

EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR REHABILITATION

The network of leading service providers to people with disabilities

NEWSLETTER

Editorial

Special:

- Latest developments in EPR member centres
- New Centre Action Plan cycle
- New Knowledge Management System
- EPR Annual Conference

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Dear EPR Members,

I would like to welcome you to the May 2013 edition of the EPR Newsletter.

As President of EPR, I have had the opportunity to learn so much more about all of our members. I have found that the European Platform for Rehabilitation is a truly unique organisation. Operating across national boundaries, it brings together some of Europe's most accomplished organisations, providing a valuable platform for collaboration and for working together.

As members of EPR, we are all committed to continuous improvement and to forging new paths in order to provide the best possible supports to the people we serve. Members are recognised Europe-wide for their commitment to quality. In this, we can all support one another by building on the expertise of all of our members, promoting quality, enabling collaboration and collegiality and by sharing best practice.

Our sector is experiencing a time of great change. Greater focus on individualised supports challenges us all to innovate. At the same time, across Europe, members are encountering very changeable economic environments because we support some of the people who have been most affected by reductions in resources available to service provision we have a responsibility to ensure that they continue to move towards greater independence in their lives. In the decade before the downturn, we played a central role in delivering considerable change in how people with disabilities are supported to live their lives. We must now work to maintain that progress and to continue to evolve our services. Never has a commitment to quality and standards been more important as we

attempt to achieve more and more with fewer resources.

Membership of EPR provides an important additional support to organisations working on the frontline every day. Through membership of EPR we have the opportunity to access the learning of other organisations. It has been my experience over the last 18 months that all of our members have a huge appetite for learning from each other. Through regular board meetings, seminars and conferences, EPR has created an environment where members can easily learn from and share with one another. Our process of Centre Action Plans ensures that EPR is relevant to its members and their front line staff and we look forward to the successful implementation of the 2013-2014 plans. This spirit of shared learning is one of EPR's greatest strengths, with members returning each year to attend meetings and information sessions which are useful and practical to their everyday work.

The EPR Annual Conference is a key annual event for members and I would like to take this opportunity to formally invite you all to join us for this year's conference which will take place in Dublin on June 10 and 11. The conference, which will be hosted by RehabCare, will offer a very interesting line-up of speakers as well as some very Irish entertainment.

I would encourage you to disseminate this newsletter widely through your organisation, ensuring that staff at all levels can participate in and benefit from membership of EPR. I would also like to thank EPR board for the active support that they provide to the EPR and also Jan Spooren and his team for their hard work and dedication to the continued success of EPR.

I look forward to meeting you all in June,

Angela Kerins

EPR President



Calendar of EPR Events 2013

- **Outcome measurement in vocational rehabilitation**, benchmarking group, Web-meeting, 24 May 2013
- **Mental health & recovery**, thematic community (open to Associate members), Live online training, 28 May 2013, 10:00-13:00 (Brussels time)
- **Person-centred planning in transition process** (open to Associate members)
 - Online training, recorded online session, 13-31 May 2013
 - Benchlearning, 17-18 September 2013, GREP, Norway
- **Cooperation with employers**, Thematic Community, Initial brainstorming, 10 June 2013 a.m., Dublin
- **Innovation**, Open round table, 10 June 2013 a.m., Dublin
- **Use of Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) in blended learning**, Visit to National Learning Network services, 12 June 2013, Dublin
- **Leading the way: demonstrating added-value through innovation in services to people with disabilities**, EPR Annual Conference, 10-11 June 2013, Dublin (open to Associate members)
- **Integral Performance Management (IPM)** (open to Associate members), Workshop on System 7 management application, Dublin, 11 June 2013
- **The use of ICT in customer management**, Workshop on System 7 management application, Dublin, 11 June 2013
- **Workshop for Directors**, 2-3 October 2013, Zeeduin Wijk aan Zee, Heliomare, the Netherlands (open to Associate members)
- **Mental health & recovery**, thematic community (open to Associate members)
Live online training, 25 October 2013, (10:00-13:00 Brussels time)
- **Public Affairs Event**, 5-6 December 2013, Brussels (open to Associate members)
- **Social firms**, site visit, 5-6 December 2013, Belgium

This list is subject to change and is regularly updated as new events are planned.

Please consult EPR website for the most up-to-date information: www.epr.eu or contact EPR secretariat
Tel: +32 2 736 54 44, e-mail: claudedelfosse@epr.eu

News from the members

Rehab Group sets up independent subsidiary in Saudi Arabia



The Rehab Group is to expand into the Middle East and has set up a subsidiary in Saudi Arabia, which is expected to create jobs for Irish workers over the next three years.

Rehab chief executive Angela Kerins last week signed a strategic partnership agreement with Global Dimension for Education and Training, a member of the Almojel Group of Companies, to deliver education and training services to people with disabilities and special needs in the kingdom.

Ms Kerins said the organisation would focus initially on its expansion in Saudi Arabia, but may consider further expansion in the region. "Saudi Arabia is the first country in the Middle East that the Rehab Group is working with and we are privileged to have the opportunity to offer our expertise to support the improvement of employment prospects for disabled people in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

Independence

The signing was attended by Minister of State Ciarán Cannon and Irish Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Dr Niall

Holohan. While the training services will be provided with a subsidiary of the Almojel Group, one of Saudi's oldest companies, it's understood the Rehab Group has been allowed to establish its subsidiary independently in Saudi Arabia without a local partner, which is unusual for foreign businesses setting up in the kingdom.

Rehab would not say how many jobs will be created for Irish workers in Saudi Arabia and support services in Ireland, but said it would be advertising for new positions in the coming months and there would be "significant opportunities" for work in the kingdom. Sources in Saudi Arabia expect the deal to create more than 300 jobs over the next three years.

Recognition

Saudi Arabia has a population of 27 million people, of which six million are expatriate workers. Of the local population, experts estimate that as much as 15 per cent of the population suffers from some level of disability or special need. While there are few options for work or training for people with disability, there is a recognition that this needs to change.

According to Ms Kerins there was high-level support for the company in the kingdom. "Disability is not a contentious issue in Saudi Arabia, but isn't a very visible issue at the moment. There is willingness to affect change in Saudi Arabia and everywhere we've gone there has been a positive reaction to our presence and our mission.

By Harry Leech, Irish Time

Companies are opportunity providers for young people with disabilities

bbw Süd Hessen

During an event on 28 February 2013, the vocational training center Southern Hesse (bbw Süd Hessen) informed about the prospects and opportunities businesses will have, if they offer a traineeship or apprenticeship for people with disabilities. Without any access to vocational training, the path into workmanship will be very challenging for young people with disabilities, even if the economic climate is

improving. Here, bbw Süd Hessen comes into place offering, in close cooperation with companies, various services in the field of career education and training for young people with special needs. At the event at bbw Süd Hessen companies like REWE, ING DiBa or the Hotel Dolce have presented examples of good practice and reported on their experience

and job training opportunities for young people with disabilities. The bbw Süd Hessen explained which services it offers to support businesses. The event was opened by Petra Müller-Klepper, Secretary of State in the Hesse Ministry of Social Affairs, and Dr. Frank Martin, CEO of the Hessian Regional Directorate of the Federal Employment Agency and patron of the event.

“To give away the potential of people with disabilities would be a missed opportunity,” Mueller Klepper emphasised. A campaign to gain more training and employment positions needs the active participation and cooperation of all participants. “The professional orientation of disabled students must be improved and the percentage of company-based training for severely disabled young people can be increased. So, with regard to individual support, it is important to advance dual education and to remove obstacles in vocational training”, the Secretary of State stated.

bbw Süd Hessen combines practical training in their own areas with comprehensive internships in businesses. Moreover, since 2012, the bbw Süd Hessen, together with the bbw Nordhessen plays a leading role in the “Inclusion Initiative”, which aims to gain new training positions for young people with a severe disability. “We see it as our task to provide the connection between businesses and young people with disabilities – therefore we accompany both, the companies and the young adults, and offer our support and advice regarding all emerging issues,” explains Renée Seehof, director of bbw southern Hesse.

Currently bbw Süd Hessen is looking for more Hessian companies offering internships or apprenticeships for young people with disabilities. “The future need of workers will hopefully lead to a change of mind in many companies and bring along more chances for young people with disabilities to get a regular job. It is high time that we, as a society, encourage participation and offer people with disabilities the support they need”, Dr. Frank Martin, head of the Hesse Regional Directorate of the Federal Employment Agency explains.

Inclusion Initiative: The “Inclusion Initiative” is a measure under the National Action Plan, the federal government has started to implement the UN Disability Convention. The Hessian Ministry of Social Affairs has instructed bbw

Süd Hessen and bbw Nordhessen with the implementation of action on “career orientation” and “New Apprenticeships” in Hesse.

In the context of “Inclusion Initiative” the two vocational training centers work on the one hand on establishing career guidance for severely disabled students. On the other hand, they seek to provide new training places for young people with a severe disability. In Hesse alone, 110 additional training positions for people with a disability are planned. To achieve this, the government of Hesse has commissioned the two vocational training centers to acquire, with the support of the employment agencies, further vocational training positions, to give them to suitable trainees and to accompany the trainees and the companies during the vocational traineeship. Employers prepared to employ young adults with disabilities and, thus, contribute to enhancing their chances on the employment market, will also receive a bonus, which is paid in addition to the legal subsidies..

VAmB: The integral training program in cooperation with companies, called VamB, was created in 2004 as a project of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and meanwhile has established itself as a permanent offer of vocational training centres. Integral means that the vocational training centres interlink their high level of expertise in the training of young disabled people with the high technical competence of enterprises. The partner companies provide important practical experience and are intensively supported by the vocational training centres. Companies thus have the opportunity to train motivated young people according to their specific needs. Throughout the duration of the traineeship, the vocational training center stays responsible for the young adults. So, all participants benefit from this cooperation: the young adults, the company and the vocational training centers.



Speech at the event
on 28 February 2013

DUOdag, Building bridges between employers and people with a disability in Flanders

GTB

On March 21st, the 4th edition of DUOdag took place. GTB, in collaboration with their specialised partners: the public employment service, different employer's organisations and vocational training centres, organises this event to raise awareness concerning the employment of jobseekers with disabilities. This year, more than 500 jobseekers with a disability had a unique opportunity to get a close look at the world of work in one of the 422 companies who were involved. A great success which we want to continue improving every year!

What makes it so special?

The DUOdag is a day of action! During this day, the person with a disability shadows an employee during their daily work in a work environment in the open labour market. The project aims on different objectives. It enables jobseekers with disabilities to create a better view on different jobs on the open labour market. They get the chance to find out if their job skills match with a certain job function. They can gain experience, learn about job requirements and can convince employers of their skills. Employers gain a better understanding of the capabilities of persons with disabilities. They get to know the organisations who can offer job support when a person is hired and gain information about the employment benefits. The mediator (employment officer, counselor, job coach) develop a better view on the labour market. He can open

doors, remove barriers and change attitudes and perception. DUOdag is an accessible project with a win-win for all involved. A very strong sensitive campaign to make employers more aware of the talents of this target group without making a recruiting commitment. It's more about getting to know each other & build up long term relationships then about creating jobs. Every year we see that a lot of jobseekers can stay at the workplace for a long-term internship, even some of them get a paid job.

We are glad that we were able to pick up the idea from the Irish Association of Supported Employment. The benefits of the project are definitely proven. Other countries are following to organise a similar event.

For more information visit www.duodag.be
and www.facebook.com/duodag

Contact: wannes.marivoet@gtb-vlaanderen.be or
Nathalie.peeters@gtb-vlaanderen.be



Astangu's first steps in involving volunteers

Throughout the years, Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre has welcomed visiting students from various universities and with various majors. They have generally found their way here either through study visits or from the need to complete their internships. In their feedback, many students have expressed a desire to further participate in our activities. Conversations with potential employees have also brought up their interest in volunteering for us.

Thus, we have lately started placing more emphasis on volunteering. In the autumn of 2012, the employees of Astangu took part in a brainstorming session where we put down our vision of involving volunteers in the activities at Astangu. We also thought about who and how will recruit volunteers, what we can offer to them, and how to support them. We promoted our volunteering opportunities in a special online volunteer database.

Immediately after the brainstorming session, we received our first offer from a prospective volunteer; we were also contacted by the Grizzly Unit of the Estonian Guides Association. Today, we have six active volunteers whose work ranges from helping our clients in their studies and in their dormitories, to assisting our staff in organising leisure-time activities. A team of five guides organises a game club which comes together up to twice per month. Their contribution is extremely valuable and we hope to become specialists on involving volunteers as many of our European colleagues.

Astangu visited partners in Slovenia



At the beginning of April, two employees of Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre spent a week in our partner organisation, University Rehabilitation Institute, Republic of Slovenia, as part of Leonardo da Vinci mobility project. The aim of the trip was to find out more about the work in various departments of the Institute and to familiarise ourselves with the main organisational methods of client evaluation in order to compare the Slovenian system with ours and to exchange experiences.

The topics of interest included assessing the coping of clients and assessing the need for assistive technology and adjusted environment, mainly because the visiting employees work in the department of Astangu - Centre for Disability Related Information and Assistive Technology. In addition to visiting the Institute, the Estonian delegates met with representatives of state funders for the field of assistive

devices: the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. During the meeting, topics related to the assistive technologies of both countries – for example, list of devices, price limits and grouping of devices, funding, and legal regulations – were discussed. Additionally, the two countries exchanged their experiences in distributing assistive devices and discussed planned changes.

The visit gave a thorough overview of Slovenian best practices in supporting clients' rehabilitation process, restated the importance of assistive devices in enhancing the coping of clients, and highlighted the significance of evaluation. Both the visit itself and the new contacts contribute to the further development of Estonian field of assistive devices.

Many thanks to the University Rehabilitation Institute!



Tasteful Conversation

AFID Foundation

Tasteful Conversation is a project of intervention and promotion of client's families, and it has been developing in AFID Foundation since 2007.

The methodology used is world café. This approach re-creates the café environment as such; an informal and understanding atmosphere allowing deep reflections through shared experience. It is a way to share knowledge and experiences, through an active, lively and fun dialogue.

It is a useful methodology for large and small audiences. This format is used for more deeper conversations since the in informal backgrounds stimulates the interactions among people, enables the intervention of all people sharing different ideas and increasing the

participation and the richness of the reflections.

Simple sheets of paper with reflective questions (focused on success) on the reflections are used to introduce the topics. Food and drinks are provided in order to aid relaxation and stimulate the creativity. Coloured pencils and drawing pens are distributed, to stimulate the use of additional forms of communication other than writing. In each table there is a host/facilitator who welcome people at the table and stimulate the conversation and the exchange of knowledge/experience.

Every 10 minutes or so, all people except the hosts/facilitators move around the tables to have conversation on different topics. At the end, each host/facilitator report on the

conclusion(s) of his own table, allowing for general discussion.

Objectives:

- To provide a voice to parents who are the main representatives of AFID clients, allowing them to share experiences, questions, anxieties in their role of carers of a disabled person.
- To foster the involvement of parents or significant others in the work developed by AFIFID, creating a closer relationship and establishing an open dialogue between the parties.
- To understand how parents or significant others feel today and how they live with such a complex task.

Added-value:

Tasteful conversations by creating a

café environment, has the important social function to make the meeting more pleasant and to facilitate the sharing, the reflection and the conversation. The duration of the conversation is between 1h and 1h30 minutes each and they are held twice a year.

Based on the assumptions of Positive Psychology and Appreciative Enquiry it is focused on successful factors instead

of problems and ruinous situations. Such approach allows AFID staff to become more conscious on what has been done and achieved, and consequently it allows having a higher self-trust for further successful moments/experience. Tasteful conversations provide emphasis on values, virtues and strength of each participant group (families, clients and staff), so it becomes easier to

overcome obstacles and deal with the inherent adversities of life.

In this way, Positive Psychology considers that every human being, group or institution, has the resources to improve and live in a more gratifying manner finding solutions for various everyday situations.

Evaluation questionnaires are distributed during each meeting in

ACTrain project «Education and training for all – Innovation not Discrimination» University Rehabilitation Institute (URI)

University Rehabilitation Institute, Republic of Slovenia (URI-Soča) is partner in ACTrain project (Accessible web-based and interactive video-supported skills transfer). On the 21st November 2012 the partnership of the ACTrain project (www.see-hear-touch.com) organised the final international conference “Education and training for all – Innovation not discrimination” in URI-Soča Ljubljana.



At this event, the partnership with very strong support from the professional audience and professional speakers, presented the innovative ICT-supported training programme Proteus. This programme has been specially adapted to the needs of deaf, hard of hearing, blind and partially-sighted people. At the round table we discussed the importance of innovative ICT tools in education and training, the usability, the vision for the future, and the sustainability of the presented Proteus innovation. We also presented the system and financial challenges, and highlighted the possibilities for establishing a Foundation for the (non) formal status of the ICT as one of the key ICT-tools within the education and training of people with special needs. This will thus help in the development of European strategies and measures for the use of ICT in education and training for all.

News from Heliomare

♦ Promotion of Heliomare research and development colleague Daphne Wezenberg - Optimizing Prosthetic Gait

Walking with lower limb prosthesis can be a challenge. Walking requires a balance between the available physical capacity and the physical load experienced when walking. This thesis gives insight into the available physical capacity of people with a prosthesis and the underlying factors causing the increased physical load while walking with a prosthesis. Based on the results recommendations are formulated that help to improve the quality of life of people after a lower limb amputation, optimize prosthetic development and prosthetic

rehabilitation. The condition of people that walk with a prosthetic leg is worse than that of people not amputated. This is especially true for those people who have a leg amputation by artery disease. For these people walking is a strenuous activity, it requires a lot of work. PhD candidate Daphne Waits shows with a model study that a relatively small improvement in the physical condition can lead to clear improvements in walking ability.

♦ (re) Opening new facilities for Heliomare R&D

On 14th of May Heliomare will (re) open its new build facilities for Research and Development in Wijk aan Zee: it hosts offices and research/test labs: gait analysis, physical stress testing. Research colleagues as well as doctoral candidates have perfect facilities here!

♦ Talent expedition

The talents expedition is a guidance program of 8 weeks. The participants will have, by making tests, assignments, and other practical exercises, understanding of their qualities and skills. So they can make a good and conscious choice for training and occupation.

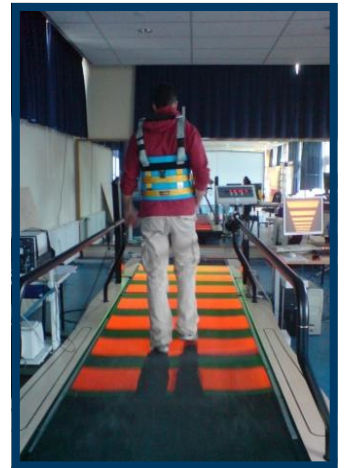
♦ Advice

The funding for participation in the talents expedition goes through UWV. UWV has a contract with REA College Netherlands, which states that all REA branches may offer the talents expedition. Some participants will, after the talents

expedition, start in a REA curriculum. For others there maybe an opinion that refers to another possibility as guidance to work or training to a regular ROC.

♦ More new facilities for Heliomare TBI-clients

In Krommenie 8 new apartments are being build, opening is planned in November 2013



20 Years of Inclusion

APPACDM Villa Nova de Gaia



On 19 March APPACDM celebrated 20 years of a special protocol that allows 20 youngsters with special needs to work in Gaia's Biological Park. This protocol is sponsored by V.N.Gaia County Council and the board of directors of the Biological Park. During the celebration, Nuno Oliveira, the Biological Park managing director, said "The Biological Park cannot do without them anymore". This is a good example of how we can do it better! <https://vimeo.com/62336022>

In 2013, to celebrate its 40th anniversary, APPACDM de Gaia is organising several events according to its strategic plan:

- "Walk for Smiles", on the 28 April, sponsored by Aurora Cunha, a long-distance runner, who represented Portugal in three consecutive Olympic Games.
- 2nd International Seminar on Special Education of Vila Nova de Gaia on the 4 and 5 July.
- Solidarity Dinner in benefit of APPACDM Gaia, in September.
- Musical Soirée, in October.
- Inauguration of the new Residential Home in Rasa, in Gaia, in November.
- Inauguration of the new Occupational Activities Centre in Canidelo, in December.



Centre Action Plans (CAPs)

New Centre Action Plan cycle 2013-2014

The full member organisations of EPR started a new Centre Action Plan cycle covering 2013 and 2014. The Centre Action plan is a tailor-made programme of professional development activities, designed following the organisation's needs assessed every two years. At the end of 2012 indeed, EPR members discussed with the secretariat about their priorities and wishes in terms of professional development for the coming two years, and the programme of activities proposed in return was negotiated and validated. In the first quarter of 2013, EPR secretariat has been planning most of the activities for this year and some of them have been launched.

Therapeutic education at CRM

Therapeutic education allows patients to improve their knowledge and skills not only concerning their illness, but also of their treatment. It brings a better quality of life, a greater therapeutic compliance and a reduction in complications. The most difficult part of therapeutic patient education occurs when patients must change their behaviour. Motivational interviewing and cognitive-behavioural approaches contribute greatly here and allow both the preparation and support of patients during progressive "step by step" change.

Prof. Alain Golaix is Head of the Service of therapeutic education for chronic diseases at the Department of Community medicine of the University Hospital of Geneva. He provided on 5-6 February 2013 a two day in-house training to approximately 20 staff members of CRM, France, with the objective to support the development of therapeutic education in the practices of various professionals across the organisation. A follow-up is planned in autumn to discuss the progress in the implementation of therapeutic education approaches.

European disability policy

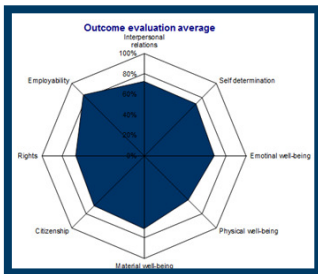


EPR Centre Coordinators participated in the training seminar on EU policy on disability and social services held on 15 March in Brussels. The training was led by Harald Hauben, a specialist of social law and consultant in social affairs. The seminar provided EPR members with a general update and overview on recent developments in EU Policy in the field of disability and social services.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the EU Disability Strategy 2011 - 2020 offer sound frameworks that put pressure on countries to put into practice numerous innovative concepts. Participants were offered the opportunity to meet with representatives of two major stakeholder organisations in the disability field at European level: the European Disability Forum (EDF, www.edf-feph.org/), and the European Network for Independent Living - ENIL, www.enil.eu

The latter insisted on the implications and challenges of the article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and fostered discussion on the changing relations between Independent Living movements and service providers.

Benchmarking group on Outcome measurement in vocational rehabilitation



The benchmarking group does it again! Nine organisations, namely CRM, Luovi, Durapart, NLN, URI three organisations of Josefs-Gesellschaft (Josefsheim-Bigge, Benediktushof Maria Veen and BFW-Hamm) and

ex-EPR member CRPG, are implementing the measurement tools they developed in the past years. A first web-meeting took place on 25 February to discuss the results collected in 2012. On the agenda 2013, the last adjustments of the measurement tool, the finalisation of its easy-read version, benchmarking on collected data and the set-up of an online benchmarking portal.

The use of ICTs in customer management

Libera, a American company, proposed to EPR members online demonstrations of an application called System 7, which offers solutions for information gathering, management and reporting. With regards to EPR member organisations, this application revealed to be interesting for two particular aspects: the possibility to organise customer management in administration and in service delivery, and the assessment of efficiency of service delivery through the calculation of costs. Libera will run a face-to-face workshop at the EPR Annual Conference in Dublin to address specific interests expressed by EPR members.

Knowledge Management System

The new on-line and interactive Knowledge Management System has been launched on 14 March 2013 during the last Centre Coordinators meeting. The experiences gained with the use of the previous Knowledge Management Centre led to revision of the exchange of good practices and knowledge within the EPR network. The new Knowledge Management is integral part of the EPR website (www.epr.eu) and it is organised around two pillars, one dedicated to EPR member organisations and their services and the other one built around different thematic communities on the disability.

The section about EPR members is accessible to all users and intends to be an orientation tool to find relevant information about EPR members such as contact details, mission and vision, internal organisation, description of services, innovation priorities and good practices.



The section on thematic communities on the other hand, can be consulted only by EPR members by login on the EPR website with username and password (each centre organisation has its own username and password). This section counts seven different thematic areas relevant for the EPR “mutual-learning” activities:

- Medical Rehabilitation
- Education and Training;
- Work and Employment
- Independent Living
- Specific Client Groups
- Management in Rehabilitation Services
- Key concepts (Person-Centeredness, Empowerment, Assistive Technologies and Accessible ICT, Quality management, International Classification of Functioning).

Each area is articulated in different content-related sub-themes on more specific and key concepts, as showed in the picture.

By accessing to the sub-theme webpages, users can easily stream the information classified according their nature under the categories EPR activities, Members' expertise, European key policy documents and events, Relevant documents and links. This information, more comprehensive and detailed, intends to be the core of the exchange of expertise in the thematic communities. All the practices inserted in the Knowledge Management Centre (KMC) during the past years will be updated in the new system in the equivalent thematic area.

On-line thematic groups related to each thematic area will be set up in the coming months to ensure a greater exchange of ideas, expertise and know-how. An expert moderator will facilitate the discussions and encourage the documents sharing by using the specific forum appearing in each sub-theme webpage, as showed in the picture.

EPR Secretariat is investing time and resources in content-management and community building and is looking forward to enhancing mutual learning methodologies and the memberships added value.

Public Affairs

EPR study on active inclusion of young people with disabilities presented at Eurofound conference in The Hague

The European Foundation for Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) organised together with the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment a conference on 'Welfare Reform for active inclusion of young people with health problems of disabilities'. The event took place in The Hague on 16-17 January 2013, with about 100 policy makers, national and international experts, local authorities, employment service providers, social partners and youth organisations participants from all over Europe.

The conference is aimed at highlighting the implementation of active inclusion policies in relation to vulnerable youth and the related reforms to welfare systems currently taking place in European countries.

The conference drew on the extensive research carried out in 11 Member States. The EPR was a major partner in this study, and many of national

experts were selected via the EPR membership. The overview report with findings and recommendations for the policymakers at various levels, as well as range of good practices, were launched at the event in The Hague. They can be downloaded from the Eurofound website www.eurofound.eu or from the EPR website www.epr.eu (under the EPR project section).

Jan Spooren, Secretary General of EPR, chaired a thematic session on 'Facilitating transition from education to employment'. The participants exchanged views on the establishment of learn/work places by employers and

discussed the tension between stigmatising and early identification of health problems. In relation to the latter issue, solutions were sought on how to identify those who will benefit from early intervention.

The conference in The Hague was the closure of this project which has been an exceptionally satisfying experience for EPR. The contents were enriching, and the project enabled EPR to prove once more its role as pivotal European network of expertise in vocational (re) integration issues. EPR is grateful to Eurofound and is looking forward for other co-operation opportunities.



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Projects

ATIS4All - Launch of the collaborative portal

EPR attended the 5th Workshop of ATIS4all project organised in collaboration with EASTIN Network and hosted by Fondazione Don Gnocchi in Milan on 21 and 22 February 2013.

During the workshop the project lead organisation, Technosite, presented the functionalities of the collaborative web portal launched at the end of January. Partners assessed and validated the portal, shared opinions on how to make the portal's forum more dynamic and discussed the forthcoming dissemination actions and the possible strategies to ensure the sustainability of the portal.

Partners are working together to provide quality contents to publish on the portal, to identify new potential supporters and key expert to involve in the portal community. The ATIS4all network is inviting interested parties to join as "supporters": any organisation working in any field related to ICT-AT and inclusive solutions. Become "supporter" of the network allows organisations to part of the ATIS4All community in the first release of the portal and to have the possibility to share information and

disseminate initiatives, best practices and case studies to a wide community. The list of supporters is also available on the portal.

EPR invites member organisations to visit the collaborative portal at www.collaborativeportal.atis4all.eu and share feedback with the Secretariat.



For more information about ATIS4All, contact Cinzia De Letis at cinzia.de.letis@epr.eu or visit the project website www.atis4all.eu



EQUASS

RehabCare Achieves Top European Quality Award – EQUASS Assurance

RehabCare, the health and social care division of Rehab, has today announced that it has been awarded a top European quality honour in recognition of the standard of the services that it provides. The European Quality in Social Services award – EQUASS Assurance – recognises RehabCare for its quality assurance and quality control in 19 of its resource centre services countrywide. The news brings to 28 the number of RehabCare services which have now gained the distinguished recognition.

EQUASS is a well-recognised European quality award for organisations providing social services. A number of European states, such as Norway, Portugal, Estonia and

Slovenia have adopted EQUASS as one of the approved standards for disability services. EQUASS aims to enhance the personal services sector by engaging service providers on quality matters and by guaranteeing the quality of services throughout Europe.

The award, which is overseen by an international awarding committee, is only given after an extensive process of external verification. As part of the process, people using RehabCare's services, staff and other stakeholders were interviewed. Over 100 criteria were reviewed, including participation by service users and families in the development of services, staff training and development, external partnerships, linkages developed with stakeholders, and

corporate governance. In their comments, the auditors paid tribute to staff members' passion and enthusiasm for their work, a strong "can do" attitude, and a clear focus on improving the quality of life for each person availing of the services.

Laura Keane, Rehab Group's Director of Health and Social Care Services, commented, "We are delighted to have received EQUASS Assurance, an independent European stamp of approval, verifying RehabCare's commitment to best practice. The award is a tribute to our committed and flexible staff who each day work to enable the people who attend our services to achieve their goals, whatever they may be – moving into their own home, finding a job, learning how to drive, or even writing a book.

"It demonstrates that RehabCare is committed to people and to supporting them in living their lives to the full. Models of social care provision are changing and it is essential that people have real choice in the type of service that they access.

In RehabCare, we pride ourselves on the fact that our services are centred around each person. We sit down with them to discuss what they want to achieve and help them to develop an individual plan, and then tailor the service provided to their own wishes. To be a truly person-centred service, you must take into account all of a person's needs from their living arrangements, to their personal development, to their financial independence. RehabCare is constantly innovating and we will build on this achievement so that we continue to be amongst the leading social care providers in Ireland."

Jan Spooren, Secretary General of the European Platform for Rehabilitation, which operates the EQUASS quality system under the supervision of its European Awarding Committee, added, "With this multi-site EQUASS certification, RehabCare proves it meets European quality requirements for its local community-based services, guaranteeing person-centered services of a high standard to all those availing of them."

The RehabCare services that have received EQUASS Assurance are:

- Tanyard resource centre, Tullamore
- Kilcruttin resource centre, Tullamore
- Ballinamore resource centre
- Dundalk Carroll Village resource centre
- Dundalk Coes Road resource centre
- Cavan resource centre
- Monaghan resource centre
- Dun Laoghaire resource centre
- Ballyfermot resource centre
- Clonmel resource centre
- Bantry resource centre
- Blennerville resource centre
- Shannon resource centre
- Casla resource centre
- Castlebar (Breaffy Road) resource centre
- Castlebar (Spencer Street) resource centre
- Waterford resource centre
- Kilkenny resource centre
- Athlone resource centre

The following RehabCare services have previously been awarded EQUASS Assurance: Bray resource centre, Castlerea resource centre, the Sligo resource centres, Bantry physical and sensory resource centre, Nenagh resource centre, Kildare resource centre, and the Lean ar Aghaidh day service and Phoenix day service in Bray.



EPR Annual Conference 2013

The EPR Annual Conference 2013 is almost there! EPR Secretariat and the host organisation RehabCare, in association with the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, are looking forward to welcome you to Dublin, Ireland, on 10 and 11 June 2013.

The programme of the conference proposes to reflect on how to demonstrate added-value of social services to stakeholders, covering the selection of measures, measurement methods, and their use to influence resource allocation and policy as well as service development. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the European Platform for Rehabilitation the Conference offers the opportunity to look forward together and stimulate creative thinking to better answer the challenges of the future.

EPR is organising additional professional development activities around the conference: the EPR Board of Directors and the brainstorming on “cooperation with employers”. On the second day of the Conference the EQUASS Awarding Ceremony will take place conferring EQUASS Excellence and Assurance certificates to the organisations certified since the last Awarding event (October 2011).

Registrations are opened until **Friday 10 May 2013**

For more information, consult the Annual Conference webpage on the EPR website.

Annual Conference Programme Highlights

DAY 1 - Monday 10 June 2013

- Effective resource allocation and improved outcomes, by Charles Normand from Trinity College
- The Irish value for money report: conclusions for disability service providers, by Tom Beegan, from the Irish Health & Safety Authority
- Living in the community and supports for people with disabilities, by Clodagh O' Brien from The Not for Profit Business Association
- Parallel workshop on Outcome measurement within the EPR membership



Completed in 1816 - Ha'penny Bridge, Dublin

DAY 2 – Tuesday 11 June 2013

- An innovation culture enhancing disability services, by Jerónimo de Sousa from CRPG
- EPR Innovation Prize Awarding Ceremony
- Examples of innovation by EPR members
- Designing new disability services – The clients' perspective; RehabCare Community Survey; The client's needs as a basis for service design, by Pascale van Bilsen from Adelante
- Disability services of the future: Setting the scene, by Mike Evans, Senior consultant
- Round table discussions on the future of disability services
- The European Social Fund 2014-2020, by Jan Spooren from EPR Secretariat
- The impact of austerity measures on the lives of people with disabilities, by Harald Hauben, from Quadrifid
- EQUASS awarding ceremony, speech by Guus van Beek, Key expert, EQUASS
- Euro-American cooperation, by Stephen Wooderson, from US Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
- The added-value of international cooperation, by André Lefèvre, past Secretary General (until April 2013),
- Conclusions by Angela Kerins, President EPR

At the end of the Conference participants are invited to attend the cocktail reception to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of EPR.

Annual conference Practical Information:

Welcome reception on Monday 10 June 2013

To warmly welcome you to the Annual Conference, a finger-food reception will be organised starting from 13:00 at the Conference venue Radisson Blu Hotel.

What to bring?

It is well known that the weather in Ireland could be really changeable even in June, with the consequence that it is not always warm, especially in the evening. We recommend participants to take warm clothes with them especially for the conference dinner which should take place outside.

Do not forget to change your wrist watch at your arrival!

EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR REHABILITATION

*The network of leading European providers of rehabilitation services
to people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups.*

EPR on the web!

For regularly updated information on EPR and its activities, visit our
website: www.epr.eu

The EPR newsletter is issued three times a year.

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