



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

NEWSLETTER

Editorial: meeting member needs

Special Focus:

- *Calendar of events 2015*
- *Latest developments in EPR member centres*
- *New EPR member*
- *Public Affairs*
- *New EPR Offices*



Dear EPR Members,

Marketing is perceived by some as a tool that is just used to sell a product or service to people who do not really need them. Last week, at our annual Strategic Workshop for Directors, we discussed how it is in fact a tool to do the opposite. There are various definitions of marketing but we examined it as the process by which customers', or clients', needs are understood, then products and services are developed and promoted to meet those needs.

We want to make sure that the EPR secretariat and board understands and meets your needs as members so we will be consulting you in the coming weeks, in a more detailed way than usual. Your responses, set within the framework of our strategic plan, will feed into the development of next year's programme of activities. Your responses are therefore very important to us.

We will also be examining our communications tools and their design. How can we best inform you as members about what is important for you? How can

we inform potential members about who we are, what we do and why we do it? How do we visually communicate our mission, vision and values? We look forward to hearing your reflections about this.

Finally, let's take a step back now to this year's activities. You will read about many that have already happened in this newsletter, but you do not need to wait until 2016 for more opportunities to connect and exchange! Our national awareness raising and training events promise to be very interesting; focusing on recovery in mental health, community-based service delivery, quality of services and the employment of persons with disabilities from a CSR perspective.

We also have an informative study visit to a specialist in computer-aided communication scheduled for the end of the month. These events are open to all members, more information can be found on our website, please take a look.

If I don't see you at one of those meetings, I hope to see you during the two days of events in Brussels in November organised around our annual Public Affairs event.

With best wishes,

Laura Jones

EPR Secretary General

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adelante
 Hatal het basito ul' jazoff



Centre de Réadaptation de Mulhouse



DURAPART



Fundación ONCE



afid
 fundação oia'd diferencia



AIAS



Astfeningabedrifstene



ASTANGU



fagerfh



GREP



heliomare



JG



National Learning Network
 Investing in People, Changing Perspectives



FONDEN



ekon



gtb



LOS



MEREK



Pluryn
 Ondernemingen met een handicap
 of wetten, werken, leren en vrede!



RehabCare
 Investing in People, Changing Perspectives



SRH



Irish Wheelchair Association



INTRAS



University Rehabilitation Institute
 Republic of Slovenia



USEL



[Organization Name]



[Organization Name]

Calendar of EPR events 2015

- **The impact of the European Semester and the UNCRPD on the right to work of people with disabilities:** web-training, 4 November 2015, at 10 am (Brussels time)
- **Community-based residential services:** National awareness-raising and training event, 14 October 2015 , Agrinio, Greece
- **Outcome measurement in vocational Rehabilitation – FAGERH group:** 26 October 2015, Paris, France
- **Corporate Social Responsibility:** National awareness-raising and training event, 29 October, Vilnius, Lithuania
- **Assistive Technologies: Computer-aided communication, LIFEtool:** site visit, 29-30 October 2015, Linz, Austria
- **Recovery: lessons learnt and directions for the future:** National awareness-raising and training event, 5 November 2015 , Dublin, Ireland
- **Employment services to support independent living:** National awareness-raising and training event, 11 November 2015, Croatia
- **Quality of social services:** National awareness-raising and training event, 17 November 2015, Warsaw, Poland
- **Outcome measurement in Vocational Rehabilitation:** Benchlearning group, 18 November 2015, (8:30 – 15:00) Brussels, Belgium
- **EU funding opportunities:** Training session 18 November 2015 (8:30 am – 15:00), Brussels, Belgium
- **Delivering services in a mainstream environment:** Public Affairs Event, 18 November (15:30 – 17:30), Brussels, Belgium
- **Centre Coordinators meeting:** 19 November 2015 (9:00 – 12:30), Brussels, Belgium
- **Board of Directors:** 19 November 2015 (9:30 – 12:30), Brussels, Belgium
- **General Assembly:** 19 November 2015 (13:30 – 15:30), Brussels, Belgium

Please consult the EPR website for the most up-to-date information: www.epr.eu

News from the members

Astangu VRC is starting fall 2015 with fresh news!

New EPR and international projects' coordinator



Keiu Talve & Minna Sild

Starting from September 2015, Ms Minna Sild is the new coordinator for EPR and international projects at Astangu VRC. Minna has been working since 2012 as a specialist in one of Astangu's departments - the Centre of Environmental Adaptation and Assistive Technology. Her main activities have been in the field of counselling and developmental work in co-operation with the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs on national level. She participated as team leader in the international hackathon Garage48 Enable, creating innovative solutions for people with disabilities and won the first prize with her team. The idea has grown into an international co-operation project linking together ICF and assistive technology.

Ms Minna Sild has given several work-related lectures in Estonia and abroad; and is currently studying in Norway and Finland. She is looking forward to your co-operation proposals at minna.sild@astangu.ee. The previous EPR coordinator Ms Keiu Talve is continuing her work at Astangu in the Center for Quality in Social Services.

New study program at Astangu VRC

In September 2015, Astangu VRC opened a new study program called *Office work* for its clients. Office work is a 3-year program, which concentrates on developing competencies to perform high quality assistive work in the office environment. The curriculum includes the basics of entrepreneurship, management and service in office work, documentation and archives, digital tools in entrepreneurship, bookkeeping and much more. The first study group consists of 7 people with physical disabilities in various age groups.

Office work is an addition to three vocational education study programs – software developer, cook's assistant and carpenter, taught at Astangu VRC so far. Several other prevocational and vocational training programmes are offered as well. All in all, 113 clients started their vocational rehabilitation at Astangu this fall.

Centre de Réadaptation de Mulhouse

The positioning clinic

CRM assists people with reduced mobility using a wheelchair to prevent discomfort, pains, bedsores and orthopaedic deformations. This consultation, called "positioning clinic", is a new service and is open to CRM and external patients. This "positioning clinic" is a consultation offered by a specialist of physical and rehabilitation medicine, and by occupational therapists, and it provides medical equipment if necessary. This consultation is available for adults in a wheelchair and who have positioning problems. The consultation aims at optimising patient's positioning in the wheelchair in terms of:

- comfort,
- functional and cutaneous prevention,

- advice and adaptation of technical aids (pillows, mattresses, etc.).

The consultation takes place in a renovated place where rails for lifting patients were installed. In 2014, 25 patients benefited from this service that was open only on Wednesdays. Patients receive a minimum of two consultations.



News from Heliomare

Sail Amsterdam 2015

Last August, more than 400 Heliomare clients enjoyed the 2015 Sail Amsterdam. With perfect logistical organization all clients were able to reach the viewpoint freely opened to Heliomare clients by MEO stevedores early in the morning. Everybody was in time to see the Amsterdam flagship passing by, followed by many others. Thanks go to Heliomare staff, volunteers and 'Vrienden van Heliomare' that this year also funded the event.

More information at www.sail.nl/en/



Education Portal

Heliomare has started to use a new education portal to personalise education for the students of the Heliomare College Wijk aan Zee. The model is based on the Swedish Kunskapsskolanmodel. Heliomare is one of the 12 schools that use the portal and one of the 2 schools offering special education in the 'Zo leer ik' network for personalized learning. In this model students with their individual talents and qualities are central in the learning process.



New site in Heliomare

After 11 years of preparation and often essential changing of plans finally Heliomare will start the realization of a new site in Heemskerk

The site is a combination of education, rehabilitation and sports facilities ideated for children and youngsters. The opening is planned for mid-2017 and it will coincide with the closure of the education department in Wijk aan Zee. All services for children and youngsters will be provided in only one site instead of four. This new building will be designed especially for optimise the cooperation between specialisms. The site will also include a swimming pool. The council will build a gym next door where Heliomare clients and Heemskerk residents can access.

The site is a new milestone in Heliomare's history, characterised by the will to look always for opportunities to improve its services and bring them closer to its clients. (attachment). An artist impression of the new building in Heemskerk by Marlies Rohmer architects Amsterdam.



Bilateral meeting within EPR

Danish colleagues visited the Heliomare centre for TBI to learn more about Tafels vol Troost project (Tables of consolation) which competed for the EPR Innovation prize 2015. The project was very successful and one of the outcome will be the 'Generation tables' - a discussion group. The table will help people with different ages living in the same neighborhood to discuss on various topic, to share life experiences and expectations and to learn to understand each other with less prejudices.

Josefs-Gesellschaft gGmbH - International Work Placement Programme

How the programme was created:

Vinzenz-von-Paul-Berufskolleg, a FE-college for business and administration for young adults with physical disabilities in Aachen (Josefs-Gesellschaft gGmbH), has been organising an annual exchange with colleges in the UK for almost 30 years now. Since 2003, the National Star College (NSC) in Cheltenham has been our UK partner college. In 2013, the NSC developed a six-week work experience programme for those of our students who, after finishing their two-year-business course at our college, do not yet know what kind of apprenticeship they will do or, more generally, how their vocational career will proceed. In order to improve their knowledge in English and to gain more vocational qualifications at the same time, they can fill that gap between college and apprenticeship with the International Work Placement Programme. Another goal is to enhance the students' chances when they apply for an apprenticeship or employment on the open job market.

Description of the programme:

A six week work programme will involve an initial week of assessment activities, orientation and work placement tasters with English classes. The programme will involve work preparation classes and week 2 will involve work within one of the college's business enterprises – Star Bistro, Star Print or Star Customer Services. This will build students' confidence to work in an external placement with a local company in week three and moving to full time placements in week 4 and week 5.

External placements will be from a range of companies according to the student preference. These will be from the colleges existing partners and will give options in Finance, Retail, Sales, Arts or Leisure industries. Placements will be with companies such as Zurich Insurance, Barclays Data Centres, UCAS (University Clearing Service), Nelson Thornes Publishing and Mitsubishi Motors.

Work preparation will be based on developing skills for work and an induction into the external work placement

company. During week 1 this will be very much an assessment of skills in order to create a work profile for each student. Students will have access to evening leisure activities at college – these may be sport, swimming, student clubs, bar and recreational areas.

The participants:

The participants should have a good command of the English language and be motivated to get to know more about the work life in the UK in their chosen area which is mostly office and administration. They should be willing to face the challenge of a work experience abroad which definitely goes beyond a mere touristic experience.

The minimum number of participants is three and in 2014, the first three students took successfully part in the programme. They were accommodated in host families near NSC and their external work places were in the offices of two social care companies and one IT-design company in Gloucester/Cheltenham. Two of the students were wheelchair users.

In 2015, NSC could offer this International Work Programme to only two students and it was shortened to five weeks instead of six due to the experience of the previous year where it had been quite difficult to find local employers who could provide such a long work experience. This year, the two students stayed in an external residential group of NSC as thus it was easier to establish a continuous contact with their English peers, which represents a big advantage for the success of the programme. Their external work places were at Barclay's Data Centre and Barclay's Bank.

In both years, the participants came back with very good certificates and reports of their employers and residential managers, which will surely be a good addition to their CVs in future applications. The costs that our partner NSC charges for the International Work Placement Programme are partly funded by Landschaftsverband Rheinland (a regional council) and partly by the participants themselves.

Outline timetable for 6 week programme

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Assessment	Internal WP	External WP	External WP	External WP	Ext. WP
Work Prep	Work Prep	Work Prep			Evaluation
*ESOL (English as second language) classes 6 hours per week each week (3 sessions of 2 hours)					

INTRAS Foundation

HORGANIC project trains people with mental disabilities for employment



Being active, being a productive part of our society, collaborating with other people, being a better citizen... this is something that all of us need but also

something that is not so easy to achieve for everybody. Training opportunities for adults with disabilities are very few in Europe and HORGANIC (<http://horganic.intras.es>) tries to fill this gap thanks to the positive influence of gardening and direct contact with nature.

HORGANIC is a 3-year initiative, run by Fundación INTRAS (member of EPR), in cooperation with partners from Slovenia (OZARA), Germany (CJD) and Bulgaria (Mental Health Centre "Prof. N. Shipkovenski"). It believes in the harmony with nature, in equal opportunities for everybody and, especially, in lifelong learning as an empowering and rehabilitative tool. That was the origin of the HORGANIC project, co-funded by the European Commission through Lifelong Learning Programme.

HORGANIC is a complete vocational training course that establishes an innovative training methodology based on experiential learning to enable adults with mental health issues to develop work related social skills while they acquire technical skills on gardening and horticulture.

In order to detect the needs of the target group, a survey was conducted at the beginning of the HORGANIC project

in Spain, Germany and Slovenia among 107 people suffering from various mental disabilities. The key problem areas for people with mental health issues were identified and they constituted the base for creating the teaching units and the experiential learning sessions. The HORGANIC study showed that people with mental disabilities have a special need to establish their self-esteem and improve their communication skills. The HORGANIC training program was constructed to address these professional challenges: working in a group, verbal skills, personal motivation, self-esteem and self-belief, dealing with difficult (negative) feelings.

As a result, a training manual and a textbook have been produced in five languages, collecting the teaching units, the experiential methodology exercises and also valuable feedback from professionals. Each training session was tested in Spain, Germany and Slovenia, and improved by taking into account the views and needs of the learners. Therefore, what we offer is a quality course that has already been successfully tested.

The teaching materials resulting from this project are available freely in the [HORGANIC website](http://www.horganic.intras.es) (www.horganic.intras.es). It is also available (upon request at projd@intras.es) a DVD including didactic videos and additional materials to improve learning of the trainees.

Put a pinch of HORGANIC in your organisation by reproducing this training course with your users!



Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre - INOVATELL Project

On September 10th 2015, international INOVATELL conference in Vilnius, hosted by the Valakupiai Rehabilitation Center and the European partners CRPG, URI-Soča and Idea Code in Lithuania successfully presented the results of two years of cooperation. The conference aimed at launching the software for remote control of computer and e-learning content for people with severe motor disabilities and attracted more than 50 delegates from around the country.

The conference was opened by Mrs. Eglė Čaplikienė, the head of the Equal Opportunities Division of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The audience had the opportunity to get acquainted with the INOVATELL software not only through presentations carried out by national and international speakers, but also learning how the deliverables works and the

feedback of the people with disabilities through the inspiring videos and practical trying out of the software. This was an especially welcome opportunity, as many in the audience had a practical interest in the software and were very curious as to what it looked like and how it could be used.

Later on, 7 enthusiastic speakers – actors of the creation of the technological solutions, persons with disabilities, the representatives of the Center for technical Aid for People with disabilities and Microsoft in the Baltics - were engaged in lively debates around the ICT technologies. Different topics were brought up, such as the opportunities and barriers encountered by disabled people in the digital world, whether ICT technologies are, nowadays, readily available to people with disabilities across Europe, and whether there are opportunities for people with severe disabilities to work in ICT-related jobs. Finally, the speakers reflected on how all stakeholders in the matter can facilitate the participation of people with disabilities in lifelong learning processes, and help them in finding decent employment.

The transfer of innovation project INOVATELL produced downloadable software that runs on a Windows 8 computers and tabs with a standard USB or built-in webcam. The project's partners developed technological and training content in order to make ICT learning accessible and to eliminate technological barriers to develop ICT skills. The touchless technology is a useful tool to eliminate the limitations of upper limbs and hand functionality. It allows with the help of the hand and head small movements to access the computer or tablet. It is expected that people use INOVATELL solution for education, communication and entertainment purposes, web browsers, and so on. This software and training material will be available for free in 4 languages: English, Lithuanian, Portuguese and Slovenian.

Find further information about the outcome of the project on the [INOVATELL website](http://inovatell.reabilitacija.lt) (<http://inovatell.reabilitacija.lt>).

The videos that were presented during the conference can also be found on the website. For more pictures of the conference, visit the VRC [Facebook page](http://tinyurl.com/facebook-inovatell-project). (<http://tinyurl.com/facebook-inovatell-project>).



New EPR member

EPR consolidates its membership in the Baltic area with the affiliation of The Social Integration State Agency (SIVA) in Latvia as of July 2015. The Agency is a state institution that offers rehabilitation services to people with disabilities, people at risk of poverty and other disadvantaged groups. SIVA was founded in 1991 and nowadays it is the only institution providing social and vocational rehabilitation services at national level. The Agency has 5 centres located in all Latvian regions and it works in close cooperation with municipalities and other service providers both non-profit and private. Two representatives of SIVA attended the EPR Annual Conference 2015 in Valencia, Spain and expressed their commitment in exchanging expertise, expanding the network and adhering to the EQUASS principles. More information about SIVA will be published on EPR website. An English version on SIVA website is available at www.siva.gov.lv/history

Professional Development Activities

Adapting vocational rehabilitation curricula to the needs of the labour market

Many employers face skills shortage despite high unemployment, while job seekers sign up for jobs that do not correspond to their qualifications: Europe is facing a skills mismatch. Bridging the gap between the skills acquired during VET and those expected by the labour market is a key challenge to raise employment at EU level. On the ground, EPR members struggle to support people with disabilities reaching appropriate employment. How to provide adequate training and reach satisfying employment outcomes? The benchlearning group led by Mike Evans on 27 May in Valencia, Spain, discussed different approaches and tools that can be directly put in place and used by members. Participants identified issues faced by employers and people with disabilities, and the organizational barriers to the development and implementation of adequate training.

Quality of Life Impact of Services: the working groups on Outcome Measurement in Vocational Rehabilitation.

The FAGERH initiative

EPR members have been developing and deploying the QOLIS tools in a range of countries, measuring the impact of their services on the quality of life of clients. The originality of the QOLIS tools lies in the fact that they make it possible to link effects to causes in the service delivery process, explaining best practices in a systematic way. The tools were initially developed at European level by a group of EPR members from different countries, before some of them engaged into a benchmarking exercise within their national networks. This is what the members of the FAGERH have engaged into in 2014, with the support of EPR. Donal McAnaney met the FAGERH working group in Paris on 4-5 June to develop logic models making explicit the structure of services delivered.

The QOLIS-European group

The members of the EPR group on Outcome Measurement in Vocational Rehabilitation met online on 11 June to work on the development of the Easy-read version of the QOLIS questionnaire and a corresponding User manual. The first benchmark over three years will be made available to the group in 2015. The members also reported on the implementation of the QOLIS tools at national level.

Members using the QOLIS tools are invited to contact Claude Delfosse at EPR secretariat at cdelfosse@epr.eu.

Strategic Workshop for Directors: How to promote our services and products in a changing market

'Marketing is so basic that it cannot be considered a separate function. It is the whole business seen from the point of view of its final result, that is, from the customer's point of view. Business success is not determined by the producer but by the customer.' (Drucker 1999) Market getting' (or marketing) is about addressing customer, or client, needs, within the boundaries of professional, ethical and financial limitations. Huub Raemakers, consultant and co-owner of Twynstra Gudde, led the workshop by introducing EPR Directors and Professionals to the field of marketing for the rehabilitation sector. Participants applied the theory on a real-life cases presented by 5 of the participants (GTB, Adelante, URI, ONCE Foundation, Marie Homes) and discussed on a marketing strategy. The workshop for Directors co-organised with the Dutch member Adelante, took place in Maastricht on 1-2 October 2015. Participants expressed their great satisfaction for the methodology and the opportunity to discuss with colleagues about common challenges.

Annual Conference 2015

“Bridging the Gap” - Matching services to persons with disabilities with labour market needs.

The EPR Annual Conference 2015 was hosted by the ONCE Foundation in Valencia, Spain on 28-29 May. Over 120 delegates, including experts from Denmark, Norway, Spain and the Netherlands attended the event. The “Coral Allegro” welcomed delegates and warmed-up the opening.

The conference focused on collaboration with employers as key factor to boost the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market. In the current context of global crisis and lack of economic resources, social service providers have to be able to understand and meet the needs of businesses so



that inclusion can be perceived as mutually beneficial by employers and people with disabilities.

The programme of the conference proposed to reflect the needs of the labour market from the point of view of employers’ network and explore innovative projects that have been successfully implemented by EPR Members to tackle the current low rates of employment of people with disabilities in close cooperation with employers. The conference gave participants the opportunity to discuss proposals and solutions to better match services to persons with disabilities with labour market needs.

The Conference was partly co-funded by the European Social Fund within the framework of the Spanish Programme “Fight against Discrimination 2007-2013” which runs until 2015, and by the European Union Programme for Employment and social Innovation “EaSI” (2014-2020)

The event was well perceived by participants as showed in the evaluation forms distributed during the event. The conference scored a mark of 4.2/5, an opportunity to reflect on the novelties and improvements realised and a great satisfaction for all those who have worked hard to make this event relevant and successful.

Innovation Prize 2015

Dundalk FC Supporters’ Club Project receives award at Annual Conference

The Winner of the 2015 Innovation Prize Contest is the Irish organisation RehabCare with “Dundalk FC Supporters’ Club Project”. Stephen Caraher, Programme Supervisor in RehabCare presented the project to the conference delegates and explained why the initiative has been such a success. The project began in 2008 when RehabCare, which provides services for people with disabilities in Dundalk, approached Dundalk Football Club as some of the men in RehabCare with an interest in football, wanted to join the Supporters Club. From day one, they were made feel very welcome by the supporters. They became well known in the football grounds around the country as they travelled to all the away games supporting Dundalk FC. The initiative between RehabCare and Dundalk FC Supporters Club has been an outstanding success and has made a big difference to the lives of those involved.

For those involved in the Supporters Club, it’s not just about being fans of football, it’s also about the friendships they make, being part of a club, the social life, and being part of the community. Darren Belton says, “I love going to the away games. It’s brought me to places I’ve never been like Limerick, Longford, Athlone, Derry and Cork. There is always good craic on the bus. You can chat to people. I’ve made new friends through the club. One of my goals was to see Manchester United play. Because of being more confident now after a few years in the Supporters’ Club, I’m going to go Old Trafford in a few weeks. It’ll be my first time out of the country.”

Public Affairs

EPR holds the current six-month rotating Social Services Europe Presidency

On 1st July, EPR assumed the Social Services Europe Presidency and will lead the network until the end of the 2015. Social Services Europe brings together eight Europe-wide networks of not-for-profit providers of social and health care services. The network aims to strengthen the profile and position of social services, and promote the role of not-for-profit social service providers in Europe. It seeks to ensure that the specificity of not-for-profit social and healthcare service providers be recognised and that economic, social and legal conditions exist for quality social and healthcare services.

Social Services Europe member organisations aim to reinforce their activities relating to the impact of EU legislation on SSGI; the staff and human resources issues; social innovation; structural funds and contribution of social services to overall EU Policy. Each member organization is part of selected task forces established around specific themes and composed of staff or other identified experts from among the members. EPR is actively involved in the task forces on the job creation potential in the health and social service sector and on the European Semester process.

During its presidency, EPR hosts and chairs meetings of the working group and board; supports the task forces in delivering outcomes and continues to build a close cooperation with EU Institutions, Civil Society Organisations and other relevant stakeholders in the social services sector. At the moment EPR (and SSE) is co-organising with the European Public Services Union a seminar on supporting the job creation potential of the social services sector planned for the 18th of November in the European Parliament.

For more information about Social Services Europe please consult the website www.socialserviceseurope.eu



EPR supported Social Platform solidarity message on the migrant crisis

In occasion of President Juncker's speech on the State of the Union* in the European Parliament on 9 September 2015, Social Platform published a solidarity message to denounce national and European leaders for their inexcusable lack of coordinated humanitarian aid to the migrant situation.

EPR signed the open letter addressed to people fleeing war, persecution and poverty to highlight how “while several of our leaders seem to have forgotten the EU’s core values of solidarity and human rights, we have not. The EU has the capacity to welcome you with open arms, and the unwillingness to do so is an embarrassment to us. We acknowledge your right to seek refuge in safer regions and to be treated with dignity. We also recognise the contribution that you can make and we will fight to give you this opportunity”. The open letter is published on [Social Platform website](#)

* The State of the Union speech covered progress in implementing the Commission's ten priorities, and explained where work needs to be done. It presented Juncker's political vision for the future of the EU that will guide the preparation of the Commission's Work Programme for 2016 and beyond.

The EQUASS Learning Community (ELC)

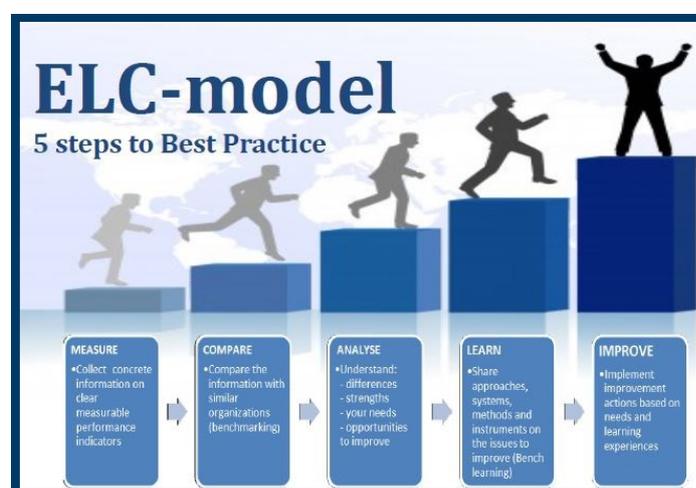
The EQUASS Learning Community (ELC) is an initiative of the European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR) in partnership with Equal-Consulting AS (Norway) and Sinase (Portugal). It is an international network of social service providers who are committed to the EQUASS principles for quality and to continuous quality improvement through learning by exchange of current practices and by common learning events based on the result of benchmarking on common indicators. The ELC is a membership organisation of social service providers who showed their commitment to the EQUASS principles for quality by EQUASS certification (EQUASS assurance and EQUASS Excellence) and by EQUASS recognition (Stairway to EQUASS Excellence).

The ELC offers a platform to social service providers and facilitates the continuous process of transformation and meeting needs in a continuous changing context by gaining knowledge through initial learning events and

through exchange of practices based on the comparison of performance on common indicators.

The ELC benchmark will be piloted in Estonia and Lithuania in 2015 and in Norway and Portugal in 2016.

For more information about ELC read the full article on [EQUASS website](#)



EQUASS involvement in SportPlus4all project



Sport and physical activity are important factors for good health and wellbeing in modern society. They can play a major role in preventing illness and the development of chronic diseases. Engagement in sport is fundamental to reducing the social and economic costs resulting from physical inactivity. People with disabilities have fewer opportunities to participate in sport programs and physical activity on the EU scene. The aim of Sport+4ALL is to create tools that will support more diverse and higher quality of sport on offer at European level for people with disabilities. To achieve this aim the project will involve Rehabilitation Centres, Sport Centres and Facilities.

Seven organisations across Europe are involved in this collaborative partnership. They all have extensive experience of providing rehabilitation, adapted sport and social services. Their expertise in the social - health - sport process will be invaluable to supporting the project to achieve its aims. Among those, three EPR member organisations are involved in the project: Astangu VRC (Estonia), Intras Foundation (Spain) and VRC (Lithuania).

EQUASS will be providing:

- External R&D support for Overview and testing of Innovative practices Quality Processes in Sport
- External R&D for developing a Cross Reference Study Sport vs HEPA

For more information please consult the project website www.sportplus4all.eu

DeSqual project: final conference

On 30 September 2015, the DeSqual project leader REA College Nederland hosted the final project conference in Zandvoort, the Netherlands. The DeSqual project, launched in November or 2013, is a collaboration of four quality assurance expert organisations and 10 social service providers / VET providers for people with disabilities who have piloted a newly developed training program for achieving sustainable quality assurance in their organisation. Partners developed a training program that focuses on individual quality behavior, quality awareness of professionals and quality culture in the organisation.



In the final conference, 3 project pilots presented the impact of the ad-hoc training programs: Fundación INTRAS (ES) with a leadership development programme, the National Learning Network (IE) with a Partnership added-value assessment programme, and REA College Pluryn (NL) with a Team Ownership programme.

The project conference further highlighted the importance and impact of management and staff being aware of how culture impacts the daily work of organisations, and how the quality of the vocational services for persons with disabilities can be enhanced by an awareness of Quality issues throughout the organisation.

EQUASS Excellence certifications

APPACDM de Viana de Castelo, Portugal

Congratulations to the Associação Portuguesa de Pais e Amigos do Cidadão Deficiente Mental (APPACDM) de Viana de Castelo in Portugal, which was awarded with the EQUASS Excellence quality mark on the 31st of August 2015. APPACDM de Viana do Castelo was one of many Portuguese organisations that had participated in the Arquimedes programme funded by the European Social Fund, with the aim of becoming EQUASS Excellence certified. APPACDM de Viana de Castelo has over 300 staff across the Minho-Lima area and serves over 500 persons, providing social responses, vocational training and residential services for persons with intellectual disabilities, aimed at promoting the well-being and quality of life of the users, and their inclusion in the community and the job market. APPACDM de Viana de Castelo extended the audit to 10 locations and 17 satellite services, with a total score of 65.



National Learning Network, Ireland

It was with great pleasure that the EQUASS Awarding committee awarded the National Learning Network (NLN) in Ireland with the EQUASS Excellence quality mark on the 31st of August 2015. The National Learning Network was established in Ireland in 1995, and serves 2.500 persons, providing Supported Vocational Training and Rehabilitative Training. This is the 3rd re-certification for the NLN, which was first certified with the EQRM (European Quality in Rehabilitation Mark) in 2004 for its services in Tallaght, Limerick, Sligo and Wexford. This time again, the NLN extended the audit to 27 locations and 20 satellite services, with a total score of 67,1



New from the Secretariat

A new location for the Secretariat in Brussels!

As of 1st September the Secretariat operates from new offices located in the heart of the European quarter in Brussels. After more than 10 years of activities in Rue de Spa, the Secretariat moved in Avenue des Arts 8 c/o CCI (French Chamber of Commerce) where it shares the offices with other business companies and NGOs.

Member organisations are invited to visit the Secretariat in the new premises!



Contact us:

Laura Jones Secretary General

Laurence Meuret, Financial Officer

Claude Delfosse, Project Coordinator

Cinzia De Letis, Communications/PR Officer

Marie Dubost, EQUASS Coordinator

Eric Falch, EQUASS Officer

Guus van Beek, EQUASS Key Expert

laura.jones@epr.eu

laurence.meuret@epr.eu

claudedelfosse@epr.eu

cinzia.de.letis@epr.eu

marie.dubost@epr.eu

eric.falch@epr.eu

equass@xs4all.nl

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Editor-in-Chief: Cinzia De Letis

EPR, Avenue des Arts 8 c/o CCI, 1210 Brussels, Belgium, tel: +32 2 736 54 44, fax: +32 2 736 86 22

Send your questions, comments and contributions to cinzia.de.letis@epr.eu