

Quality Social Services: a Key to Ensure Social Rights

20 November

Transforma Bxl, Avenue Jules Bordet 13, 1140 Brussels

Background and introduction

This mini-conference aims to promote mutual learning on providing quality services, to discuss success factors and how to address challenges, including a focus on implementing social rights and the “European Pillar of Social Rights”. Workshops will give opportunities to learn about methods to improve the quality of services and participants will be encouraged to network to create lasting connections. Another goal of the conference is to discuss and make recommendations as to how actions at EU level could support quality social services in implementing the principles of the Pillar. It will include plenary sessions with national and European experts.

The topic of quality of services in the social sector has been a priority for EPR and its members for many years, and in 2003 EPR launched [EQUASS](#), which enhances the social sector by engaging social service providers in continuous improvement, learning and development, in order to guarantee service users quality of services throughout Europe. Its quality framework provides a comprehensive approach to quality management, features a rights-based approach and is a recognised tool for implementing the European Voluntary Quality Framework for Social Services.

The European Pillar of Social Rights was “proclaimed” by all EU member states, the European Parliament and Commission in November 2017 and is considered a significant initiative in the social field at EU level; according to the European Commission, contributing to “Building a more inclusive and fairer European Union”. It contains “[principles and rights essential for fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems in 21st century Europe](#)”, and actions should be taken to implement it at national and EU level.

Social Services Europe, in which EPR is an active member, developed the position paper ‘[The Role of Social Services in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights](#)’ in 2018. The paper highlights the importance of these services in achieving the principles in the pillar, and in addition stresses “The effectiveness of the principles described in the Pillar is conditional to the provision of quality services”.

Quality is also explicitly mentioned in some of the Pillar principles, such as:

1. Education, training and life-long learning: “Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education”
8. Long-term care: “Everyone has the right to affordable long-term care services of good quality”;
11. Childcare and support to children: “Children have the right to affordable early childhood education and care of good quality
19. Housing and assistance for the homeless: a. “Access to social housing or housing assistance of good quality shall be provided for those in need”.

Draft Agenda

09.00	Registration and coffee
09.30	Welcome, introductions, ice-breaker
09.45	Short presentations: challenges and developments in quality services and ensuring social rights across sectors/countries First findings from pan-European research on trends, demands and needs for quality in social services
10.30	Group discussions identifying common and most important issues, sharing experiences and practices
11.00	Feedback
11.10	<i>Coffee</i>
11.40	The EQUASS perspective on quality and how quality management supports quality services and helps to ensure social rights / Q&A; Michael Crowley
12.00	EU activities addressing quality in social services and impact on service providers: presentation from the European Commission / Q&A; Monika Chaba
12.20	Panel: Reflections on the morning's presentations and how the EU can best support quality services for social rights Heather Roy, Secretary General Eurodiaconia and President of Social Services Europe; Alfonso Montero, CEO European Social Network; Gunta Anca, Board member of the European Disability Forum, Laura Jones, Secretary General EPR. Q&A
13.10	<i>Networking lunch</i>
14.00	Training-mutual learning workshops (including coffee break)
	Learn about and share resources to support a human rights-based approach for quality service provision and share experiences of implementing such an approach. Dr Amets Suess Schwend, Rights and Mental Health Specialist, Andalusian School of Public Health, with Alicia Gómez Campos, EPR lead on Be Right project.
	Discover and discuss how to measure impact of services on rights, participation, social inclusion, quality of life. Michael Crowley, Business Management and Quality Expert; Valentina Brecelj, Research And Development Specialist at University Rehabilitation Institute, Republic of Slovenia
17.00	Feedback from the workshops, closing conclusions
17.30	<i>Closing</i>
	<i>Networking reception</i>