



EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR REHABILITATION

The network of service providers to people with disabilities committed to excellence and innovation through mutual learning

NEWSLETTER

Editorial: Creative and innovative learning

Special Focus:

- News from members
- Upcoming events
- Focus on Don Gnocchi Foundation
- Annual Conference
- Review Disability Strategy
- PESSIS 3 project

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Dear EPR Members,



I don't know if you have had the same experience, but I have found that the first quarter of 2016 has flown by! A number of successful events have already taken place, but there are many to come. I

would like to draw your attention to some of our recent work *Building capacity for excellence in service provision for people with disabilities*.

Firstly, I would like to highlight our mental health e-learning module. Mental health issues affect 1 in 4 people each year and the e-learning module includes a creative animated video addressing mental well-being and what positive attitudes can be adopted to promote it, aimed at the general public, service users and professionals. There is also a virtual bookshelf of resources for more information. I encourage you to check it out and see how you can use the module in your work, as well as to consider participating in future EPR training and mutual learning on mental health. The module can be found here: <http://bit.ly/1NChxdm> and will continue to be developed.

Secondly, we recently held a workshop on the Portalento.es employment platform that

coordinates job offers from over 4,000 companies and assists over 190,000 job-seekers. Equipped with the latest technological innovations, the platform run by ONCE's entity FSC Inserta is at the forefront of labour mediation and allows their users to directly interact with experts. Members expressed a high level of interest in the platform at last year's Annual Conference and the workshop equipped participants to consider how elements of this comprehensive platform could support their own employment services, with the view to piloting an innovation drawn from the platform. For more information and how to engage in the pilot, please contact Claude in the secretariat.

Finally, some initiatives led by the EQUASS Unit. The EQUASS Learning Community establishes an international network of social service providers committed to the EQUASS principles for quality and to quality improvement through learning by exchange of practices and benchlearning. You can find more information in this Newsletter. The benchlearning on quality culture will also be kicked off with a webinar on the 24th of May. Are you interested to know how supporting a culture of quality in your organisation builds capacity and improves services? Contact Marie for more information.

With best wishes,
 Laura Jones
 EPR Secretary General



Calendar of EPR activities & events

- ◇ **Training sessions on EU developments:** Online meeting: Wednesday 16th March, 10am-11.30, during coordinators meeting 20 April, during coordinators meeting 24 November.
- ◇ **Development of Employers' Charters:** Upon request, online
- ◇ **Strategic Workshop for Directors:** 11-12 May, Copenhagen
- ◇ **General Assembly:** 12 May, Copenhagen
- ◇ **Benchmarking activity on quality – quality culture:** 24 May online, followed by a face-to face meeting.
- ◇ **Job coaching/supported employment training online:** June, online.
- ◇ **National awareness raising seminar + workshop on Quality:** 8 June, Arad, Romania,
- ◇ **National awareness raising event + workshops on employment of people with disabilities:** 17 June, Riga, Latvia.
- ◇ **Training seminars on EU Funding Opportunities:** 10:00 – 11:30, 28 June, online – Second session in October
- ◇ **National event on community based services and social inclusion** Josefs-Gesellschaft, Germany, (date tbc)
- ◇ **Benchlearning on mental health recovery:** Josefs-Gesellschaft, Germany, (date tbc)
- ◇ **National awareness raising event on mental health services in rural areas:** Spain, September date tbc).
- ◇ **Study visit to Fondazione Don Carlo Gnocchi (medical rehabilitation):** October (date tbc) Milan.
- ◇ **Outcome measurement in Vocational Rehabilitation (OMVR):** 20 September (tbc), Lisbon.
- ◇ **General Assembly:** 20 September, Lisbon (tbc)
- ◇ **Annual Conference – Demographic change:** 21-22 September, Lisbon.
- ◇ **Public Affairs event – empowerment:** 23 November, Brussels (p.m.)
- ◇ **Centre Coordinators meeting 2:** 24 November, Brussels (a.m.)
- ◇ **General Assembly:** 24 November, Brussels (a.m.)
- ◇ **Benchlearning on transition from education-employment:** 24-25 November, Brussels.
- ◇ **Building partnership strategies with employers:** 8-9 December, Paris

Please consult the [EPR website](http://www.epr.eu) for the most up-to-date information: www.epr.eu. Further information about the individual activities and invitations will be circulated amongst members as soon as they are available.

These will include a description of the learning objectives and draft agenda.

For more information about any of the above events please contact the secretariat:

Tel. +32 2 736 54 44 - epr@epr.eu

News from the members

AFID Diferença Foundation takes a step forward towards innovation and environmental protection



A few months ago AFID Diferença Foundation launched a new project called the “Packages Rebellion”, in Portuguese “Revolta das Embalagens”. This is a socio-occupational workshop that sees discarded Tetra Brik aseptic packages converted into sturdy, re-usable shopping bags, while providing meaningful work to disabled young adults in Portugal.

With the main objective of building the capacity of and integrating young adults with intellectual disabilities, AFID Diferença Foundation counts on the consultancy and close support on the ground of TOUCH, proprietary and manager of the brand, along with the sponsorship of Tetra Pak.

Each partner reinforces its commitment with the environment and social responsibility, through the development of this social business generating sustainability for everyone through the production and commercialization of the products.

Each shopping bag reuses seventeen one liter Tetra Brik packages and can be purchased at the AFID [Diferença Foundation website](#) for 18 Euros. The aim is to create a sustainable eco-social business model that can be replicated to other markets.

Heliomare

Scoop: Dialyses in rehabilitation centre!

On Thursday 17th March the first kidney dialysis in started in Heliomare rehabilitation centre, other rehabilitation centres will use this possibility. *"Heliomare thinks it is important that care is brought as close to the patient as possible. We bring the facility to the source, instead of the other way around"*, said Hans Smits, team manager at Heliomare. *"Rehabilitation is an intensive process, if the transport and the dialysis treatment has to take place during the rehabilitation process, the latter will slow down."*

The dialyses are executed by staff of the dialysis centre Beverwijk and the hospital in Haarlem. The fact that patients do not need to move to receive this treatment, the risk of complications decreases and the rehabilitation process can start earlier and save time!



INTRAS Foundation

CHIC & CRAFT Project

INTRAS is a Spanish member of EPR very active in European projects. One of these initiatives is called Chic & Craft, an innovative training course for people with mental illness on fashion designing using discarded materials. Things, as people, deserve a second chance and this is precisely the philosophy behind Chic & Craft: to reuse-recycle old fabrics, second-hand clothes, waste materials, etc. to create new clothes and fashion accessories; this has been called upcycling in the recent years.

Hand craft is a therapeutic activity where people with mental illness can find a safe environment to express themselves and their creativity. On the other hand, fashion is a useful tool to easily reach the general society and thus make more visible the potential and abilities of the people with any kind of mental illness that also deserve a new opportunity to take control of their life. That is why INTRAS thought that a sustainable fashion designing course would be a good way to train abilities of the people they work with.

Chic & Craft is led by INTRAS Foundation, working jointly with OZARA d.o.o. from Slovenia, CJD Frechen from Germany, IASIS from Greece and the Valakupiai Rehabilitation Center from Lithuania (also EPR member). As

all partners firmly believe in the recovery capacity of people, the figure of the peer trainer has been promoted in the pilot course that will be made in five different countries. Small groups of 2-3 people in each country will be specially trained to act as peer trainers for the rest of the trainees, helping other course mates to understand the contents taught, express any question they might have or just encourage them to continue with the course. A guide, including exercises to train these small groups of people to be peer trainers, is already being developed so the experience could be replicated in other organizations.

The digital divide can be a problem when talking about mental illness, thus it was thought that it would be a good idea to create an on-line platform to implement the training course so the trainees have to enter to the platform to follow the course.

The Chic & Craft project wants people to return to valuing what is all around them; show them that creativity, lifelong learning and empathy are powerful tools than can change the world!

More information <http://chicandcraft.intras.es>



ONCE Foundation

The project “Inclusive Finances” from ONCE Foundation, selected as one of the Zero Project Innovative Practices 2016



At this year's Zero Project Conference on “Inclusive Education and ICT”, the ONCE Foundation was recognised as one of “Zero Project Innovative Practices 2016”, able to facilitate the transition towards a world without barriers. The project was distinguished at the United Nations Office in Vienna at the presence of more than 500 experts in the field of disability rights from around the world for its achievements in inclusive education and/or accessible Information and Communication Technology.

The goal of “Inclusive Finances” is to promote the capacity of people with intellectual and learning disabilities to manage their personal finances in an autonomous way, with the specific goals of:

- Learning basic financial concepts.
- Improving their capacity to manage and use money responsibly.
- Applying the acquired financial knowledge to the labour market.

“Inclusive Finances” was created with a multi-stakeholder approach. Promoted by the ONCE Foundation and co-financed by Citi, it includes contents and didactical support from the APROCOR Foundation. It was developed with the support both of Bank of Spain and the Spanish National Stock Market Commission. The disability movement was also involved throughout the whole process, providing their expertise from the design phase, and later as participants in

the different pilots, evaluating the resource and making concrete recommendations for improvement.

Currently, there are 741 registered students, 445 of which have made a course, and the number of registered entities has increase up to 58. Entities and students are from 26 provinces in 14 regions of Spain.

The project was selected by a committee of renowned disability and accessibility experts as an exemplary initiative in the areas of innovation, impact, chances of long-term growth and success, and scalability.

About the Zero Project

Zero Project focuses on the rights of persons with disabilities globally. It provides a platform where the most innovative and effective solutions to problems that persons with disabilities face are shared. The Zero Project was initiated by the Essl Foundation in 2010, and has run in partnership with the World Future Council since 2011 and with the European Foundation Centre since 2013. The mission of the Zero Project is to work for a world without barriers, according to the principles and Articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

Factsheet of the project at the Zero Project website:

http://zeroproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/208-ESP_Fundacion-ONCE_Inclusive-Finances_PRA.pdf

More about the 2016 Zero Project Conference: <http://zeroproject.org/conference-2016/>



PlayLab in Theotokos Foundation



The mission of Theotokos Foundation in Athens, Greece, is the education, training and treatment of children and young people aged 2.5 -35, with the aim of facilitating their full participation in society. The fields of specialisation of the Foundation amongst others, special needs education and development of daily living skills, vocational training and promotion towards supported employment. Towards these goals, Theotokos Foundation in cooperation with National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, has introduced serious games in their educational practice, implementing a methodology of research, application and development based on digital games and location based games.

Over the past years, serious games have been documented at the literature review as a promising educational tool with motivational perspectives to demotivated students or students who deal with low self esteem and learning difficulties. Game based learning, through its motivational qualities and friendly environment might be able to help the student with intellectual disability to virtually prepare for social integration, vocational training and safety while test her abilities and make mistakes in a friendlier and personalised environment. Besides the long-established importance of gameplay as a privileged framework for learning and socialisation, modern digital games enjoy a number of additional features.

Digital games implicitly include many educational theories and special education prerequisites, such as their enhanced capability to simulate real-world and everyday-life situations in a straightforward fashion, as well as their ability to attract the player's engagement through augmented playability mechanisms and balanced game feedback. Additionally, qualities such as promotion of equality along with acceptance

of differences, motivation through challenge and absence of punishment in the case or errors, have been present in recent studies about the usage of games as an educational tool.

PlayLab in Theotokos Foundation, uses an integrative approach based around fundamental educational value, playfulness and game design, using technology and playful experience as mediators. This methodology is consisted by three different games based practices:

- Integrating Serious Games in the educational experience of students with intellectual disability (ID). Educators integrate computer games in their educational scenario. Games are being used both as media of motivation and as educational tools, introducing new subjects or revise acquired knowledge.
 - ⇒ Serious Games Application for academic subjects (literacy, numeracy, math, color recognition, reading, reasoning etc).
 - ⇒ Serious Games Application for soft skills (social skills, time management, crisis management, communication, sharing, waiting, taking turns, independent travel)
 - ⇒ Serious Games Application for vocational training (preparation for first day at job, time management, crisis management, independent travel)
- PlayLab Game Design workshops for students with ID. Teenagers with ID, design and develop urban games and simple digital and pervasive games for digital devices, combining analytical thought with team cooperation skills and creativity. Students use tablets, mobile phones and everyday objects, in order to design artifacts and playful experiences.
- Game Development serious games specifically designed for Theotokos Foundation by game designers and developers in close cooperation with special educators, psychologists and students.

The methodology and practices of PlayLab, have been presented in national and european conferences and festivals. In the future PlayLab will also invite specialists in order to introduce robotics, augmented reality technologies and virtual reality to PlayLab members, in order to foster creativity, communication, team-spirit and self-motivation.

Theotokos Foundation

ABLE project: Autism - Building Links with Employers



Theotokos Foundation is participating in the Erasmus+ project “Autism - Building Links with Employers” in the field of Strategic Partnerships for vocational education and training. The lead partner is Orchardville Society (Northern Ireland) and the other partners are the Irish Association of Supported Employment (Ireland), Autism NI (Northern Ireland) and MISA (Sweden).

The ABLE (Autism Building Links with Employers) Project will directly impact and influence employers in the open labour market. Training material will be developed for employers that will assist them to employ, retain and maintain people with an Autism Spectrum Condition.

The Aim of Project ABLE

To develop ‘training material’ for Employers aimed at improving:

- Knowledge and understanding of an Autism Spectrum Condition
- The impact of someone with an ASC within the workplace
- Reasonable adjustments and support strategies available at work

Previous research indicated that a key barrier to securing Employment was the lack of knowledge of Employers in relation to the characteristics of People with Autism and the workplace adjustments which may be necessary to achieve an inclusive workforce. Project ABLE will enhance the

recruitment potential for People with an Autism Spectrum Condition through providing knowledge and appropriate support. Using the Supported Employment Model successful “Job Matches” can be achieved – that will result in a win-win situation for the Job Seekers and the Employers.

The project addresses the labour market relevance through the involvement of the employers in the identification of their needs through an attitudinal survey. The needs of employers have been researched and they are currently incorporating them in the development of the training resources. These will be shared throughout Europe for delivery within and to the key stakeholders in the employment arena and as a result employers will be better able to recruit and retain suitable employees. Project ABLE will demonstrate to the participant employers the relevance of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the workplace and the benefits received from it.

The quality of the materials developed will be enhanced through the participation of the participants in this process. The peer review of existing materials across states and therefore robust identification of best practice in the area of work based VET materials further ensures the development of high quality and appropriate work based VET materials.

Project ABLE is funded through Erasmus+, and is part of the Life Long Learning Programme. The Project will run from 2015 to 2017. For more information and involvement in the training you can visit the website <http://projectable.eu/>



REHABILITATION CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND
YOUNG ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES
AND AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre together with the Italian partner “Istituto Don Calabria” develop competences on vocational rehabilitation

In March, the Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre (VRC) team participated in a study visit to “Centro Polifunzionale Don Calabria”, which is one of several structures developed by the “Istituto don Calabria”, a worldwide organisation with its head office in Verona (Italy).

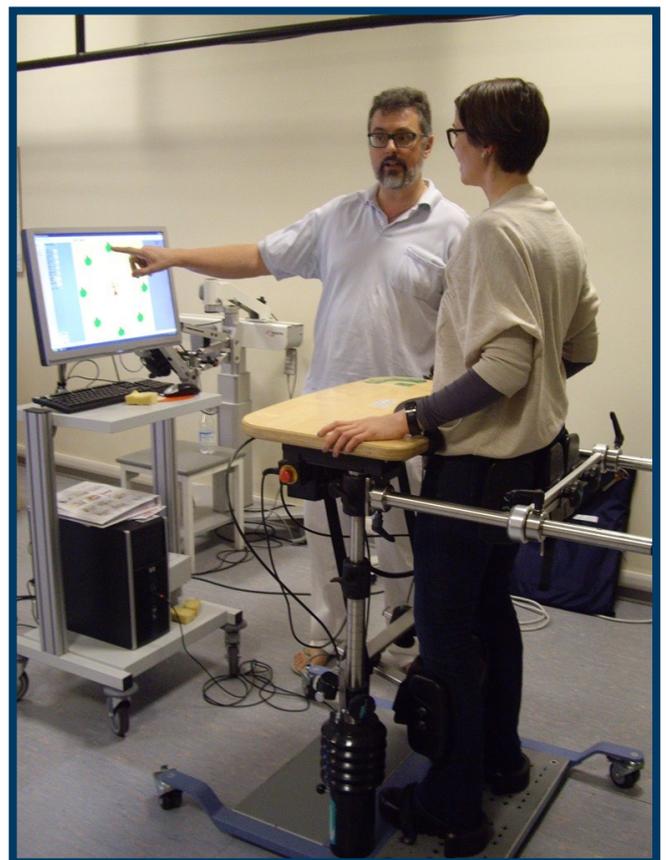
The one week programme allowed the vocational rehabilitation specialists to visit different vocational training as well as doing some job shadowing with the local employees. They also had the chance to discover the activities offered in the centre. The team was introduced to the Valpar evaluation system, which uses real or simulated work as the focal point of the vocational evaluation. This practice is also used at the Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre.

Furthermore, the participants had a chance to participate in a meeting with employees from the EQUASS certified unit Medialabor Service, who presented an overview of their activities and procedures for job placement for people with disabilities. There, they had a rewarding discussion about the organisation’s placement and advocacy work, and the situation of people with disabilities in Italy and Lithuania.

The team was also introduced to sport and physical activities as a tool for the inclusion of people with disabilities and people suffering from Alzheimer’s or Parkinson’s disease; the team even got to participate in this very interactive activity, which allowed them to learn a lot on the topic, giving them some new ideas that could be applied in VRC.

Overall, the visiting team learnt a lot from this visit, which allowed them to get a better insight into the state of synergy of healthcare, vocational, social and sport services in “Centro Polifunzionale don Calabria”. This visit also strengthened the professional links between the workers of both centers, which augurs for successful work in the implementation of current and future joined projects.

This visit has been implemented with the support from Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.



Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Member Focus



Discovering the Don Gnocchi Foundation in Italy

Founded in 1945 by Don Carlo Gnocchi, a priest from Milan, to provide care, rehabilitation and social integration for children who lost limbs in the war. Since its creation, the foundation has expanded its scope to healthcare rehabilitation, social welfare, social-therapeutic services and innovative scientific research. Today the [Don Carlo Gnocchi foundation](#) has more than 5,500 employees and consultants, operating under accreditation from the Italian National Health Service. The foundations' activities cover the fields of healthcare-rehabilitation, social welfare and social therapeutic services in 29 centres, grouped into 8 districts, covering 9 administrative regions.

Healthcare services at the foundation provide rehabilitation for post-acute patients during recover or patients with chronic conditions. The welfare model is based on principles of medical evidence to ensure care quality and continuity. Medical rehabilitation is based on a multi-disciplinary approach involving various specialists to promote the best quality of life for the patient, fostering readjustment to family and social life.

Assistance for the elderly has been central to the Don Carlo Gnocchi foundation with facilities designed to enhance alternatives to moving to nursing homes (assisted-living facilities) such as home care and integrated daytime centres. Resources and skills have been invested into local areas, part of an innovative model for organising initiatives to provide services in the community. Research has supported the welfare activities with the fight against Alzheimer's and senile dementia aided by specialised assistance through day hospitals, clinics and support groups.

Providing a range of socio-educational services for those with long-term disabilities aims to build a system of services designed to meet the needs of the individual within a single organisation. A harmonised approach encourages full membership in society by developing skills and self-sufficiency. Activities include special education nurseries and elementary school, aimed at differently abled users to participate in society.

At the Don Carlo Gnocchi foundation, research have been

at the centre of all its activities both at the IRCCS research hospitals facilities in Milan and Florence and at other centres. The foundation takes a translation approach to its scientific, clinical and technological initiatives. This centres on a principle of 'from bench to bedside', encompassing biomedicine, biotechnology and clinical experimentation in the search for new methods and technologies to aid the recovery of deficits and reduce conditions of impairment.

The field of assistive technology represents a core research area for the Don Carlo Gnocchi foundation, which has a facility equipped with sophisticated domotics for people with disabilities. Another initiative is SIVA, the evaluation service for data on assistive technologies and leading Italian network for orientation and consultation on the choice of assistive technology or medical device. The SIVA service expands beyond the Italian border and forms a part of Europe's EASTIN network, representing the integration of seven major national portals.

Vocational training represents the formative dimension of the Foundation with courses partially supported by the European Union, to those with with physical, cognitive or sensory disabilities alongside monitored job placements. Another initiative is the training of professionals in the field of disabilities and preparation of school staff to support children with special needs. The latter activity was piloted at the CeFOS (Centre for Orientation Training and Development) in Milan and Rome, while the former continues its operation at the IRCCS hospital in Milano .

The Don Carlo Gnocchi foundation received Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) status in March 2001, reflecting the projects carried out in developing countries alongside its activities in Italy. The extended reach of the Foundation increases the capacity to assist and serve people in need beyond the Italian borders. These activities include the creation of centres for disabled children in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Ecuador alongside facilities for orthopaedic surgery and rehabilitation in Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Burundi.

Professional Development Activities

Outcome measurement in Vocational Rehabilitation – FAGERH

The French network of vocational rehabilitation centres FAGERH hosted a meeting on Outcome measurement on 14-15 March 2016 in Paris. The group, led by Donal McAnaney and Claude Delfosse, piloted the QOLIS tool and gave a first trial to interpreting results. The 9 participating centres pursued their joint efforts towards a better understanding of positive (and negative) outcomes in relation to quality of life, more particularly personal development, social inclusion and well-being. Improvements were made to the QOLIS tools so that the questionnaire now integrates guidelines for a systematic, harmonized administration and the scorebook now automatically records disability types and other demographic details.

Webinar on EU developments in social and employment policies

What relevance for service providers?

On 16th March 2016, EPR organised for its members an online training session about relevant EU social and employment policy initiatives and legislation that could impact service providers' daily work. Participants had the opportunity to discuss the initiatives and share opinions, and to see if challenges they face are addressed by EU initiatives. The webinar featured three sessions:

The **European Disability Strategy (2010-2020)** and the public consultation on the mid-term review of the Strategy launched by the European Commission in December 2015. The European Commission asked for feedback on progress in the goals it set and actions it planned, as well as hear in general about the key challenges for persons with disabilities and proposals for how to address them. Participants had the opportunity to share the main challenges in the provision of services with and for persons with disabilities, with a focus on the challenges that persons with disabilities face. Participants' contribution fed the consultation [response of EPR](#) (also published on EPR website/Disability Policy).

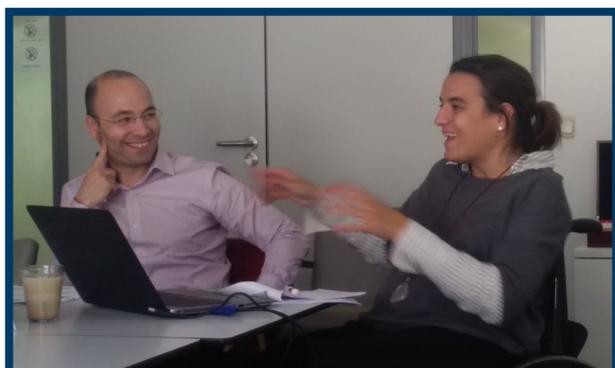
The **new Directive on public procurement (2014/24/EU)** and its transposition process into national law by April 2016. The new Directive on public procurement was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union on 26 February 2014 with the aim of simplifying the rules and providing the best value for

money for public purchases while respecting the principles of transparency and competition. EPR secretariat updated participants on the transposition process and highlighted the social advantages the Directive offers to social services providers. Participants also heard about the ONCE Foundation's experience in participating in the [socially responsible public procurement forum \(CON R\)](#) promoting the inclusion of social clauses in public procurement.

The EPR secretariat also presented the key **findings of two of the latest analytical papers** that link EU policy and practices Employment and ICT in Rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. The papers outline the main EU initiatives in those fields in the past year, and examine how they could impact the employment and inclusion of people with disabilities, as well as service providers in the provision of services. Both papers can be found on [EPR website/Policy Papers & Study](#).



Portaleto - Workshop on job-matching facilitation



Angel Lastanao , Illunion and Edurne Alvarez, FSC Inserta

Portaleto is a platform co-financed by the ONCE Foundation and the European Social Fund that coordinates job offers from over 4,000 collaborating companies and assists over 190,000 job-seekers. The particularity of the employment platform lies in the intermediation services undertaken by FSC Inserta, which proactively links up companies with suitable candidates. By doing so, it combines the potential of new technologies with human expertise. Edurne Alvarez de Mon, FSC Inserta Human Resources Consultant, and Ángel Luis Lastanao Yuste, Project Manager at ILUNION, presented to EPR Centre Coordinators and employment programme Managers the ins and outs of the platform and its mediation services. Members interested in developing similar tools are invited to contact Claude Delfosse at EPR secretariat in order to explore piloting possibilities.

The Portaleto workshop was organized on 19th April 2016 and was linked to the Spring meeting of the EPR Centre Coordinators on the following day. A social programme after the workshop offered the participants networking opportunities in a chilled atmosphere.



EPR Centre Coordinators

Minding our mental health: release of an e-learning video on mental health recovery

The 8-minute video aims at raising awareness about the main mechanisms behind mental well-being. The contents of the video have been developed by Tom O'Brien, EPR senior expert on mental health. They cover the definition of mental health, the impacts of mental health issues, as well as the factors and attitudes hindering or promoting mental health. The user-friendly format of the video makes it accessible to any kind of professional and to the general public. The video is accompanied by the video script in its full version and by a selection of resource materials for further reading. It will be expanded in the coming months with interactive e-learning tools. <http://www.epr.eu/index.php/thematic-expertise/specific-client-groups/540>



EPR Annual Conference 2016 is on tracks!



This year, EPR members will be invited by AFID in the delightful city of Lisbon, Portugal. The EPR Annual Conference, planned on 21 (full day) and 22 (morning) September, will critically look at rehabilitation services in the mirror of tomorrow's European society: how will demographic trends and societal change impact rehabilitation services in the coming 15 years?

The conference will take participants for a tour in the future and listen to youth's challenges, but also look at the growing elderly, migrants or people affected by mental health issues. Beyond the awareness of the challenges awaiting EPR members, the conference wants to raise the right questions: how to turn new needs into business opportunities? How to diversify or transform services? How to sustain funding? How

to secure quality of service and continuum of care throughout the lifecycle and throughout the organisation?

All EPR members are encouraged to contribute to the conference to make it a success!

Please contact claudedelfosse@epr.eu for any suggestion or question. The publication of the programme and the opening of the registrations are planned in June.

Other EPR events will be organised on 20 September, notably a General Assembly meeting, a Board of Directors meeting and a few other EPR professional development events. Invitations to those events will be sent directly to the relevant persons.

For more updating information, please consult regularly [EPR website](#).

EPR Innovation Prize Contest 2016

Innovation is the driver supporting the very existence of EPR as a network of mutual learning. Professionals must be encouraged to implement new ways of thinking and working with the view to continuously improve the service delivery to people with disabilities. Innovation must be at all times promoted, highlighted and rewarded. In this light, EPR promotes exchange of innovative and best-practices within the network and thanks to its Innovation Prize contest EPR members and their staff can be granted for their most innovative and high quality practice.

The contest is open to all professionals working in EPR member organisations. One application can be submitted on behalf of an individual or a team. 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 process for applying to the prize is very easy and can be done by filling the template available on the [EPR Innovation](#)

[Prize webpage](#).

All templates sent to the EPR secretariat between **02 May 2016 and 03 June 2016** will be eligible to win the Prize. The list of best-practices received will be submitted to the EPR Centre Coordinators which will score the practices.

The practice with the highest score will be selected as the winner of the Innovation Prize and rewarded with a voucher of 1.000 Euro for travel and participation to EPR activities. The winning organisation will be invited to present its best practice during the Innovation Prize Awarding Ceremony at the EPR Annual Conference on 21 September 2016 in Lisbon, Portugal.

		EPR Innovation Prize Celebrating mutual learning and continuous improvement
To: _____		€ 1.000
Amount <i>One thousand euros</i>		<i>Jean-Paul Evers,</i> EPR President
This amount covers costs for participation in EPR activities.		

Public Affairs

The Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth 2016 – Contribution from Belgian EPR member GTB vzw

On 21st March, the European Commission organised its first Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth that brought together policy makers and civil society to discuss what the EU can do to ensure that all citizens reap the benefits of inclusive growth.

The Convention was opened by Marianne Thyssen, the Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility. She pointed out that the Convention is organised as one of the actions taken by the Commission to demonstrate their dedication and efforts to improve social inclusion and growth for all. The Convention is also linked to the current ongoing [public consultation on a European Pillar for Social Rights](#) which was released by the Commission in early March and will be going for the rest of the year and includes fighting poverty, increasing employment, equality for men and women, life-long learning etc.

The full day Convention also included parallel and interactive workshops where all participants, representing different civil society organisations and public authorities, discussed challenges and actions for improvements in the fields of employment and inclusive labour market, social investment and EU funds, social convergence and fight against poverty, and integration of refugees.



By EU Social Europe - DG EMPL

The **EPR member GTB** in collaboration with the Flemish Public Employment Service (FPES) organised a speed dating session to present their **programme TAZ**: an activation programme for jobseekers with severe medical, mental, psychological or psychiatric problems. The programme features a co-operation between the employment, health and welfare sectors. The mental health and empowerment coaches are responsible for identifying the right services in their respective sectors.

The GTB job coach sets up an individual action plan and puts the jobseeker in contact with the health coach and the empowerment coach. The mental health coach is a psychologist working in a mental healthcare centre. They provide training and support (e.g. self-confidence, handling stress, assertiveness). The empowerment coach focuses on the psycho-economic or social impediments and deals with issues such as mobility, finances, or housing. Both coaches work either on an individual or group basis. The three coaches work together during the activation internship (520 hours), in which the jobseeker can apply the newly learned basic skills for employment. Clear definition of roles, process and outcome evaluation, appropriate training and good communication structures between the various services were implemented.

All services are financed by the Flemish Government and free of charge for the jobseeker. The maximum duration of the activation program is 18 months. The cost of the activation program is 1880 euro and it is available to 1100 jobseekers each year. After the program, 26 % of the participants are able to search for a job in the regular labour market, 12 % are ready for a job in a sheltered workplace, 28% will start unpaid transitional employment and 33% need further assistance before employment is possible.

Consultation on the review of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020

On 23rd December 2015, the European Commission launched a public consultation on the review of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020. This Strategy was designed to provide a roadmap for the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which the European Union is a party. The EU must ensure the Convention is respected in all of its actions as well as promote the rights across the EU. Eight main areas for action were outlined at EU level (accessibility, participation, equality, employment, education and training, social protection, health and external action) and different initiatives were planned.

The European Commission launched this consultation in order to assess its impact and to ensure EU policy remains tailored to the needs and rights of persons with disabilities.

EPR responded to the consultation and emphasised that a greater recognition of the role of services to persons with disabilities and a greater involvement of such service providers is needed to improve implementation of initiatives and aims of the European Disability Strategy. In the planned work on employment and reasonable accommodation it is important to engage service providers who have experience of partnerships with employers for integrating people with

disabilities in the workplace, to share good practice and dispel stigma. It is also important to showcase good practice in community-based services, particularly services funded by the EU Social and Investment Funds.

EPR called for a renewed Guide to Social Considerations in Public Procurement to include highlighting the opportunities for measures that support people with disabilities and good practice in this field, as well highlighting the possibilities for and benefits of contracting high-quality social services. The Commission should continue to promote the Voluntary Quality Framework for Social Services, particularly among public authorities.

We call on the Commission to develop a strategy to ensure that the European Semester contributes positively to the implementation of the UNCRPD, including in the AGS, Country Report analyses and CSRs. The social investment approach must continue to be promoted and supported by the European Commission, to ensure access to quality services to all people who are in need of care or support.

The EPR consultation response is published on [EPR website/ Disability Policy](#)

European Accessibility Act: improving the accessibility of products and services

On 4th December the European Commission presented a proposal for an EU-directive which deals with certain accessibility requirements for various products and services on EU level. The proposed directive on accessibility concerns the following areas: computer hardware and operating systems, ATMs, ticketing and check-in machines, telephones, digital TV sets, audio-visual media services, transport systems, banking services, e-books and e-commerce. The act regulates characteristics products and services need to fulfil in order to be classified as accessible. The Accessibility Act does not prescribe technical details on how to render a product or service accessible, amend existing EU legislation or place heavy requirements. European Disability Forum (EDF) has been campaigning for this act over past years and after a broad consultation with its members all over Europe, published its response to the proposal highlighting ways in which the proposal can be improved in order to bring a real,

positive change in the lives of persons with disabilities. For example, the widening of the scope of the Act is necessary; it should also cover the accessibility of the built environment related to the accessible goods and services covered by the Act. Business Europe has critiqued the act as it implies a blanket rule that restricts businesses' ability to offer a wide range of services. The Accessibility act aims to remove obstacles within the market by introducing a single set of obligations for accessibility, thus improving conditions for cross-border trade. The harmonisation of rules also widens the reach of products and services to persons with disabilities, older people and those facing challenges linked to accidents or temporary illnesses. Overall, the act represents an opportunity for businesses to develop accessible products and services to increase people with disabilities independence and participation within society. However, the challenge lies within the scope of the act, its implementation across borders and willingness of businesses to invest in an inclusive and accessible society.

Projects

4Quality! Project comes to an end

After two years of activity the 4 Quality! Project moved to the end this April. Its final conference scheduled on 23rd March was cancelled due to the Brussels terror attacks and not re-scheduled but its publications are available on the project [website](#):

- [European recommendations](#), also available in French, German, Czech, Spanish, Finnish, Dutch, Italian and Swedish
- [General Report](#) (also available in French)
- [European Toolkit of good practices](#) (also available in French)

The project promoted quality of services and jobs in personal care and household services by supporting a stakeholder dialogue between organisations active in PHS. The project intended to contribute making employment in PHS more attractive, creating more quality jobs, encouraging the movement of workers from the black or grey economy to the formal economy, and better protecting vulnerable people.



Progress Programme

Co-funded by the European Commission through the PROGRESS programme, the project gathered nine organisations or networks, namely European think & do tank Pour la Solidarité (project coordinator); Office Européen de Recherches Sociales (ORSEU); European Federation for Services to Individuals (EFSI); Social Services Europe (SSE); European Research and Development Service for the Social Economy (DIESIS); European Social Network (ESN); the European Regional Organisation of Union Network International (UNI EUROPA); the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT); and the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU).

EPR was involved in the project through its partnership in Social Services Europe.

EPR is partner in PESSIS 3 project on promoting employers' social dialogue in social services

PESSIS 3 Promoting employers' social services in social dialogue

The project, funded by the European Commission's Programme on Industrial Relations and Social Dialogue, runs from November 2015 to November 2017. It brings together 4 European and 7 national organisations representing social and health service providers with the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU). It is the follow up of the project PESSIS and PESSIS 2 and represents the third step of a longer term process aiming at establishing a representative platform for employers in the social services sector at European level. For more information about previous PESSIS projects please consult the [Social Services Europe website](#)

What is Social Dialogue?

Social dialogue is the process of negotiation, consultation or simply the exchange of views between different actors in society (or 'social partners') to reach agreement to work together on policies and activities, such as minimum wages or health and safety issues. Social dialogue takes place at national and sectoral level (e.g. health sector) as well as European level. 'Bipartite' social dialogue brings together workers and employers, whereas 'tripartite' social dialogue also involves government or EU representatives. There is a rich diversity in institutional arrangements, legal, frameworks and traditions and practices of social dialogue throughout Europe.

Trade union organisations at local, national, regional and international levels are the major means by which workers or

employees participate in social dialogue. Employers' organisations represent the employers. Labour administration (Government) has two principal roles to play in social dialogue: (1) promoting consultation with the social partners and for taking appropriate measures to ensure that such consultation is regular and effective; (2) acting as employer in the public sector.

What is European Social Dialogue and who are the key actors?

European Social Dialogue (hereinafter ESD) brings together employer and employee representative organisations at EU level to “assist in the definition of European social standards and play a vital role in the governance of the Union”. There are two strands in ESD, cross-industry and sectoral:

- Cross-industry ESD tackles broad issues affecting all –or most- industries in Europe. It brings together the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) on the trade union side and the Confederation of European Business (BUSINESSEUROPE), the European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services (CEEP) and the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (UEAPME) on the employers' side.
- EU-level sectoral social dialogue provides a structured framework to tackle issues between Employers and Employees – in the framework of exchanges of information or of models of good practice, in jointly advocating towards the EU institutions, in negotiating (framework) agreements, frameworks of actions, guidelines, etc – which are more sector specific. There are now 43 sectoral social dialogue committees, including for example the hospital sectoral committee which brings together the Hospital and Healthcare Employers Association (HOSPEEM) and the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), or the local and regional government sectoral committee which brings together the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and again EPSU.

What is the added value of European Social Dialogue?

European Social Dialogue provides an opportunity for EU-level platforms/associations of national employers and employees to discuss and come to agreement on issues that have cross-border implications and that require action at European level. For example, the European Hospital sectoral social dialogue

committee has discussed and made an agreement on good practices in the recruitment of international health workers. The same committee has also worked on occupational health and safety issues, i.e. related to needle sharps, this dossier having resulted in the European Commission publishing a Directive. This is a good example of how negotiations in an EU level sectoral social dialogue committee can be given ‘legal effect’.

In addition, participation in ESD would provide the sector with an increased influence over EU policy making as the European Commission is obliged to consult social partners in all proposals related to Employment and Social policy. It would also allow the sector to have a say on Europe's agenda-setting activities, such as the Europe 2020 Strategy or the Social Investment Package.

The PESSIS 3 project features three actions:

1. Extending the research on the state of social dialogue in social services sector in 5 additional countries not covered by the previous PESSIS projects*: Portugal, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and the United Kingdom. Each country researcher will be developing a case study of social dialogue in the social services sector in their respective country. This research will also contribute updating the European report.
2. Establishing capacity-building with national employers in 3 selected countries (Spain, Ireland and the Czech Republic) and discussing the participation in European Social Dialogue
3. Organising Social Partner negotiations at EU level to develop a Joint Declaration and a Sectoral Agreement on a social dialogue issue of importance to the sector between employers from Austria, Belgium, France and Germany, with feedback from the sector's trade union representatives.

EPR supports the project by leading the communication and dissemination activities designed to raise the visibility of the project outcomes.

* 17 country case studies are being researched in PESSIS and PESSIS II projects: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and The Netherlands.

The EQUASS Learning Community

The EQUASS Learning Community (ELC) aims at establishing an international network of social service providers who are committed to the EQUASS principles for quality and to quality improvement through learning by exchange of current practices and by mutual learning events based on results of benchmarking on common indicators.

The ELC allows social service providers to gauge their own position; it creates a learning curve to improve performances and it helps boost transparency, profile and image. Providing comprehensive insight into the performance of a social service provider, the ELC allows the provider to identify any areas in need of improvement and actions that need to be taken¹. The ELC also provides insight into relationships between performances. Social service providers may use the ELC outcomes in communicating with stakeholders to improve their profiles and promote transparency.

How does the ELC work?

The ELC network will organise national and international bench learning² events. These events will offer initial training, learning activities and workshops where social service providers can meet and exchange practice based on identified needs for learning. The program of the bench learning events will be based on the needs and expectations of the ELC members.

Piloting ELC concept in 2015 and 2016

The ELC concept has been piloted in Estonia (October 2015) and Lithuania (February 2016) and will be piloted in Norway (June 2016) and Portugal (TBC 2016). Social service providers who are committed to the EQUASS system applied on voluntary basis to participate in piloting the ELC concept. Five EQUASS certified organisations participated in the ELC pilot in Estonia and 4 EQUASS certified organisations participated in the ELC pilot in Lithuania. These

pilots consisted in one-day event in which EQUASS social service providers compared and exchanged performances and practices on Quality Culture and Persons Centred Approach. Prior to these pilot events information and data (Quality Culture Survey and various individual plans) are collected in order to be analysed and made comparable.

The events have been facilitated by Guus van Beek (EQUASS), Geir Moen (Equal Consulting) and Michael Crowley (CQC-Crowley Quality Consultants). During the two events, participants had the opportunity to present, compare and exchange the results of the analysis and their current practices. This process of comparison and exchange helps participants to learn from each other and decide how to improve their current practices and ways of working. Both events have been evaluated. The table below shows the core results of the evaluation. We also receive practical suggestions how to improve the organisations' learning process. These suggestions will be put into practice at the next ELC-pilots in Norway and Portugal.

After evaluating all pilot events, an extensive evaluation report will be written based on the figures and qualitative feedback from the participants. Based on feasibility of the ELC concept and the needs of the social service providers, EQUASS will decide how to continue with facilitating bench learning at national and international level.

For more detailed information about ELC, please read the full article published on [EQUASS website](#).

¹ Note that benchmarking in this concept is always considered as an instrument to improve and never an end in itself. Benchmark outcomes should always be tested against the vision and the policies of the Social Service Provider.

² Bench learning is a “systematically investigating the performance and underlying processes and practices of one or more reference organization providing social services in a particular field, and comparing one’s own performance with these practices, resulting in action-oriented learning”.

Nr.	Criteria	Tallinn		Vilnius	
		Score	Variation	Score	Variation
1	Content of the benchmarking and bench learning event	4,82	0,40	4,86	0,35
2	Relevance of benchmarking and bench learning for your organisation	4,91	0,30	4,86	0,35
3	Quality of the trainer(s) / facilitator(s)	5,00	0,00	5,00	0,00

The scale: 1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = good, 5 = excellent

EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR REHABILITATION

*The network of service providers to people with disabilities
committed to excellence and innovation through mutual learning*

EPR on the web!

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