

Newsletter

Special points of interest:

- Mark your Agendas - full calendar of events for 2008 available inside!
- EQUASS rebranding
- EPR launches new website!

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Editorial

Dear EPR members,

'Enhancing performance, meeting needs'

This is the mission of EQUASS after the rebranding recently approved by the Board of Directors as part of a new phase of the Quality system that EPR set up a few years ago.

EQUASS represents perhaps the most important contribution of our network to the EPR's members as well as to the overall domain of disability-related social services in Europe. The EQUASS approach, we can proudly state, is fully in line with the main concerns and political guidelines of European and international policies which emphasise issues as citizen rights, needs and expectations. Yet, the status and framework of disability-related social services remains a crucial question for us to follow due to the direct impact on the daily activities in our centres

We are living nowadays in Europe some turbulent moments, questioning the framework and models of what we have been doing in the social sector. It is a time that may contain dynamics that can be lived as threats or as opportunities, depending on the positioning, but should in any case be viewed as challenges. The role for us in the EPR is to identify the key tendencies, and to develop collective solutions to address them as leading organisations.

In the upward path we have been walking together, we now face the challenge of consolidating the EPR project. We need to

deepen its structure and reinforce its capacity as a professional, complex and sustainable organisation. This should enable the network to enhance its role to support its members and Europe, to promote more quality of life for citizens and foster a more inclusive society.

We are, at this stage, preparing the Strategic Plan for 2009-2011 which will constitute the *'star for the navigation'* in the coming years for our network, guiding us to go where we want to go. The Workshop for Directors, the Annual Conference, together with other work dynamics, will constitute essential moments for discussion, consolidation and transfer of our strategy.

I am convinced that by sharing approaches, concerns, perspectives, with our diversity, in a complementary way, with our commitment and availability, all of us together we will for sure, contribute to *'enhancing performance and meeting needs'*.

With best wishes,

Jerónimo Sousa, EPR President



Paal Haavorsen makes his point during the 'Ageing Workforce & Disability' Seminar organised in February

Calendar of EPR events 2008

April

- Centre Coordinators and KMC Administrators Meeting, *10 April, Brussels*
- Training on Knowledge Management, *11 April, Brussels*
- Steering Committee Meeting of 'Reintegrate' project, *14-15 April, Athens*
- Learning Group: Empowerment, 1st session, *17- 18 April, Brussels*
- Executive Committee/EQUASS Management Committee, *22 April, Brussels*

May

- EQUASS Awarding Committee, *28 May, Brussels*
- Workshop for Directors: Modernisation of Social Services, *29-30 May, Malta*
- Board of Directors Meeting, *30 May, Malta*

June

- Training Seminar: Relations between Service Providers and Employers, *17-18 June, London*
- Training Seminar: Outcome Measurement of Rehabilitation Services, *23-24 June, Brussels*
- Training Seminar: Mentoring, Coaching, Motivating, *25-26 June, Wijk aan Zee*

August

- Executive Committee Meeting, *28 August, Arendal*

September

- Site Visit: Rehabilitation for Children, *17 September, Hoensbroeck*
- Learning Group: Using the ICF in rehabilitation, last session, *16-17 September, Roermond*
- Annual Conference: Outcome Measurement of Services to People with Disabilities, *18-19 September, Roermond*
- Board of Directors Meeting, *17 September, Roermond*
- KMC Administrators Meeting, *17 September, Roermond*

October

- Empowerment, *second session on 21-22 October, Brussels*
- In-house Seminar on Distance learning programmes for vocational training, *date tbc, Neckargemünd*
- Centre Coordinators Meeting, *autumn (date tbc), Brussels*

November

- Housing services for people with disabilities, *12-13 November, Groesbeek*
- Disability management: training of trainers (Reintegrate Project), *11-12 November, Porto*
- Executive Committee/EQUASS Management Committee, *18 November, Brussels*
- EQUASS Awarding Committee, *26 November, Brussels*

December

- Board of Directors Meeting, *10 December, Brussels*
- Public Affairs Event, *11 December, Brussels*
- Benchmarking group on Post-rehabilitation services, *date tbc, Brussels*

** List of meetings and events as known at the moment. In the case of any changes you will be duly informed. It is advised to always confirm details of events with the secretariat prior to attending.*

News from the members

Momentum takes over Rehab UK; welcomes Minister for Disabled People

1. National brain injury charity, Rehab UK has become a subsidiary of not-for-profit organisation Momentum. Together they deliver a range of innovative training and employment solutions and social care and community outreach services throughout the UK.

2. Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, presented Haven Products with the Investors in People award, the Enterprising Solutions award and the Social Firms UK STAR award and officially opened

their new learning centre at an event in February. Haven Products provides meaningful employment for disabled people across Scotland and currently 80% of their workforce is disabled. The centre will be used by employees to develop their literacy, numeracy and IT skills.



News from: laura.delaney@momentumscotland.org

Chaseley shoots film, produces DVD

A film crew descended on Chaseley in March to capture some of Chaseley's service users and staff going about their normal day, for a Rehab Group DVD that will show the continuum of care for people with Acquired Brain Injury throughout the Group's Services in the UK and Ireland. Chaseley, a member of the Rehab Group, is a residential, respite and day care home in Eastbourne, East Sussex for people with severe physical disabilities resulting from Spinal Injury, Acquired Brain Injury and a wide range of neurological conditions. Physiotherapy, occupational therapy and rehabilitation are all key elements in the treatment offered at the home.



News from: ChrisE@chaseleytrust.org

SRL appoints new CEOs

With the appointment of Anke Meijs and Jean-Paul Essers as CEOs of SRL the vacancy in the top-management of SRL that occurred after Thérèse-Sophie de Wit left is filled. Both of the appointed persons jointly carry the full responsibility for all of the SRL activities. Anke Meijs will be the Chairperson and she will also be the one who participates in the Board of Directors of EPR. Before coming to SRL, Anke Meijs was CEO of a general hospital. Jean-Essers started his career at SRL in May 2006 as Director of the service and financial department.

News from: P.Kurvers@srl.nl

Opera Don Calabria starts new projects

'Locomotor Impairments and Rehabilitation in Infantile Cerebral Palsy' is the title of the Opera Don Calabria Innovative Research Project officially launched on 15 February 2008 with the aim of develop new rehabilitation strategies and technologies for the best exploitation of recovery potentialities in patients suffering from Infantile Cerebral Palsy (ICP). The two years project will focus on the ODC children users and will be developed in co-operation with 4 Faculties of the University of Verona and the Catholic University of Rome.

In January the Veneto Region assigned to ODC the experimental project on '*Comprehensive services to people with disabilities in a sustainable system*' the project focuses on ways of social care and assistance to adults with disabilities of the Region and aims to define (or re-define) common assessment tools to adults with disabilities and to overcome the huge differences within the Region and to build a common and sustainable model of system at regional level.

News from: valentina.danese@centrodoncalabria.it

Two Ministers visit Durapart

On 25 January 2008, the Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion, Bjarne Håkon Hansen and Minister of Government Administration and Reform, Heidi Grande Røys visited Durapart AS. The purpose of their visit was to learn more about quality assurance of social services, the project '*Patient in Activity*' (PIA) and Durapart's focus on helping long-term recipients of social benefits into having a more active life and find ordinary work. The Ministers were particularly interested in learning about Durapart's work on motivating young, unemployed people (18-25) for an active lifestyle. This work is focused on practical areas like starting every day with a healthy breakfast and newspapers to be better informed and integrated into society. In our opinion a healthy diet combined with physical activity has have a positive effect on sleeping habits, and this provides the necessary energy and strength to start working. In an eight week program, a majority of the 15 participants adopted an active lifestyle, and 3 participants found ordinary work. The Ministers declared that they would recommend this programme nationwide. The Ministers spoke with youths while two of the most recognised TV-channels in Norway were filming them.

News from: grete.kristiansen@durapart.no



Theotokos opens Centre for Work Preparation and Integration

The purpose of the Centre is to prepare and support young adults with learning disabilities to access the community and acquire real relationships that will allow them to acquire and maintain real paid work. The Centre's programme strives to answer the questions:

- How can we promote real well-being for our clients?
- How can we help them attain and maintain real relationships?
- How can we increase our clients' presence in their communities?
- How can our clients attain more skills for living in the world?
- How can we support our clients so that they are not mere recipients of philanthropy, but active citizens in their own right?
- How can we help our clients build their self efficacy and self esteem?

We hope to answer all these questions and more in our daily repertoire of activities and experiences with our clients.

News from: pantelis_argiris696@yahoo.gr





Josefsheim Bigge takes the lead in Quality

Seven German vocational rehabilitation centres, among them Josefsheim Bigge, have launched a Quality initiative. They aim at improving the quality of vocational training for young people with hearing impairments. Their first project is an internet-based sign language encyclopaedia containing technical terms of jobs and trainings provided in the centres. This new website's address is www.fachgebaerdenlexikon.de. The quality project also aspires a certificate of quality to attest the high level of vocational training for the hearing impaired in the seven centres.

News from: c.halbey@josefsheim-bigge.de

Astangu opens sheltered workshop

At the end of 2007 Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre opened a small sheltered workshop. There has been need for sheltered workshop for years. The main reason is that many graduates are not ready to enter open labour market after they have completed the training at Astangu Centre. They may need time to adjust to work life or they don't get job right away after the graduation and there is a need to keep them active until they gain employment. The clients work in sheltered workshop with a services contract. In addition to Astangu Centre's own students and graduates we also plan to have clients referred by Labour Market Board in the framework of employment service offered by the Labour Market Board. They will receive funding from Labour Market Board. Most of the jobs involve packing: disposable tableware, seeds, etc. But there was a nice offer from a cable company that enables our clients to try out product development. The cable company provides us with the remains of their products and our clients can come up with and implement the ideas for company gifts.

News from: marika.hass@astangu.ee

Archbishop of Malta visits Eden Foundation

For the first time in the short history of The Eden Foundation we were visited by His Excellence, The Archbishop of Malta, Mons. Paul Cremona. On arrival, Mons. Cremona was greeted by the President of Eden Foundation, Bro. Martin Borg f.s.c. and introduced to the Management. This was a pastoral and informal visit wherein the Archbishop wished to meet the parents and the clients whom we serve as well as all the Staff who go beyond their call of duty to offer a service to persons with mental disability which is second to none. The other reason for His Grace's visit was to inaugurate a room which has been set aside and transformed into a prayer room / Chapel so that Staff, clients and parents may, if they so wish, spend some quiet and reflective time on their own or with others.



Mons. Cremona proceeded to bless this new Chapel in the presence of several children with mental disability and their siblings. Mons. Cremona found time to speak, play and joke with every individual. While His Grace visited all the diverse programs, the parents were able to follow the proceedings under a marquee through CCTV while being served food and drinks. Once he emerged from the building, a group of Adult trainees and volunteers greeted the Bishop to the sounds of ECU TAMBUR, our small percussion orchestra. Soon he was invited to join in and very quickly donned one of the instruments and started playing with the rest. Mons. Paul Cremona is very much loved by everyone and most wanted the commemorative card that was prepared for the occasion to be signed by him. We thank him for the honour!

News from: austin.gili@theedenfoundation.com

CRPG is one of the founding members of the Health Cluster Portugal

CRPG is one of the founding members of the first health competitive and technology pole. Named *Health Cluster Portugal* it brings together 70 public and private Portuguese organisations: universities, R&D centres, hospitals, etc.. The partners aim to promote the development of partnerships and innovative projects at both national and international level that add value and raise exchanges in this field. One of the goals of this cluster is to promote patent registry and technology transfer linking those who research with those who produce. The initiative focuses on three strategic areas: well-being and ageing; prevention of diseases and treatment, such as neurodegenerative and cardiovascular diseases, cancer, etc and e-health.

News from: andrea.mota@crpg.pt

FreteX implements new work-life policy

FreteX wants to initiate arrangements that will support employees in combining work and private life at different ages and under different private and family conditions. FreteX aims to adopt a corporate culture that accepts all people and values diversity. In order to achieve this, the new policy is designed to meet the changing needs employees are experiencing in different phases of their lives. The policy draws up a framework which will be an asset for our branches and divisions when in cooperation with employees they make the individual adjustments necessary to secure a sustainable work-life balance.

News from: Trine.Gjermundbo@fretex.no

Centre Action Plans (CAPs)

CAPs implementation well under way

The 2nd generation of CAPs (2007-2008) is half-way through its implementation process, a key phase during which an interim evaluation is conducted. This evaluation has been based on centre visits organised in the end of 2007 and beginning 2008 and during which Jan Spooren and Jan Albers have met the persons involved in the Action Plan of their centre.

These meetings were very helpful in collecting feedback on the past year's activities and fine-tuning the activities in 2008 according to the centres' needs. Moreover, these visits provided an excellent opportunity of maintaining a direct contact between the EPR secretariat and the professionals of the centres.

In total, 12 *joint activities* and 20 *individual activities* are planned for 2008. This represents a significant increase in comparison to 2007, but is in line with the EPR work plan 2008 clearly prioritises the CAPs and the services to members. With the financial support of the Structural Funding EPR receives from the European Commission since 2008, it also became possible to involve more experts and consultants in the CAP activities, which should still increase their quality.

Several *joint activities* will be organised in the coming months:

- The first session of the Learning Group '*Empowerment*', 17-18 April, Brussels
- Workshop for Directors on '*Modernisation of social services*', 29-30 May, Malta
- Training Seminar on '*Relations between service providers and employers*', 17-18 June, London
- Training Seminar on '*Outcome measurement of rehabilitation services*', 23-24 June, Brussels
- Training Seminar on '*Mentoring, Coaching, Motivating*', 25-26 June, Wijk aan Zee (the Netherlands)

The contact persons for all CAP-related issues in the EPR secretariat are Nadège Jibassia (planning & coordination) and Jan Spooren (management).

Professional Development



‘The Seminar gave me a different view on how to manage older workers’

A participant

EPR Seminar on ‘Ageing Workforce & Disability’

In February, EPR organised a one-day Training Seminar in Brussels on the theme of ‘Ageing Workforce & Disability’. The Seminar was attended by 25 participants from 13 countries. It was facilitated by Dr Richard Wynne from the Work Research Centre in Ireland.

The collected Evaluation forms indicate that partici-

pants were satisfied with all aspects of the event: practical organisation, trainer and content.

The full Report and presentation delivered is available on the EPR website.

Knowledge Management Centre (KMC)

KMC improvements

After a one year break for the KMC activities, the EPR secretariat works at full speed on technical and methodological innovation to offer fresh and attractive features to EPR members.

The objective is to promote the KMC among professionals and to integrate the use of this tool in their usual references for searching information. The main improvements are:

- **A full text search**

The KMC will display an optimised functionality for searching information which is similar to the research function of Google. This functionality increases the volume of information found and presents the research results by order of relevance.

- **Launch of a database section on experts**

This new section will be dedicated to information on the experts from EPR centres. This section will help the EPR members to find experts available for consultancy services or projects in quick and easy way.

These innovations will be presented at the KMC meeting on 10 April and will be fine-tuned during the coming months according to the meeting conclusions.

EPR Innovation Prize

EPR is pleased to announce you the launch of an Innovation Prize. The Prize rewards a practice in the EPR network which would be the most innovative and valuable to the rehabilitation sector. The Prize aims to promote innovation and support mutual learning through knowledge management.

All professionals from EPR members are invited to participate via the EPR Knowledge Management Centre (the database can be accessed via a password at <http://epr.eu/kmc>), and insert information on a good practice in his/her centre in the standard templates of the database. The best practice will be selected by the KMC administrators and upon pre-defined criteria.

The Prize will be granted during the EPR Annual Conference. The professional who has inserted the awarded practice in the KMC will receive of voucher of **1.000 Euro** for travel and participation to EPR professional development activities.

Research & Innovation

Reintergrate project kicks-off

EPR has commenced a new project entitled '**Integrated e-learning for managing job retention and return to work**' (acronym: **Reintergrate**) aims at developing tools to upgrade the skills and competences of employers on how to prevent employees at risk of disability to lose their work. The project consortium is made up of 5 organisations:

- Work Research Centre Ltd (WRC), Ireland (project leader)
- Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), Ireland
- European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR), Belgium

- EWORX SA, Greece
- National Institute for Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR), Canada.

In addition to these partners, six centres will be involved in the project under the leadership of EPR. They will collect feedback from employers on the developed tools. These centres, include 5 EPR members and are the following: CRPG, Portugal; ODC, Italy; Heliomare, the Netherlands; Institute for Rehabilitation in Slovenia; Durapart, Norway and the Centre for Regional and Social Resource in Hungary.

The project started on 1 November 2007 and it is due to end in 31 October 2009.

The centres have already undertaken their first tasks, which consisted in providing their own views via interviews on the specific skills and knowledge in disability management that the future tools should address.

The project partners are currently reviewing the centres feedback in order to make a first draft of the tools content which will be discussed with all partners during a project meeting on 14-15 of April in Athens.

The contact person for this project in the EPR secretariat is Nadège Jibassia.

Public Affairs

EPR attends Disability High Level Group meeting

In March, Jan Spooren, General Secretary and Jeronimo de Sousa, President represented EPR at the meeting of the **High Level Group on Disability (HLG)**. The HLG is essentially composed of senior civil servants from the EU Member States and key NGOs in the sector. It meets three times a year to develop and discuss the priorities of the EU Disability Action Plan.

The March meeting, co-chaired by the new **Head of the EC Disability Unit, Mr Johan Ten-Geuzendam**, addressed important issues such as the implementation of the UN Convention, the new State Aid Block Exemption Regulation being currently drafted and Social Services of General Interest and public procurement. The HLG two-year work programme was also rolled out.

In relation to fostering accessibility to the labour market where only supported employment was mentioned, EPR stressed the importance of other services such as vocational training and disability management.

EPR Seminar on Social Services of General Interest

In January, EPR hosted a Working Seminar focused on the issue of **Social Services of General Interest (SSGI)**. The Seminar brought together several partners of the informal network of NGO social service providers that EPR has joined.

The Seminar was organised in follow-up to the EC Communication on SSGI adopted in November 2007. Debates focused on the SSGI which refer to enhancing legal certainty in the field of SSGI and to the promotion of quality. The partners also reviewed two accompanying documents concerning the application of state aid and public procurement rules to SSGI.

Following the event, EPR has produced an extensive Analysis Report on latest developments around SSGI. You can find this paper on the EPR website.

For all Public Affairs-related questions, please contact Martin Ohridski in the EPR secretariat.

EQUASS



Rebranding

Following approval by the EPR Board of Directors, the name EQUIP was replaced with **EQUASS**. This rebranding overcomes a number of challenges and confusions identified in the Sales & Marketing strategy.

EQUASS stands for **European Quality in Social Services** and all the certification levels have been named according to the 'brand name'.

EQUASS Assurance (formerly EQUASS)
- guarantees quality of service provision

EQUASS Excellence (formerly EQRM)
- guarantees excellence in social services

EQUASS Award
- New EQUASS certification programme that will be launched in May 2008. It has been developed to promote the Principles for Quality in the social sector and to identify and award *outstanding performance* on these Principles.

During the first month in 2008 extra efforts have been made to adapt the existing EQUASS documentation as well as to develop a brand new set of PR materials.

Capacity-building

To assure continuity in development, management, coordination, sales and marketing an EQUASS Core Group has been set up. The EQUASS Core Group has the objective to learn and to review the different aspects and developments of the EQUASS unit. The Group members are: Guus van Beek (EQUASS Manager), Jana Kukuckova (EQUASS coordinator), Michael Crowley (Rehab Group), Karl Wiggo Jensens (Durapart AS), Jean Claude Schrepfer (CRM) and Antinio Riho (CRPG).

News from the EQUASS Licence Holders

The **Association of Vocational Rehabilitation Enterprises (AVRE)**

signed the Local Licence Holder Agreement (LLH) for Norway in December 2006. An increasing interest for EQUASS Assurance has been noticed during 2007, both from AVRE member companies and from the Norwegian authorities. It is likely that external certification will become a requirement for all organisations in the rehabilitation sector in Norway. The Norwegian Licence Holder AVRE expects an increase of interest and requests for certification for EQUASS Assurance in 2008.

The **Association of Social Services (LOS)** signed the LLH Agreement for Denmark in November 2007. LOS has since that date worked out a general plan for introduction, promotion and implementation of EQUASS Assurance for the Danish market for 2008. This plan contains the following actions:

1. Translation of EQUASS materials into Danish Language.
2. Informing key stakeholders in Denmark (including the Ministries of Social Affairs, employment and Welfare) about the initiative of LOS to introduce EQUASS Assurance into the Social Sector.
3. Building up capacity to run the EQUASS Assurance system in Denmark: training of EQUASS Assurance auditors and EQUASS consultants.
4. Organisation of information events for Service Providers in the Social Sector.

For more information on EQUASS, please contact: Guus van Beek (EQUIP Executive Manager), Jana Kukuckova (EQUASS coordinator) or consult the EQUASS website, linked to the EPR website.



All eyes on EQUASS - an Auditors Training took place in February in Brussels

News from the secretariat

EPR recruits EQUASS Coordinator

Jana Kukuckova joined the EPR secretariat in February 2008 as the EQUASS Coordinator. She is mainly responsible for handling EQUASS certification processes and monitoring the application procedures. Her duties also include public relations, preparation and organisation of EQUASS

events, communication with clients, partners and auditors, and supporting of meetings of the European Awarding Committee. She closely co-operates with Guus van Beek who acts as EQUASS Manager.

Jana is Slovak and already has acquired good experience in the social sector having worked for the Platform of European NGOs, and for EQUAL projects both in her native country and in Brussels. She has MA Degrees in English and Gender Studies.



Jana - already well integrated into the EPR team and happy

EPR recruits Communication Officer

Eva Novacean who was on a 5-month internship with the secretariat in 2007 has been recruited as Communication Officer for a period of 6 months. Eva's recruitment corresponds to the prioritised objective to strengthen the internal communication dimension

of EPR's work.

Eva is responsible for EPR's Communication Strategy and Action Plan. Her main tasks in EPR include website management, production of the newsletter and PR materials, event and meetings planning, organising of Conferences and overall support in office management.



Eva has given a real boost to EPR's Communication activities this year

Sarah De Roeck has a baby!



EPR is delighted to report that Sarah De Roeck, EPR's Financial Administrator has given birth to a daughter - Fiona Mae. Both mother and baby are feeling very fine

and are in good spirits. Sarah is currently on maternity leave for several months and during this period her administrative duties have been taken up by Benedicte Du-bois, former EPR employee. Benedicte is using the email of Sarah .

What's new on the website?

**Visit our
new website
www.epr.eu !**

EPR launches new website!

In short, the website itself is new!

EPR is pleased to announce the launching of its new website at the same address as before - www.epr.eu !

The new website features a number of technical, visual and content improvements. In this way, EPR will be able to exploit the full potential of this online tool which is so essential for effective internal and external communication in any international network today.

The '*Members area*' is also active. In this part you can find internal infor-

mation related to events, meetings, projects, reports, news, etc. Your username and password remain unchanged.

Message for EPR members: as this is also YOUR website, we invite you to review it and to give us your feedback! Let us know if you wish to see any articles, links or other information included. Kindly check also the presentation of your organisation in the section '*Our members*' and inform us if you would like to change or add any details. We request especially the centre coordinators to review the content and to give us their views.

For all website matters, please contact Eva Novacean in the secretariat.

Contact us:

Jan Spooren, General Secretary - jan.spooren@epr.eu
Martin Ohridski, Public Affairs Officer - martin.ohridski@epr.eu
Nadege Jibassia, Project Coordinator - nadege.jibassia@epr.eu
Eva Novacean, Communication Officer - intern@epr.eu
Sarah De Roeck, Financial Administrator - sarah.deroeck@epr.eu
Jana Kukuckova, EQUASS Coordinator - jana.kukuckova@epr.eu
Guus van Beek, EQUSS Manager - equass@xs4all.nl

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Editor-in-Chief: Jan Spooren; Managing editor: Martin Ohridski

EPR, Rue de Spa 15, 1000 Brussels, Belgium, tel: +32 2 736 54 44, fax: +32 2 736 86 22; website: www.epr.eu

Send your questions, comments and contributions to
martin.ohridski@epr.eu

The European Platform for Rehabilitation is a network of leading European providers of rehabilitation services to people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups.