



EPR Public Affairs e-bulletin

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Social Affairs & Social Services

Improved quality for mental health patients: World Health Organisation, WHO, seeks to improve the quality and human rights conditions in mental health services through the Quality Rights project.

The care available in many mental health facilities around the world is not only of poor quality but in many cases hinders recovery, according to WHO findings. Human rights violations have been found in residential facilities where patients are locked away in small cells without human contact or chained to beds, as well as for outpatients who experience restrictions to their basic human rights.

Quality Rights is WHO's global initiative to help improve quality of care provided by mental health services and favour the human rights of people with psychosocial, intellectual and cognitive disabilities.

A Quality Rights Project-flyer, guidance and training tools can be downloaded from the following site:

http://www.who.int/mental_health/policy/quality_rights/en/

Two EPR members Fundacion INTRAS (as a lead) and VRC (partner) will work on Mental Health and human rights through the project "BE RIGHT: Training Program in Human Rights for Professionals working in social and health care sector". EPR Secretariat will also take part as a partner on the project providing expertise in co-production and dissemination at European level. The project will last two years and will kick off in Valladolid, Spain, in November. Read our next newsletter to find out more details about EPR and members' involvement on projects.

European Pillar of Social Rights: An open debate

The European Pillar of Social Rights is the latest initiative of the European Commission to address social policy in the European Union. It sets out 20 key principles and rights designed to support fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems. It is primarily aimed at the euro area, but is applicable to all member countries of the EU wishing to participate. The Pillar is divided into three chapters covering equal opportunities and access to labour market, fair working conditions and social protection and inclusion. It has also been defined as a reference framework for measuring the proposals of work-life balance (addressed at improving parental leave and recognising informal care) and working time, it also looks at social security coordination, making free movement of workers fairer and easier, together with a package of health and safety measures to increase the impact of EU legislation in the work place.

European NGOs have welcomed the Pillar as a solid and strong initiative towards a more social Europe. They are now calling for a concrete action plan towards its implementation. For the moment, the European Commission has proposed for the Pillar to be signed through a proclamation together with the European Parliament and European Council, composed by Heads of Member States. A Social Summit is set to take place in Gothenburg, Sweden, in November where the proclamation will be signed. Ahead of this Summit and the EU Commissioners' change next year, the debate for a concrete plan continues in Brussels with different actors calling for different expectatives around this Pillar of, still, *un-concrete* materials.

This proclamation has been received with scepticism by some actors as it seems to water down the initial proposal that the Pillar would be endorsed at the highest political level by the Member States of the EU which would have meant a higher level of commitment to implement the Pillar's principles at national level. This initial proposal seems now weakened as Member States have expressed the need for clarification about the binding level of the Pillar, affirming citizens will not be able to make their State responsible before the law for not implementing the principles within the Pillar. As a result, some see the Pillar's strength as a social policy tool is at risk.

It is unclear what this proclamation will bring in terms of concrete procedures for the Pillar's implementation and how it binds Member States, or commits them to take actions. There are questions around what will be the action strategy plan or if legislation will follow to make the principles applicable to Member States. Social organisations are questioning what is the true purpose of the Pillar, as its binding principle for all Member States of the Union seems to disappear. Concrete action plans, specific budget allocation to implementing actions and clear indicators linked to the twenty principles make part of the proposals European NGOs are putting on the table for the European Commission to move forward with the Pillar.

Social policy is a national competence, but Member States can receive guidance from the European Union through the European Semester and other tools, receiving national policy recommendations. Many organisations are stressing the need for the European Semester process to also monitor the principles in the Pillar and to address recommendations related to them to national governments, ensuring a stronger social dimension to this process.

A briefing will on the Pillar will be developed after the social summit. Meanwhile, we invite you to read the following publication.

Useful complementary information about the Pillar can be found in this edition of the Social Agenda:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8007&furtherPubs=yes>

EPR was present at the European Economic and Social Committee hearing on the *Impact of the Social Dimension and the European Pillar of Social Rights on the Future of the European Union*.

The hearing brought together the main actors at European level reporting on the Pillar's development, academics and representatives of trade unions, businesses and civil society. The main focus was on describing what the Pillar can bring to the future of Europe but also, what will be the best way for it to be implemented, if through the European Semester, as main policy tool to monitor national progress, as mentioned above or through other dedicated action plans. Participants called for a shift from a vision of Europe as a competitive market to a Europe driven by its workers and social rights.

Details about speakers and topics addressed can be read here:

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/agenda/our-events/events/impact-social-dimension-and-european-pillar-social-rights-future-european-union>

Launch of the Federation of European Social Employers

Next October, a new Federation at European level will be launched, the Federation of European Social Employers. This Federation will aim at bringing together the major European employer organisations in the field of social services in Europe and providing them with a voice at a European level.

FESE, the Federation of European Social Employers, will work towards finding common solutions to the challenges faced by the social sector working together with both representatives of employees and representatives of the European institutions. The Social Services sector directly employs over 10 million staff in Europe, with over 1.7 million new jobs created since 2008 making it one of the biggest job creating sectors in Europe. Together with health services, social services represent 7% of the total economic output in the EU-28. With changing demographics and family patterns, the social services sector is expected to grow significantly over the next few decades.

A Study will be presented at the launch conference on the state of play of social dialogue in the social services sector in Europe, covering 22 EU Member States, with specific input on the structures in the UK, Hungary, Romania, Portugal and Slovakia.

The Future of EU Finances: European Expert Group on the transition from institutional to community care-based paper calls for ensuring sufficient budget is available for social services in the next financial period, after 2020.

In June, the European Commission published a paper reflecting on the future of EU financing and looking at the upcoming challenges, starting by the departure of United Kingdom from the Union. Before the new funding period starts after 2020, European organisations are looking at reminding the EU politicians of the need to keep investing in social services in Europe. The European Expert Group (EEG) on the transition from institutional to community based-care has prepared a response to ensure that budget allocation after 2020 will continue to improve the lives of the over 1 million adults and children who continue living in institutions across Europe.

One of the main challenges faced by EU funds comes from its uptake and efficient use. Complex application processes lead to many European organisations and actors not being able to benefit from them for what the EEG calls for a simplification of the processes to make them more accessible, transparent, sustainable and efficient.

Read the complete paper and find out more details about the EEG demands for the next budgeting period here:

<https://deinstitutionalisation.com/2017/09/07/eeg-response-to-the-reflection-paper-on-the-future-of-eu-finances/>

The Estonian Presidency will hold an event on Deinstitutionalisation in Tallin, Estonia in October. The focus of the event will be to advance discussions to accelerate the transition from institution-based care to community-based support.

Find more information here:

<https://www.eu2017.ee/political-meetings/dignity-independent-living-di>

Employment & Disability

Seventh Edition of the Employment and Social Developments in Europe Review. Key issues to look at for Member States to increase employment rates, increase energy efficiency, reduce poverty and have more citizens with complete education.

The annual Employment and Social Developments in Europe Review is a key publication on the topics of labour market and social developments in the European Union. It provides an in-depth detailed analysis of key social and employment issues such as long-term unemployment, mobility, skills or the modernisation of social protection systems. The aim of this publication is also to address the existing concerns the European Union and its Member States are facing to pursue the Europe 2020 social and employment goals such as reduction of poverty in 20 million by 2020, increasing the employment rate up to 75 per cent for people of ages between 20-65, have at least 40 per cent of people aged 30-34 with completed education.

This Review takes into account outcomes of the European Semester, which through Country-specific Recommendations is the main policy tool for guidance and implementation of European policies at national level, and the new initiative of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The findings of this publication are in line with the proposals and objectives set up on the Pillar. For example, the proposal of a social partner consultation on Access to Social Protection.

This year's Review is also focused on Intergenerational fairness and solidarity in Europe. It makes the point on how inclusive labour markets contribute to sustain social protection and healthcare systems in the long run. Efficient education and training with the right set of skills is also highlighted in the report.

The Review document contains useful information about current trends on labour market and shifts that will be seen in the future. The publication can be downloaded from this catalogue:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8030&furtherPubs=yes>

European organisations applaud UNCRPD adoption of General Comment 5 on the right to live independently and being included in the community.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) has adopted the General Comment 5 on the right to live independently and being included in the community. The adoption comes after dedicated efforts from different organisations defending the rights of persons with disabilities to emphasize the importance of strengthening independent living within the text of the Convention and the obligations of States parties under this Convention.

General Comments are used for Human Rights treaties. They contain further interpretations and explanations of a particular right hence filling a right with meaning. They are written as a draft and have to be adopted by the relevant Committee.

The General Comment further complements the information contained in the Convention with regards to: independent living in general, reinforcing the right to live independently and outside institutions of people with disabilities, legal capacity and supported decision making, extra support to women with disabilities to combat the particular multiple discrimination they face, families and children with regards to receiving formal support and concrete actions from the State. It also clearly defines independent living, personal assistance and de-institutionalisation.

The article 19 is one of the most intersectional of the CRPD. The General Comment clearly explains that States must take all the necessary measures to enable all disabled people – regardless of their age or any other characteristic – to live independently in the community. It highlights the urgent need to end institutionalisation of children and groups that are overrepresented in institutional care (such as people with intellectual disabilities and mental health conditions).

EPR has followed the advocacy work done by organisations such as [Inclusion Europe](#), the [European Disability Forum](#) and [ENIL](#) on the adoption of this General Comment.

For more information, you can read the text of the General Comment below:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/GC.aspx>

Council of Europe publishes good practices related to raising awareness on the rights of people with disabilities.

The Council of Europe, leading continental organisation on human rights, has recently published a compilation of best practices related to raising awareness on the rights of people with disabilities. This publication contributes to the strategy the Council has in place on the rights of people with disabilities based on five priorities focused on particular rights related to this group of society. Each of this five priorities are connected to Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The article 8 of the CRPD relates to awareness raising.

The published study looks at understanding disability and how stereotypes can turn into real barriers when it comes to people with disabilities being able to fully enjoy their rights in equality with other citizens.

This publication disseminates good and useful practices to policy makers. The practices presented were initiated by civil society organisations or by authorities. The study includes suggestions for Member States on how to develop awareness raising campaigns and have a long-term impact. Some of the examples included are from Spain, United States, Northern Ireland, Slovenia, Finland, Latvia, Canada, Bulgaria, Belgium or Hungary and they look at discrimination (racial, sexual), violence against persons with disabilities, employment, independent living, quality of life in long-term care, violence against women and girls with disabilities, sexual and reproductive health, co-creation and inclusion of children with disabilities.

Read all the examples in further detail and actors who contributed to the study:

<https://rm.coe.int/final-study-awareness-raising/168072b421>

Education & Vocational Training

European multilingual classification launch. The European Commission has launched its first full version of the European classification of Skills, Competences, Occupations and Qualifications, ESCO, in 26 languages.

The classification is available in 26 languages and aims to connect people and jobs, employment and education as well as labour markets at EU-level by providing a common language that could help overcome labour market imbalances and increase labour mobility. The European Commission aims for ESCO (the European Classification of Skills, Competences, Occupations and Qualifications) to become the European classification for the information exchange via EURES, the European job mobility portal.

The publication of ESCO is a key milestone in the achievements of the objectives of the Europe 2020, the 10 year strategy proposed by the European Commission for advancement in the economy with goals such as such as reduction of poverty by 20 million by 2020, increasing the employment rate to 75 per cent for people of ages between 20-65, have at least 40 per cent of people aged 30-34 with completed education strategy and the New Skills agenda for Europe, which aims at making a better use of skills available and equipping European citizens with new skills to help them find quality jobs and improve their life. The publication will be followed by a conference in Brussels the 9th and 10th of October.

The first full version of ESCO is available free of charge from the ESCO service platform.

For more information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2850&furtherNews=yes>

Investing in skills pays off. A new Cedefop study on the economic and social costs of low-skilled adults in the EU seeks to provide evidence for policy makers to design and implement policies tailored to this particular group.

The study has looked at low-skilled adults, their volume, characteristics, as well as the economic and social costs of people not having enough skills.

Long-term projections show that, on average, labour demand for the low-skilled workers is expected to decrease while demand for medium and high qualification levels will increase. The reintegration of low skilled workers into the labour markets and their upskilling is therefore a key policy challenge for European economies.

For policy makers to design and implement policies tailored to this group there was a need to develop an evidence base in relation to low skills adults in the EU. The Cedefop study seeks to provide such an evidence providing an assessment on the consequences of being low skilled and the benefits of updating these skills.

Download the report to find out more on:

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5560?src=email&freq=weekly>

European Vocational Skills Week: Still on time to participate or register your event!

This year the European Commission organises the second edition of the European Vocational Skills week. The Week is focused on highlighting that vocational and educational training (VET) can lead to a successful working career as much as traditional education paths. A number of meetings in Brussels between the 20-24th of November together with nationally organised events across Europe from September to December 2017 will be linked to the initiative.

The 22nd of November there will be a VET day in Brussels. The opening of national events will take place on November 20th accompanied by an Employers Day.

[Find events or activities you can participate in](#) or submit your own event initiative [here](#) with an online registration system that allows national, regional and local activities from now till December 2017 to be showcased.

Different ways of engaging are available: organising a Week at national level, an activity or event, engaging on social media or by speaking at national, regional or local level events.

Would you like to know more about this Week?

Find some guidelines to follow if you wish to organise an event and all the related information on the [website](#).

Other relevant EU affairs

State of the Union: The President of the European Union addresses main issues of the past year and the months to come at the European Parliament.

The State of the Union is an annual speech delivered by the President of the European Union addressing the main issues of the past year and the months to come. Marked by the political and economic situation of the Union, President Juncker spoke between other topics about migration, security, taxes, Brexit and the future of Europe. References to a social and inclusive Europe were limited in his speech.

The State of the Union can still be followed on Twitter [#SOTEU](#)

More information is available here:

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/state-union-2017_en

EU funded programmes

- Erasmus+ [calls 2017](#)
- DG EMPL – PROGRESS / EaSI [calls](#)
- Horizon 2020 – [calls](#)

Calendar of upcoming EU events

Date	Title	Venue	Contact
7/10/2017	Accessibility Conference	Tallinn, Estonia	https://europa.eu/newsroom/events/accessibility-conference_en
16-18/10/2017	e-Health Tallinn 2017	Tallinn, Estonia	https://europa.eu/newsroom/events/ehealthtallinn-2017-health-digital-society-digital-society-health_en
19-20/10/2017	Youth Guarantee in Spain: The Way Forward	Brussels	https://europa.eu/newsroom/events/policy-conference-youth-guarantee-spain-way-forward_en
24/25/10/2017	Social Innovation – Research and Policy of the Future: towards a comprehensive innovation policy	Brussels	http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/index.cfm?pg=events
17/10/2017	Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth	Gothenburg, Sweden	https://europa.eu/newsroom/events/social-summit-fair-jobs-and-growth_en
20/10/2017	Launch of the Federation of European Social Employers	Brussels	https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe2WfTtfDv5tT3017zqwTvyleDba0THwRmx_YbzX0ervyu4Vw/viewform
20-24/11/2017	European Vocational Skills Week	Europe	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1261&newsId=2754&furtherNews=yes
5/12/2017	Access City Award 2017	Brussels	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1208&furtherEvents=yes

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<http://ec.europa.eu/social/EaSI>

