

epr newsletter

March 2005

FULL MEMBERS



ASSOCIATE MEMBERS



Editorial

Dear EPR members, we are pleased to present you with the first edition of the Newsletter in 2005. I would like to take the opportunity of this editorial to comment on two pioneering events that the EPR organised over the last months.

With the European conference on “Quality assurance in vocational training to people with disabilities”, the EPR demonstrated it is widely respected and recognised in the European disability sector. The Conference was organised in partnership with the European Commission, and key players contributed as speakers to the success of this event.

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Bas Treffers presents the EQRMA Awards at the EPR Conference “Quality Assurance in vocational training to people with disabilities” last December.

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We welcome your questions, comments and contributions.

The Awarding Event of the EQRМ (see picture on page 1) was a highlight of the Conference and confirmed the opinion that the EQRМ is an output of EPR cooperation that actually does make a difference in improving the sector.

At the internal level, the strategic Workshop for Directors on "Future scenarios in rehabilitation" can be qualified as a milestone in "learning together" within the EPR network. For the first time, Directors of nearly all the EPR member organisations discussed in a structured but open way about the main challenges they face, due to the changes in the welfare state and the increasing impact of EU policies on the rehabilitation sector at national level. The debate between the Directors was supported by the contributions of some external high level experts, and the outputs of the discussions will directly feed into the activities of the EPR in the near future. Seen the great interest and the positive evaluation, we intend to include this action in 2006 again in the service package for the members.

Another significant development I would like to mention is the strengthening of our Public Affairs pillar. Within ENSPER, we clearly moved from "creating a single voice for service providers" to the stage where this single voice actually "speaks" and listened to. Participation in standing committees at EU level and the production of position papers has become a regular activity in our work plans. The most significant development however is that the service providers this year are for the first time formally involved in 'tripartite' consultations between the Commission, EDF and EPR on various important dossiers.

Besides our endeavours to influence European policy in the interest of our members and the disabled people they provide services to, there is a growing demand from the EPR members for information and clarification of policy developments in our sector at European level. The structural and financial co-operation with Workability Europe and RI Europe (who both have based their seat at Rue de Spa 15 in Brussels) provides us with the needed resources and capacity to handle successfully the increased Public Affairs activities.

I look forward to seeing many of you in May at the EPR General Seminar hosted by RehabCare in the magnificent facilities of Dublin Castle.

Jan Spooren
General Secretary

Upcoming EPR events March - May 2005

- ERA Learning Group on Strategies for Effective Life Management: working with families
Verona, 6 & 7 April
- Executive Committee meeting
Brussels, 13 April
- Academy Council meeting
Brussels, 14 April
- ERA Training Course: Creative facilitation teaching techniques
Tallinn, 28 & 29 April
- EQRМ assessors training
Brussels, 2 & 3 May
- Opti-Work meeting
Dublin, 10 & 11 May
- KMC meeting
Dublin, 11 May
- General Seminar
Dublin, 12 & 13 May
- Board of Directors meeting
Dublin, 13 May

News from the members



Theotokos Foundation promotes Supported Employment

Five organisations working together in Athens Greece are promoting Supported Employment for physical and learning disabled clients. The organisations are Theotokos Foundation, TACT (UK organisation based in Athens), the Spastic Society of Athens, SPAC-ES Consulting and the Hellenic Association for Supported Employment. Said a representative from Theotokos, "Up until today we have worked alone and reached positive goals, but now through cooperation and sharing know-how we foresee much better results. Untied and in cooperation with the state as well as the Business community we aim toward promoting and socially including the disabled worker through the scheme of Supported Employment in the wider community of Athens."

Theotokos theatre

Theotokos Theatrical Group presented the play "Looking for the suitcase". The play was the result of disabled clients improvisation and theatrical playgroups. It was a big success in 2004 and on its way to be played in the community at a theatre in wider Athens. Theotokos staff is responsible for the direction, choreography and scenery.



JG Bigge's Leonardo-project *Disabil IT y* halfway through

As project-coordinator the Berufsbildungswerk Josefsheim Bigge reports about a very successful course on the Leonardo-project *Disabil IT y*. The main focus of the project is to optimise pathways for young people with disabilities into vocational training using modern ICT in an intensive way. The project aims especially to young people with physical disabilities as well with learning disabilities need an approach which pays special attention to their learning potential. The media competence and key qualifications are very important as individual learning objectives in the project. These vocational competences will be promoted by special-pedagogic aspects like promotion in fine arts and sports/medicine pedagogic. The first module of the curriculum is developed, adapted and tested by the European project-partner. The project will run until May 2006.



Leonardo da Vinci

More concrete information about the project-activities is available on the website www.medialbility.org

Meet Thérèse-Sophie de Wit



On 1 July 2004 Thérèse-Sophie de Wit succeeded Jan Albers as Managing Director of Stichting Revalidatie Limburg SRL. Thérèse-Sophie de Wit began her career in healthcare 9 years ago as Managing Director of RIAGG, Regional Institute for Community Mental Health. After the merger of RIAGG and a psychiatric hospital, she became the Managing Director of the newly formed organisation: Spatie, Centre for Mental Health. When she heard about the opening at SRL, she considered it a new challenge. Said Thérèse-Sophie, "Healthcare is an appealing and valuable sector. The actual sphere of action of SRL is new to me; however I recognise many well-known processes. After a comprehensive introduction programme I have formed a clear picture of what the employees of SRL are doing in their daily work. During the next couple of years, it will take the organisation as a whole all their creative skills to provide an answer to decreasing resources, increasing competition and the necessity to keep supplying high quality services."



Eden Foundation's educational & artistic activities

The Eden Foundation in Malta joined EPR as an associate member as from January this year. Godwin Scerri, Eden's International Secretary, was delighted to immediately update EPR on Eden's latest activities:

- The Eden Foundation is in the process of screening all First Year pupils in Primary Schools for ADD/ADHD as well as Asperger syndrome. The former is not very well understood by teachers who tend to view the child as being a nuisance, while because children with Asperger syndrome can achieve in certain areas, they tend to mask their deficit in others. The Director of Programmes of the Foundation has so far visited 88 schools in Malta and its sister island of Gozo and the feedback has been very positive. This project is sponsored by UNESCO (Malta).
- In February, the Foundation launched an Advanced Course of 63 hours spread over 12 weeks intended to provide Facilitators working with children with disability with hands-on experience, The participants will be doing practical work with children and young people with intellectual disability and will have a chance to give a working dimension to their University training.
- The Ministry of the Family and Social Solidarity commissioned the Creative Arts Dept. of the Foundation to design the Ministry's Christmas Card. The interesting design of Ronald, one of the young men supported by the Foundation, was chosen to represent the Ministry's Christmas Greetings. The Creative Arts Dept. is now seeking orders from other agencies.
- The Eden Foundation's percussion band, *Ekū Tambur*, which has taken the form of an inclusive music adventure, has taken the island by storm. Not only are they invited to perform at all sorts of social functions, but they have now been commissioned to play at football games in Malta's National Stadium.



Cedar partnership projects

Eileen Thomson, Deputy Chief Executive shared with EPR some news about Cedar's expanding partnership network. "Cedar has/is/will be undertaking many projects with EPR partners. These include:

- Challenge Italy, where Brain Injury Services developed a work placement programme with Opera don Calabria and NTDI, and 12 trainees spent 4 weeks in Ferrara.
- We are currently working with NTDI on a cross border project which brings employers from both sides of the Border together to do Diversity and Equality Training.
- Our Children and Young People's Services are doing a youth exchange programme with SRL.
- We are providing staff training on care management and service planning of individuals with brain injury to Rehab Care.
- We plan to deliver a workshop at the European Union of Supported Employment Conference in June in Barcelona on Quality at which we will highlight the benefits of EFQM.
- We will be sending both staff and trainees as well as User Forum representatives to Barcelona.
- We had 10 staff participating in the EPR Staff development programme."

National Learning Network **National Learning Network - the new name for NTDI**

Investing in People, Changing Perspectives

To facilitate its plans for growth, the National Training and Development Institute has changed its name to National Learning Network. Colm Whelan, Projects and Operations Manager NLN explained: "Key reasons for choosing this name include: It confers '**National**' status. The use of the term '**Learning**' is appropriate to enabling the future development of the range of services that will be developed by the organisation in a mainstreaming environment; it encompasses both training and education. The term '**Network**' is an appropriate description of the nature of the organisation with its 50 centres nationwide, and it is also an enabling term in the context of the development of partnerships and networks of relationships with stakeholders and other organisations."



CRPG's new projects

- **Return to Work** is one of the new projects promoted by CRPG. The team involved in it will analyse and describe the phenomenon of professional illnesses and work accidents in Portugal and its impacts. It will also build a model and an action program of disability management applied to the enterprise world, focusing on 3 areas: prevention, maintenance and return to work. Professional illnesses and work accidents are one of the major problems that affect the productivity of companies nowadays. According to the Portuguese Work Statistics Department, the absenteeism caused by work accidents cost 183 millions of euros to Portuguese companies, representing a loss 7, 5 millions of working hours.



Momentum shines a spotlight on ESF

Momentum, the Scottish voluntary organisation which assists disabled and excluded people to achieve their goals, shone a spotlight on the future of European funding this month when it hosted a topical debate on the issue. The issue of European funding post-2006 is currently a key debate in the UK voluntary sector. Jan Spooren, General Secretary EPR, was among the panel of speakers, along with European Funding experts from the Scottish Executive and Scottish Parliament.

Ian Welsh, Chief Executive of Momentum said, "For many Scottish voluntary organisations, European funding is their most significant source of finance and while many are now taking action to reduce their reliance on ESF, it remains a vital component of their operations. The Momentum debate gave those in the voluntary sector the opportunity to learn about the likely impact of the reforms direct from the experts."



Merikoski Opens Doors for gipsy people

Merikoski Vocational Training Centre will kick off an EQUAL Project called *Open Doors* in the beginning of 2005. The project is directed to the gipsy people living in Northern-Ostrobothnia province in Finland. The project will last until the end of 2007 and its total budget is around 1 million euros. The objectives of *Open Doors* are to abolish prejudices between two cultures; to raise gipsys' education level to the vocational level; to improve gipsys' opportunities in the labour market; to increase gipsy culture information among dominant population; to enhance studying favourableness among gipsys and cooperation between gipsy families and schools; gipsy culture adviser experimentations in municipal sector; open and unprejudiced conversation about gipsys' situation in Finnish and European society.

The main activities in the project are publication, training and regional and international networking. Training will be organised in open learning environment and it will contain student advising, communications, information techniques, culture know-how, civics and preparatory guidance for working life and career. Students will have peer support and possibility of cooperation. The aim of the regional networking is by bringing together to enhance initiative and activity.

Partners in the Finland will be Local Gipsy Association, National board of education, churches, municipalities, University of Oulu, employment administration, occupational organisations, National Pensions Institute and Provincial state office in Oulu.

For more information contact Kati Parkkinen, Project Specialist: kati.parkkinen@merikoski.fi



Specialised article

Bulgaria: a country of health!

At the last EPR Coordinators' meeting in November 2004, it was suggested that the newsletter could feature specialised rehabilitation-related articles on an interesting issue, professional or country. We took up this idea and this month bring you Bulgaria – read on to see why.

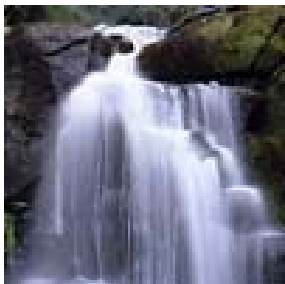


This small country in South-Eastern Europe is an extremely attractive place for treatment, prophylactics and recreation with its numerous resorts, specific favourable climate, a 378 km long coastal strip with wonderful sandy beaches, over 500 mineral springs of varying physico-chemical composition, temperature and indisputable curative properties, dozens of lagoon mud sources and curative peat deposits. The medicinal herbs and the excellent healing properties of the apian products add to the unique possibilities of curing and improving one's health. Health resorts and balneosanatoria are built all over the country.

The enormous wealth of natural factors, combined with country's modern hotels and spa facilities, provide excellent possibilities for the year-round effective treatment of the most widespread diseases of our times and truly make Bulgaria a COUNTRY OF HEALTH. One of the leading Bulgarian rehabilitation resorts which offers unique curative effect to people with disability of the locomotory and the nervous system is Pavel Banya.



The mineral waters spring from seven sources with high content of fluoride, at the temperature of up to 63°C. Such water is excellent for healing degenerative disorders and inflammations of the joints, chronic rheumatism, infectious arthritis, deforming osteoarthritis, the Behterev syndrome, inflammation of the tendon, of the joint "pockets", post-traumatic and orthopaedic conditions, post bone-fracture conditions, post dislocation and post sprain conditions, ankylosis of the joints, inborn problems of the pelvis joints. Treatment results have been particularly effective in cases of deformations resulting from spine problems and the peripheral nervous system, blocked movements of the spine joints with painful and limited ability to move, disc pathic states of all kinds - plexus, radiculitis, etc. One characteristic feature of the Pavel Banya Sanatorium is that it treats - with particular success - disc hernia. But the most effective results are achieved in the treatment of diseases of the locomotory system and traumatic conditions of the spinal cord.



Another resort which offers excellent treatment of the locomotory system, but based mainly on the curative mud is the resort St. Constantine and Elena, located on the Black Sea coast. A natural park, vast beach strip, covered with fine sand, a clean sea, calm sunny days, mineral waters with temperature of 42°C, slightly mineralised, curative mud - all these natural factors are fully utilized for the treatment of chronic inflammatory and degenerative disturbances of the locomotory system and the peripheral nervous system, hypertonia, bronchial asthma, neuro - vegetative complaint, inflammatory conditions of the respiratory tract, disturbances of the endocrine system and metabolism, mental and physical fatigue, stress and other functional disturbances of the nervous system.

"In addition to classical forms of climatic cures and spa treatment, prophylactic holiday programmes are also available", reminds Mariana Delova, director of a company specialised in health tourism. Nowadays it is really important to try to relax, to diminish the everyday stress. "That is very important for everybody and you can do it in the Bulgarian spa resorts all year round."

For more information mariana@onvol.net

Public Affairs



ENSPER approves work programme

The Board of ENSPER approved the Lobby Strategy & Action Plan for 2005. The main issues ENSPER will tackle include:

- EC Green Paper on Equality and non-discrimination in an enlarged EU;
- EU Regulations on State Aids;
- EC White Paper on Services of General Interest;
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- EC Biennial report on the situation of people with disabilities in the EU



EPR awarded 'participatory status' with the Council of Europe

In December EPR was awarded 'participatory status' with the Council of Europe - the pan-European organisation for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. European NGOs enjoying participatory status are involved in the definition of Council of Europe policies, programmes and actions in particular by granting observer status to the Liaison Committee and to the NGO thematic groupings. In this respect, participatory status with the Council of Europe will further advance EPR's Public Affairs to a prestigious European forum. EPR could use this forum to create valuable contacts, obtain first-hand information, participate in new initiatives, provide advice and take action.



RI to benefit from a package of services & opportunities

Following the strengthened cooperation between EPR, Workability Europe and Rehabilitation International in the framework of ENSPER, from January this year RI will benefit from a package of service & opportunities offered from Rue de Spa 15. The offer includes use of office facilities, secretarial and administrative support as well as certain Public Affairs services

Projects



LABOR comes to an end

EASPD's Leonardo da Vinci project - *European Knowledge Centre on Vocational Training and Employment for People with Learning Disabilities (LABOR)* - in which EPR participated as a scientific partner has come to an end after three years of intensive work. A large LABOR Conference was organised in Dublin in October and Dorothy Gunne chaired a workshop on behalf of EPR. On 10 December, the LABOR closing event took place in the European Parliament in Brussels. The role of EPR in this valuable project was to test the 'Good Practice Guide' developed via several of its members; to draft a country report for Germany and Finland and to contribute in the dissemination of the project results.

LABOR has gathered material on training and employment measures for people with intellectual disabilities in 13 countries and made this information available on an online Knowledge Centre at www.start-labor.org

EPR resubmits accreditation proposal

After approval of the European Commission of EPR's pre-proposal to develop a *European accreditation system for professionals in vocational rehabilitation/training* (acronym: *ProCreditus*), in February 2005 EPR submitted a full proposal for this project and expects a final evaluation result in June 2005.

Workshop for Directors



A Strategic Workshop for Directors on “Future scenarios in rehabilitation”, organised by EPR and hosted by SRH, took place in Heidelberg on 24-25 February 2005.

Discussion on this topical issue attracted 24 participants from EPR members with some expert inputs from external partners.

The Workshop was divided into two sessions: during the first day participants debated the impact of the changing welfare state on the rehabilitation sector and during the second day they analysed the impact of internationalisation of rehabilitation services.

The Workshop was in many ways a true reflection of the EPR motto of “learning and developing together” and on the basis of the evaluations received, it appears that the Directors were overall very satisfied with the Workshop’s content and practical organisation.

Said one participant about the Workshop: “I really liked that each speaker stuck closely to their topic and time. Overall, the opportunity for discussion we got was invaluable.”



Opti-Work kicks off

EPR will join iRV (the Netherlands) in a 3-year long project under the 6th Framework Programme. The project, called ‘Optimising strategies for integrating people with disabilities into work’ (acronym: Opti-Work), sets out to develop and disseminate a conceptual framework, consisting of a number of analytic tools, and cross national comparative reports, to assist in formulating EU policy, calculating the socio-economic impact of those policies, and making recommendations for innovative strategies to enhance the labour market integration of citizens with disabilities.

General Seminar 2005

As you all know RehabCare will host the General Seminar this year. The General Seminar will take place on the 12th and 13th (half day) of May 2005 and the theme is “*Rehabilitation Pays!*”

The Seminar programme & some practical information are available on the EPR website <http://www.epr.be/members/gs.htm>

The contact person in RehabCare is:
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The famous historic Dublin Castle will be the venue for the General Seminar!

**“Quality Assurance in vocational training to people with disabilities: a European perspective”
a Conference organised by the EPR**

On 16 & 17 December 2004, EPR organised a Conference on “Quality Assurance in vocational training to people with disabilities: a European perspective” in Brussels. The Conference was co-funded by the Leonardo da Vinci Programme and was the largest event ever organised exclusively by the EPR. The Conference was organised as a two-day event, divided into four sessions. The overall objective was to identify, analyse and exchange “good practice” in quality management with the view to promoting, controlling and improving quality of public and private Vocational Education & Training provision.

132 representatives from 22 countries across the continent from Portugal to Estonia and from Denmark to Malta participated in the event. Delegates also came from a wide spectrum of stakeholders: European and international policy makers; VET bodies such as national training authorities, regional and local organisations, not-for-profit and commercial service providers; NGOs, especially organisations of disabled people; funders; insurers; employers’ federations; experts and consultants in quality and accreditation; academia and media.

The pinnacle of the event was the Awarding Ceremony where 4 organisations received the EQRm:

- *The National Training and Development Institute (3 sites), Ireland*
- *RehabCare (4 sites), Ireland*
- *Pluryn Werkenrode Arbeid, the Netherlands*
- *Centre de Réadaptation de Mulhouse (department UEROS), France*

The label 'Committed to EQRm' was delivered to 6 organisations:

- *Åstvedt Industrier AS, Norway, Durapart AS, Norway*
- *Durapart AS, Norway*
- *Opera Don Calabria (department MediaLabor), Italy*
- *Theotokos Foundation, Greece*
- *SRL (department Hoensbroeck Centrum voor Arbeidsperspectief), the Netherlands*
- *Josefsheim Bigge, Germany*



Holding high the EQRm award, Pierre North from Centre de Réadaptation de Mulhouse.



An evaluation form was distributed to delegates at the Conference. Unsurprisingly, the winner was the Gala dinner at the spectacular Sheraton Hotel.

Knowledge Management Centre

The KMC was officially launched on 16 February 2005. From now on, it can be consulted by all EPR professionals and modified in every EPR centre who has appointed an administrator. A KMC meeting will take place on 11 May 2005 from 15.00 to 18.00hrs in Dublin and the KMC will be presented in the plenary session at the General Seminar. No change will be made in the system during this year, since the KMC group and the secretariat worked a lot in 2004 to design and implement the database. More detailed evaluation will be carried out towards the end of this year. We encourage the centres to promote the use of the system among their staff, since the KMC success depends on the users' contributions.

EPR website: what's new?



The EPR secretariat has carried out a survey in 2004 to check the website use. It appears that the website has welcomed many visitors throughout the year: the number of hits reached 4344 in 2004 (hits from the EPR secretariat excluded), with an average of 5 unique users per day. In order to increase the use control and the safety, individual log in and password for each EPR member has been implemented. Please contact the EPR secretariat (e-mail: nadege.jibassia@epr.be Tel: +32 2 736 54 44) if you don't know the log in data for your centre.

Last update can be found on the web on various issues:

- The programme of the last ERA seminar of the season 2004-2005 is available on the website at this address <http://www.epr.be/downloads/eraprogramme/era9.doc> This seminar will take place in Estonia on 28 & 29 April 2005 and we strongly recommend the event to EPR professionals. To download the registration form click on <http://www.epr.be/downloads/eraregistration.pdf>
- To read the Report on the Conference "Quality Assurance in vocational training to people with disabilities: a European perspective" visit <http://www.epr.be/downloads/conference/confreport.doc>
- For the EPR General Seminar 2005 in Dublin - programme & practical information - click on <http://www.epr.be/members/gs.htm>
- The EPR Annual Report 2004 is available on <http://www.epr.be/About/AnnRep.htm>