat with invaluable linguistic support in proofreading and editing publications and key documents.

EPR has been running its internship programme for a number of years with an increasing degree of success every time, and is confident that once again, the internships will be a positive experience for the interns and for the EPR Secretariat.



EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR REHABILITATION



The European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR) is a network of leading European providers of rehabilitation services to people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups. EPR's member organisations are influential in their countries and stand for high quality service delivery in the fields of vocational education and training, reintegration, medical rehabilitation and

social care.

EPR assists its member organisations in achieving continuous professional improvement, best practice and competitiveness in every aspect of service delivery. Through its Public Affairs activities, EPR enables service providers to contribute to the formulation of European social policy, and facilitates access to EU funding.

Recognised as an important player on the European scene, the network receives structural funding under EU's Lifelong Learning Programme. EPR has a seat on EU's High Level Group on Disability and has participatory status with the Council of Europe. EPR cooperates actively with all key sectoral stakeholders.

EPR on the web!

For regularly updated information on EPR and its activities, please visit our website:

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EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR REHABILITATION

The network of leading service providers to people with disabilities

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