

## European Platform for Rehabilitation

## EPR Newsletter

## Special:

- **A new EPR member looking ahead: Interview with A.I.A.S. (pg 3)**
- **Strategic Workshop for Directors summary (pg 7)**
- **EPR Annual Conference 2009 - update (pg 9)**

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## Editorial

Dear EPR members,

"The organisations of the EPR network are indeed confronted with the impact of the economic crisis. But they are also confident that pro-active management will enable them to sustain and even improve their service provision to people with disabilities". This is the striking conclusion of the strategic workshop for directors which the EPR organised on 11 June in Bled.

Moreover, the directors hold the view that the crisis also offers opportunities for the sector, such as the identification and retention of staff with high potential and the re-orientation of existing services. The overall opinion was that fundamentally re-thinking what we do and how we do it is more helpful than a purely defensive attitude. More information about this absorbing event and its conclusions can be found in this newsletter.

In order to respond to the economic crisis, it is clear that sharing information and exchanging experiences between similar organisations in different

countries contributes to finding solutions. During the first half of 2009, EPR organised no less than 11 joint seminars and working groups in which most EPR members participated, and about 10 in-house seminars and individual consultancies. This volume of professional development activities reflects the EPR strategy to focus on assistance to members to innovate and strengthen their position. The results of these EPR actions are briefly described in the newsletter; additionally, members who did not participate have access to all materials and presentations via the members section of the EPR website.

On the European scene, the most important development is without any doubt the design of a new European Disability Strategy 2011-2020. This document will be closely built around the UN Convention on the Rights for People with Disabilities, and the EPR was asked by the European Commission to contribute to this strategy. The expertise of EPR will primarily be needed in relation to the employment of people with disabilities and the development of ICF-based indicators for a transnational measurement of the implementation of



the UN Convention. Moreover, the EPR Charter on 'Modernisation of disability-related health and social services', which was launched in December last year, was very well received by the major actors in our sector at both European and national level, and the EPR was invited on various occasions to present its pathways to modernisation.

Finally, I would like use this opportunity to wish you all a nice summer period, and hope you gain sufficient energy to cope with your professional challenges during the second half of the year. I also hope many of you will, during the coming half year, participate in the numerous EPR activities that are scheduled, with the absolute highlight being our Annual Conference on 15-16 October in Waterford, Ireland.

Jan Spooren  
General Secretary



## Calendar of EPR events 2009

### September

*7 September: A Common Quality Framework for Social Services of General Interest, CEN workshop meeting, Brussels*

*24-25 September: Customer focus, EQUABENCH seminar, Nijmegen*

*28-29 September: Outcome Measurement in Medical Rehabilitation, benchlearning group, Hoensbroek*  
*Impact of EU legislation on social services at national level, seminar, Brussels, date to be confirmed*

### October

*12-14 October: Community-based social care services, learning partnership, Limerick*

*13-14 October: Outcome measurement in VET, benchlearning group, Waterford*

*15-16 October: Transition as a key challenge in Rehabilitation, annual conference, Waterford*

### November

*2 November: Disability Management/Relations with employers, project final event, Dublin*

*2-3 November: Implementing EQUASS in practice, project meeting, Ljubljana*

*19-20 November: Management of Human Resources in social services, information seminar, Brussels*

*Integrated services and decentralised service provision, learning group, Brussels, date to be confirmed*

*26-27 November: Results orientation, EQUABENCH seminar, Verona*

### December

*9 December: Implementation of Quality Assurance in Rehabilitation services, information seminar, Brussels*

*10 December: Empowerment, public affairs conference, Brussels*

*14 December: Quality Assurance in the social care sector, and the role of training, public hearing, Brussels*

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

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## News from the members

### Interview: A.I.A.S., the perspective of a new member

EPR has welcomed five new members to its network since the start of 2009. The following is an interview with Dr. Gaetano Santonocito of Comitato Regionale Lombardo de AIAS, one of these new members. The other new members are:

Berufsbildungswerk Neckargemünd gGmbH, SRH, (Germany) as full member;  
Workchance (Hungary), Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre (Lithuania), Panagia Eleousa (Greece) as associate members.

#### **Can you explain a little about the background of AIAS and its development in advance of becoming an EPR member?**

Comitato Regionale AIAS has been active in the medical rehabilitation field for about 40 years and has branches in Lombardia. In total, there are 110 AIAS branches all over Italy. The Comitato Regionale Lombardo of AIAS have decided to join EPR in order to reinforce its knowledge of medical rehabilitation in the European Union.

#### **What particular aspects of EPR first attracted AIAS?**

The professional approach, the numbers and different national origin of the members and the connection with HLG (the European Council High Level Group on Disability). Of particular importance to us is the opportunity to reach "Quality certification".

#### **Does AIAS intend to disseminate knowledge about EPR in Italy? If so, how?**

Yes, I think the national AIAS will join EPR after a trial period. First I have to get a better understanding of the opportunities, the rules and the chance for all - or for the majority - of AIAS branches to assume membership. The language barrier also needs to be taken into consideration. At that point I will formalise the proposal at the national board of Directors, of which I am also a member.

#### **What are your next expectations from EPR itself in the upcoming years? How do you believe AIAS can grow under EPR membership?**

The mutual experience exchanged with European colleagues through EPR is essential to build up the future and to ensure that we are following the right road.

#### **You recently participated in the EPR Workshop for Directors in Slovenia. What were your impressions about this event and its extra value for AIAS?**

My impression was excellent. The workshop was very constructive and dynamic. It was also especially interesting



*Dr. Gaetano Santonocito, Director,  
Comitato Regionale Lombardo de  
A.I.A.S*

to gain knowledge about the other organisations operating in the EU. I did feel that perhaps one of the presentations was too generic, in that it was suitable for any type of companies and not quite so specific for our goals.

#### **The social and health services in Europe are facing important challenges due to structural changes in the sector (for example, ageing society, economic laws that regulate the social sectors, uncertain direction of the labour market). Do you see these as characteristics of the sector in Italy as well?**

Yes, we all have the same problems and needs, but very often the solutions are different.

For more information on A.I.A.S, visit [www.aiasmonza.it](http://www.aiasmonza.it) (in Italian).

#### **Quick facts:**

- ⇒ A.I.A.S (Associazione Italiana Assistenza Spastici) provides rehabilitation services to people with neurological disabilities.
- ⇒ 110 departments.
- ⇒ Active for 40 years in rehabilitation and social inclusion field.
- ⇒ Cares for about 3000 clients in physiotherapy, logotherapy and occupational therapy facilities.

## CRPG publication welcomed by Portuguese national qualification agency

Centro de Reabilitação Profissional de Gaia (CRPG) has produced a new methodological guide for the Portuguese national Agency for Qualification (ANQ). The subject: the access of people with disabilities to the process of recognition, validation and certification of competences at a basic level.

Acknowledging the right that people with disabilities have to the process of recognition, validation and certification of compe-

tences (RVCC), this guide identifies the adjustments to be made to the RVCC process in order to guarantee its access by citizens with the most common disabilities (hearing, intellectual, neuromuscular, etc).

As a part of the New Opportunities Initiative (see below), the guide aims to adjust the Key Competencies in Adult Education and Training Reference Framework (basic level) to people with disabilities. The dynamics regarding adult

education and training are based on this Framework. According to ANQ, this guide is a fundamental tool for the creation of a broad network of inclusive New Opportunities Centres, which are also able to work with people with disabilities, allowing them to be integrated into the regular structure which is open to all citizens. As such, it becomes an invaluable tool to help achieve the principle of equal opportunities in the access to training and education.

ANQ is a public institution integrated into the Indirect

State Administration, subject to the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity and the Ministry of Education. The mission of the agency is to coordinate the implementation of policies regarding vocational education and training of young people and adults, as well as to ensure the development and management of the System of Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences.

Contribution by Ana Pinto  
[ana.pinto@crpg.pt](mailto:ana.pinto@crpg.pt)

### What is the New Opportunities Initiative?

Started by the Portuguese Ministry of Education and by the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, and publicly introduced on 14 December 2005, it aims to extend the minimum training reference for young people and adults.

The strategy behind this initiative rests on two basic pillars:

- making technical teaching a genuine option, providing New Opportunities for young people;
- raising levels of basic training for the working population, providing a New Opportunity for learning and progressing.

## CRPG hosts successful trainee exchange programme

Between 28th April - 8th May, CRPG hosted a group of trainees from Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre (Estonia) for an exchange programme in carpentry.

With parallel aims to provide the trainees with independent skills in carpentry while at the same time offering experience of cultural differences, the programme was a great success.

Professionals from Astangu Centre accompanied the six trainees, most of whom had not travelled abroad before. But



even languages were not a barrier to the birth of friendships.

The programme included visits to some

companies related to carpentry as well as visits to cultural activities including one to the Porto Wine cellars. This exchange programme was financed by the EU programme *Leonardo da Vinci*.

Contribution by Ana Pinto [ana.pinto@crpg.pt](mailto:ana.pinto@crpg.pt)

## Heliomare: handbiking study



Linda Valent, movement scientist/occupational therapist from Heliomare Rehabilitation, has successfully defended her doctorate study 'Handbiking as a physical training instrument for people with a high paraplegia'.

Interested in this study?  
Contact

[l.valent@heliomare.nl](mailto:l.valent@heliomare.nl)



## Momentum: Employees learning achievements celebrated

20 employees from Haven Products, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Momentum, have had their learning achievements honoured at a certification ceremony in Haven's Hillington facility, Glasgow, 29 May. Over the last year, the group has been undertaking a range of courses with Adult Literacies Renfrewshire.

Social enterprise firm Haven Products works in partnership with different agencies to provide a range of accredited and

non-accredited courses and drop-in sessions at its on-site learning centre for staff. Adult Literacies Renfrewshire, responsible for the implementation of Renfrewshire Council's Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, has been running sessions at the centre since its doors first opened in January 2008. Around 80% of employees at the centre have a disability.

Susan Bates, Adult Literacies Coordinator for



Employees are presented with their certificates by Councillor James McQuade of the Education Policy Board, Renfrewshire Council

*"The centre has seen many successes, with staff gaining new qualifications and skills which will assist them on a daily basis and in the future."*

Jackie Flynn, Centre Coordinator, Haven Products

Renfrewshire Council, said: "The workers have embraced the opportunity to achieve their learning goals, and in many cases have gone far beyond what they would have imagined possible in learning new skills and in gaining new

confidence in many aspects of their lives."

For more information, see [www.havenproducts.co.uk](http://www.havenproducts.co.uk)

Contribution by Laura Delaney  
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## "Panagia Eleousa": social rehabilitation through cultural experiences

Service users of the Workshop "Panagia Eleousa", Greece, made a visit to the Museum of engraving, "Vasso Katraki" in Etoliko, 22 May.

The visit formed an educational programme, in cooperation with the Department of Engraving,



Service users at an engraving museum, part of a workshop to learn and experience arts and culture

University of Thessaloniki. Works of the famous artist Vasso Katraki are exhibited at the museum.

This visit had two aims: not only to bring the service users close to the work of an important artist, but also to give some teaching on the art of engraving. As a result, participants attempted the whole process of engraving, generously assisted by students from the University faculty, and they produced their own work which the museum donated to them as a reward.

The experience was an excellent boost to self-confidence, since the participants found they could use their own abilities to create something of personal significance.

"Panagia Eleousa" has a social rehabilitation policy to organise visits to museums and galleries, because it identifies the educational and cultural development they can offer. As a result, the service users gain therapeutic benefits of cultural experiences, something they might otherwise be deprived of.

Contribution by Mina Kyziridi  
[panael@otenet.gr](mailto:panael@otenet.gr)

## SRL launches their new identity:



Stichting Revalidatie Limburg (SRL) is fully in motion. In 2008, SRL launched their Strategic Plan 2008-2011, which included a 'Top 10' list of priorities for the direction of the organisation. A new direction and a new future calls for a new house style and above all a new name.

The name "Adelante" was chosen, meaning "moving forward" in Spanish, signaling SRL's intentions. The logo is an abstract hand, symbolising an accessible and open organisation for all: everyone is warmly welcome! Above all, the hand represents the supporting hand which is necessary in the quest for 'making the most of yourself', which is the bi-line of the new logo. Finally, the logo symbolises the five core activities of SRL: adult rehabilitation, child rehabilitation, special education, reintegration in the labour market, and audiology.

Adelante was officially launched on 1 July, along with the new website, [www.adelantezorggroep.nl](http://www.adelantezorggroep.nl). On 25 September, the new house style and image will officially be introduced to clients and colleagues at a celebratory event, followed on 26 September by an Open House during which time people will be offered the opportunity to get more acquainted with the updates.

Contribution by Paul Kurvers: [p.kurvers@srl.nl](mailto:p.kurvers@srl.nl)

## Project update: Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre, Lithuania



Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre (VRC) is starting to implement LLP Leonardo da Vinci mobility project entitled "The Development of Interfaces between Vocational Creativity and Training Content". VRC plans to organise two mobility visits to Slovenia and Portugal, and is grateful in advance to their hosts: The Institute for Rehabilitation Republic of Slovenia and Gaia Vocational Rehabilitation Centre.

Through this project, VRC seeks to improve the qualification of specialists, develop their creativity, strengthen collaboration and share best practices between Slovenia, Portugal and Lithuania. These visits will aim to develop the competencies in the fields of new methods of working with people with disabilities, the content of innovative vocational training and foreign language improvement in the vocational field. The project will end in April 2010.

Additionally, a national project devoted to developing vocational rehabilitation methodologies for people with different types of disabilities is commencing. The current situation in Lithuania is that only development and practice of methodologies of vocational rehabilitation services for people with movement disorders takes place. So far, there are no methodologies and standards of vocational rehabilitation services for people with sensor and mental disabilities, nor defined professional requirements for specialists working in the field, nor defined principles for system of quality management. As a result, the quality of services provided in different vocational rehabilitation centres is the remit of the provider himself.

By preparing and implementing methodologies, standards for vocational rehabilitation services and the quality management system, regulation and high quality of services in the country will be ensured, while at the same time addressing the possibility of unifying the costs of services.

VRC, in partnership with other rehabilitation centres, will develop four methodologies for vocational service provision for people with visual, hearing and mental disabilities. The project represents a significant challenge for project partnership, lasting until the end of 2013.

Contribution by Rasa Noreikytė-Ustinavičienė: [rasa.noreikyte@reabilitacija.lt](mailto:rasa.noreikyte@reabilitacija.lt)

## Centre Action Plans (CAPs)

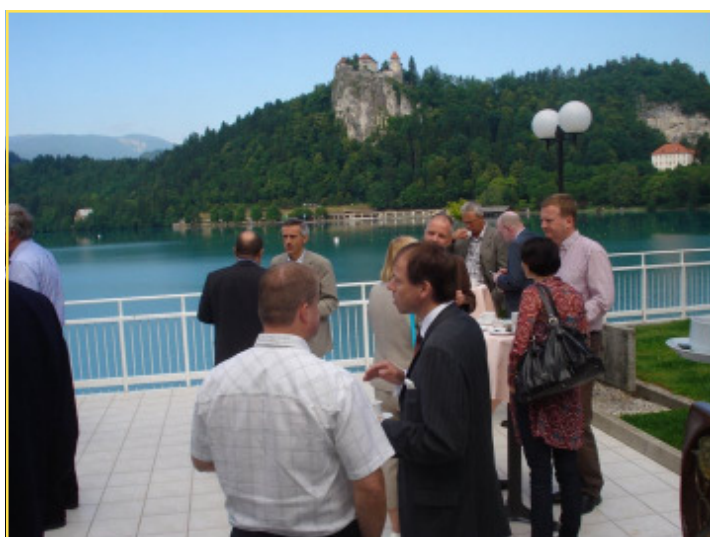
### Strategic Workshop for Directors

EPR held its fifth strategic workshop for Directors on 11 June in Bled, Slovenia. The now traditional annual meeting was hosted by the Institute for Rehabilitation of the Republic of Slovenia (IR-RS).

In light of the economic recession, the specific focus this year fell on the response by providers in the social services sector which is, like every sector, facing the current impacts of the recession. The main goal of this event was to offer the participants an opportunity to discuss in depth the best approaches to tackling the challenges of recession. Identifying the direct and indirect consequences of the recession is the primary challenge facing all services providers.



Crucially, EPR Members reaffirmed their positive approach to these current challenges, and their will to consider them as an opportunity to re-evaluate and re-invent social services delivery, rather than a threat.



*“The meeting raised most interesting openings for the future”*

A workshop participant

These annual workshops are a key occasion for the Directors to exchange professional good practices in the field of rehabilitation, to strengthen the network and to gain skills in order to address European-wide situations in the sector. There was particular praise for the location and atmosphere which allowed for positive and open discussion.

Presentations can be downloaded by members from the EPR website, and there is also a description of the programme and conclusions of the workshop available which are generally accessible.

### Training puts client at heart of Challenging Behaviour

On 14-15 May, the EPR secretariat organised a seminar on Challenging Behaviour, held in its office in Brussels. Four EPR member organisations (IR-

RS, Josefs-Gesellschaft, Pluryn and Theotokos) were represented by a small, highly motivated group of five participants. They were led by Peter McGill, Senior

Lecturer at the Tizard Centre at the University of Kent, UK, as seminar trainer. Peter specialises in the design and delivery of services to people with severe learning disabilities and challenging behaviour.

The seminar was introduced with a general approach to challenging behaviour, based on the participants' experiences, which were then addressed with theoretical analytical frameworks. The participants discussed the influence of environmental and individual factors on the occurrence of challenging behaviour,

before exploring in-depth professional practices to prevent and reduce it, the aim being to improve the quality of life of the client, notably by designing person-centred services. The discussion was regularly nourished by group and individual practical exercises. A post-event evaluation found it to be extremely well received, with an average rating of 9.4 out of 10.

For more details on this event, visit [www.epr.eu/index.php/activities/professional-development](http://www.epr.eu/index.php/activities/professional-development) and click 'Challenging Behaviour'.



### Benchlearning Groups

#### Benchlearning on outcome measurement in Vocational Rehabilitation

In an effort to help members implement learned lessons and practical knowledge, EPR has launched new training methodologies this year which includes the benchlearning groups.

The objective of this group is to explore hard and soft indicators of vocational rehabilitation outcomes and to analyse the barriers and drivers for using these indicators. Methodological issues related to outcome measurement will be presented, exchanged and tested.

The first meeting of the benchlearning group took place on 22-23 April in Brussels with Jan Albers as a facilitator and Donal McAnaney as expert. The format followed a presentation of the outcome measurement activities in the 10 participants' own organisations, then an introduction to theoretical concepts and concrete European outcome measurement tools used in Vocational Rehabilitation. With a common understanding established, the group could agree on both the concrete outcome that they want to focus on and agree on a common tool developed by CRPG to be piloted in their own organisations. The evaluation score of 9.2/10 reflects a real satisfaction about this first meeting and an enthusiasm for this new generation of professional development activities. The next meeting will take place on 13-14 October in Waterford.

#### Benchlearning on outcome measurement in Medical Rehabilitation

Four EPR centres that offer medical rehabilitation services gathered on 8-10 June at the National Rehabilitation Institute of the Republic of Slovenia to compare their medical rehabilitation practices and to discuss in detail about how they conduct outcome measurement. The overall objectives of this benchlearning group are to explore the best use of outcomes in the field of medical rehabilitation, compare and support the implementation of outcomes measurement and deepen the insight of some of the best practices in the EPR network.

This benchlearning group is a key activity for EPR, since it is the first time the EPR has organised such an activity in the area of medical rehabilitation. The benchlearning will hopefully generate a dynamic of bilateral co-operation between medical rehabilitation departments within the EPR network. With an average satisfaction rate of 8.2, this meeting can be considered as another successful professional development activity. The meeting was facilitated by Jan Albers and Donal McAnaney, and the participants are currently preparing a logical model for comparing their outcome measures which they will share the results of in Maastricht in September.

For more information: [nadege.jibassia@epr.eu](mailto:nadege.jibassia@epr.eu)



## EPR Annual Conference 2009



Preparations for EPR's Annual Conference 2009 are well under way. Hosted by and co-organised with National Learning Network, Ireland (NLN), the Annual Conference is to be held in the historic city of Waterford, Ireland. The venue

chosen is the Tower Hotel, located in the heart of the city and overlooking the marina.

Registration has begun, and Centre Coordinators are responsible for returning forms to the secretariat by 15 September. These are downloadable from the EPR website, along with the draft programme and practical information including travel, accommodation and contact details.

The EPR secretariat, in cooperation with NLN, continues to work on the preparation of the programme and various additional activities. The next update will be communicated to all Centre Coordinators in September 2009.



*The waterfront, Waterford City at night time*

Visit [www.epr.eu/index.php/about-epr/annual-conference](http://www.epr.eu/index.php/about-epr/annual-conference)

## Knowledge Management Centre

### Josefsheim Bigge wins Innovation Prize

One year ago, EPR launched the Innovation Prize, which aims to stimulate the development of innovation and the dissemination of best practice within the network. The contest was open to all professionals working in the member organisations, who were encouraged, between 19 September 2008 to 31 March 2009, insert a description of a good practice in the on-line Knowledge Management Centre (KMC) which the EPR is operating.

In May 2009 the templates inserted during the contest period were evaluated and scored by the EPR Centre Coordinators. As a result, the template "Getting old together in Olsberg", inserted by Martin Künemund, project manager in Josefsheim Bigge, has received the highest score in the contest. Therefore, EPR is pleased to announce Josefsheim Bigge is the winner of this contest.

The winner will present the selected best practice in a plenary session at the EPR Annual Conference 2009 in Waterford (Ireland) and will receive a voucher of 1.000€ which can be used to cover the travel costs of participation in EPR activities.

### New articles summary



**Recent additions to the KMC include:**

**Heliomare's** (The Netherlands) special initiative, the 'Vitality Centre': a preventative intervention to encourage the health of citizens in cooperation with trade and industry, insurance companies, and re-integration enterprises. This has also been reported extensively by the Dutch SER (Social Economic Council).

**CRPG** (Portugal) Neuropsychological Rehabilitation - an innovative programme researching into the rehabilitation of people with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) towards work/vocational training.

For more information on the KMC, and for member's log-in, visit:

<http://www.epr.eu/index.php/activities/knowledge-management-centre>

## Projects



### Common Quality Framework for Social Services

The CEN Workshop 51 - Common Quality Framework for Social Services - is the initial stage of the Prometheus project and will run until September 2009. The second meeting was organised at the CEN premises on 27 April 2009 in Brussels.

The main goal of this meeting was to review and identify proposed amendments on / contributions to the Second Draft of Common Quality Framework (CQF) document. The 21 participants had a chance to discuss these contributions in smaller working groups.



All the suggestions and conclusions were incorporated into the document. The Third Draft of CQF is now available for comments and will be published on the CEN website for public consultation starting at the beginning of July.

The final meeting of the CEN workshop will be on 7 September 2009 in Brussels followed by the Project partners' meeting on 8 September 2009. The proposed CEN Workshop Agreement (CWA) will be published for public consultation on the website of the CEN ([www.cen.eu](http://www.cen.eu)). For more information visit: <http://prometheus.epr.eu>

### ÆGIS first pan-European User Forum and Workshop



**Open Accessibility Everywhere**

Groundwork, Infrastructure, Standards

On 4 and 5 June 2009, EPR, in cooperation with Research In Motion Ltd, UK, organised the first Pan-European ÆGIS User Forum and Workshop in Slough,

The Workshop (5 June) presented the preliminary findings of the project, the related 'Use Cases' and an overview of the preliminary user requirements. Throughout the Workshop, participants (both end-users and developers) from over 20 countries provided feedback, which will now be considered by the project to further enhance the project outputs.

For more information: [www.aegis-project.eu](http://www.aegis-project.eu) or [simona.giarratano@epr.eu](mailto:simona.giarratano@epr.eu)

UK. The events, organised in the context of the ÆGIS project, aimed to generate fruitful discussions between both end-users and application developers. The events gathered over 100 European and Asian user representatives and organisations, EC representatives and technology developers. It provided a unique opportunity for all involved to meet and exchange ideas and expertise.

The User Forum (4 June) allowed the ÆGIS consortium to better understand and assess the user needs regarding accessible desktop, mobile and internet applications through an interactive discussion with the participating stakeholders.



*Dr. Evangelos Bekiaris (CERTH-HIT), leader of the project, talking to Mojca Jenco, researcher of Institute for Rehabilitation of the Republic of Slovenia, EPR member*



*Karel Van Isacker, representing EPR as Dissemination Manager, presenting during the workshop the first feedback as collected from the user forum.*

## EQUASS in Practice 2nd seminar

The second meeting of project partners for the “EQUASS in Practice” project took place on 22-23 June in Porto.

All project partners presented market analyses of their countries which put forward possible marketing of EQUASS Assurance certification to VET (Vocational Education and Training) service providers. Further discussions revolved around individual implementation strategies in each country. The project partners had a chance to exchange their ideas and suggestions and learn from each other's experience.

The participants also focused on the EQUASS implementation manual, which should be one of the outcomes of the project.

The next meeting will take place in Ljubljana on 2-3 November 2009. For more information please visit: <http://equassinpractice.epr.eu> and <http://www.equass.no/> (in Norwegian).

### What is Equass in Practice?

This project aims to develop and share best practice for how VET (Vocational Education and Training) service providers may work to implement the EQUASS Assurance certification programme, with the aim of improving quality of their services and achieving sustainable working practice and routines.

## Vocational Integration in Romania update

The VIP project, which started in November 2008, aims to integrate people with disabilities into the labour market through vocational assessment and rehabilitation services. The EPR secretariat, along with National Learning Network, the Rehab Enterprises and Pluryn, are responsible for providing international expertise to design new tools and methods of vocational assessment, vocational training, sheltered employment and supported employment.

The EPR team of experts is now working on the first phase of the project which consists of evaluating the Romanian legislation and services in relation to Vocational Integration. On 25-26 June, they gathered to reflect on the methodology of evaluation and future training as well as on the preparation of their joint mission to Romania in September.

Donal McAnaney and Ron Reeuwijk, in charge of developing the vocational assessment tools, facilitated the meeting and shared with the other experts the knowledge acquired during their first two missions in Romania in May and June. The meeting was very intense and productive, and promised great opportunities for the future steps of the project.

For more information: [nadege.jibassia@epr.eu](mailto:nadege.jibassia@epr.eu)



**EQUABENCH** Josefsheim Bigge hosted the latest EQUABENCH workshop on People Development and Involvement in Olsberg, Germany. The workshop took place on 28-29 May 2009 and was attended not only by all the project partners but also a number of local stakeholders. Presentations from partners concentrated on human resources development and people management. During a case clink exercise, participants had a chance to exchange their ideas about practical implementation of improvement ideas.

All the presentations from this and the previous workshops are available on the project website (see below). There you will also be able to find a downloadable version of the project leaflet.

The first Innovative Practice Guide focusing on Leadership and Constancy of Purpose is also now available on the project's website. The second guide on People Development and Involvement is now being finalised. Other Guides in the series include:

- Customer Focus
- Results Orientation
- Continuous Learning, Innovation and Improvement

Finally, the next workshop on Customer Focus will take place on 24-25 September 2009 at Pluryn in the Netherlands. For more information on all the above, visit: <http://equabench.epr.eu>



## Public Affairs

### Social and health services in an open market – Discussing modernisation in France



The 37th national day of the ADC (Association de Directeurs, Cadres de direction et certifiés de l'E.H.E.S.P.) on education and training took place in Nîmes (France), 26-28 May. The theme was *Le secteur social et médico-social à l'épreuve de la pensée*

*libérale* (The way the social and health sector face liberalism).

On the 27 May, Simona Giarratano, EPR Public Affairs Officer, participated in a round table discussion on the European perspective and the changes occurring in the social sector. She gave a presentation on how to face liberal policies following the pathways developed by EPR in its Charter on Modernisation of disability-related Health and Social Services.

The Conference represented a great opportunity to promote EPR and its initiatives, including EQUASS, and to confirm once again that national and European priorities in the sector are becoming more and more compliant.

For more information:  
[simona.giarratano@epr.eu](mailto:simona.giarratano@epr.eu)

### International Conference on the 'Situation of Disabled persons in Europe: Changes and Solutions'

Vilnius, Lithuania, 7 May, was the scene of the international conference on the 'Situation of Disabled people in Europe: changes and Solutions'.

The event was part of a set of conferences organised in the context of a European project: "SYNTHESIS – Health and Social Services integration for the most

vulnerable groups" lead by the Romanian Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunity.

EPR, represented by Simona Giarratano, was called to provide the viewpoint of the services providers, giving a sector specific overview of the socio-economic challenges at EU level and making propositions on how to tackle them.

Representatives of public authorities, as well as users' organisations, attended the conference, discussing the problems of a modern society and providing samples of good practices in different European countries, including Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, and Spain.

For more information:  
[simona.giarratano@epr.eu](mailto:simona.giarratano@epr.eu)



### Services Providers meet the European Commission

On 11 May, the eight organisations of the informal network of social and health services providers, including EPR, met with Concetta Cultrera, Head of Sector - Social services of general interest, of DG Employment Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the European Commission.

The participants highlighted the specific nature of social services, the right-based approach of the providers in this sector and the importance of ensuring that high-level quality of services is not overcome by quantitative outputs and low prices.

Ms Cultrera recognised the importance of social services not only for disadvantaged people but for everyone and welcomed data and facts that could help the Commission improving existent legislation and procedures.

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## Two major events attended by EPR, 10-12 June, Thessaloniki, Greece

### Bringing people with disabilities into the labour market

On 10, 11 and 12 June, Simona Giarratano participated in the international conference on 'Bringing people with disabilities in to the labour market'. The conference was organised by EASPD (European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities).

Art. 27 (on work and employment) of the UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities (UNCRPD) was one of the main issues discussed from the point of view of different stakeholders.



*Barbara Murray, International Labour Organisation of the United Nations, asking a question about the implementation of the UNCRPD at national level*

The users were represented by the president of the European Disability Forum, Mr Yannis Vardakastanis. The International Labour Organisation, agency of the United Nation, was also there in the person of Barbara Murray, who explained the relevance of the UNCRPD as the guiding framework for most policy actions in the disability field both at International and National Level.

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## CEDEFOP conference on Matching Skills and Jobs



*Delegates, including Mr Gerd Oskar Bausewein, Head of Communication and Information, during the dinner on the terrace of the Cedefop building*



On 11 and 12 of June, Cedefop organised, with the cooperation of the European Commission, the Agora conference 'Matching skills and jobs: anticipating needs in challenging times'. The participants discussed, both in plenary sessions and parallel workshops, about the supply of skills for the EU labour market in the next ten years. The ultimate aim of the conference was to debate how best to

identify skill mismatches, how to achieve the most appropriate partnerships between education and the labour market, and generally to draw attention to the implications of the forecasting exercises for policy-making in several related social fields.

For more information:  
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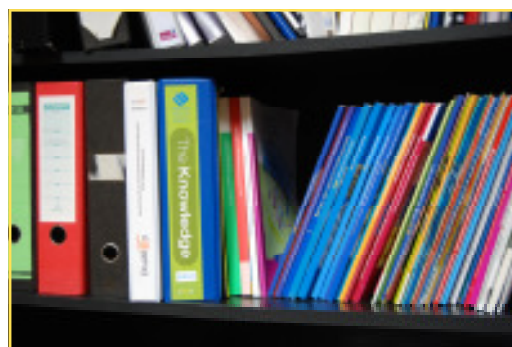
### EQUASS Assurance newly qualified organisations

Four new organisations have been awarded the EQUASS Assurance certification. They received their awards during AVRE's annual conference.

- **Fønix Kompetansenett AS** (Norway)
- **Nopro AS** (Norway)
- **Ankerløkken AS** (Norway)
- **Industri Lambertseter** (Norway)
- **Jæren Industripartner** (Norway)



*Representatives of the newly certified organisations at AVRE's annual conference*



### EQUASS Excellence Auditor training

On 8 and 9 June 2009, EQUASS organised an Auditor training for EQUASS Excellence. Participants from Portugal, Sweden, Norway and Ireland were trained in the method of scoring and auditing organisations on EQUASS Excellence criteria. They calibrated their individual performance and their results through a case study.

For more information on EQUASS training programmes, visit <http://www.epr.eu/index.php/equass/training>

### EQUASS upcoming events

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>6 July 2009:</b>       | Induction seminar for the Portuguese Association for Quality (APQ), Lisbon (Portugal) |
| <b>7 July 2009:</b>       | Information seminar for Portuguese stakeholders, Lisbon (Portugal)                    |
| <b>7 September 2009:</b>  | Prometheus - final meeting of the CEN Workshop 51, Brussels (Belgium)                 |
| <b>8 September 2009:</b>  | Prometheus - project partners' meeting, Brussels (Belgium)                            |
| <b>17 September 2009:</b> | EQUASS Awarding Committee meeting, Brussels (Belgium)                                 |
| <b>2-3 November 2009:</b> | EQUASS in Practice - project meeting, Ljubljana (Slovenia)                            |
| <b>2 December 2009:</b>   | EQUASS Awarding Committee, Brussels (Belgium)   |

## EQUASS In-house Training Sessions

EQUASS in-house training sessions have been offered to EPR members in the framework of their Centre Action Plans (CAP):

### 15 May 2009 for Luovi (Finland)

18 managers learned about the core characteristics of the EQUASS approach and the differences with other Quality Measurement approaches. Luovi has now started to carry out a self-evaluation on current performance against the EQUASS criteria for EQUASS Assurance.

### 25 May 2009 for the JG Gruppe (Germany)

28 participants, both directors and quality managers, were informed about and trained in how to prepare an EQUASS application. This involves carrying out the EQUASS self-evaluation and writing a self-evaluation report as the input required for external auditing.

The evaluation conducted after these training sessions showed that both seminars were highly appreciated.

For more information: [equass@equass.be](mailto:equass@equass.be)

## EQUASS Local License Holder support totals four organisations

EQUASS has a total of four local license holders in four different countries. Local license holders play a key role in the EQUASS Assurance process, including marketing of all EQUASS products, operating EQUASS assurance applications, and facilitating local stakeholder committees.



Portuguese Association for Quality (APQ), a membership based non-profit organisation. With around 2200 members, it is recognised as the leading non-governmental institution on the Portuguese quality movement.



The Association of Vocational Rehabilitation Enterprises (AVRE) is an employer and interest organisation for approximately 110 not-for-profit organisations spread across Norway. These provide support to more than 35,000 disadvantaged persons annually.



Excellence Ireland Quality Association (EIQA), the leading professional association for the advancement of quality practices and business improvement in Ireland and Internationally.



The Quality Secretariat operates in Denmark in the social area, and is developing – among other things – different Accreditation Standards for specific social areas. It is a unit of Foundation for Quality Development, knowledge and documentation, established by the associated EPR member LOS in 2008.

For more details, visit [www.epr.eu/index.php/](http://www.epr.eu/index.php/) and click 'Local License Holders'. Alternatively, email [jana.kukuckova@epr.eu](mailto:jana.kukuckova@epr.eu)

## News from the Secretariat

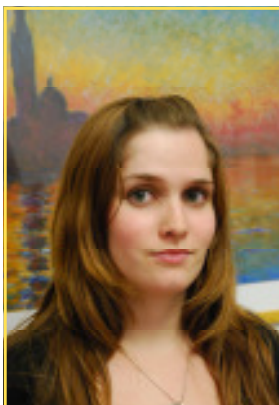
### Secretariat recruits to expand its capacity

The EPR secretariat has recruited two new interns, as of June 2009. Julie Buttier and Ben Holbourn will be employed for six months to help with specific expanding fields in the work of EPR.

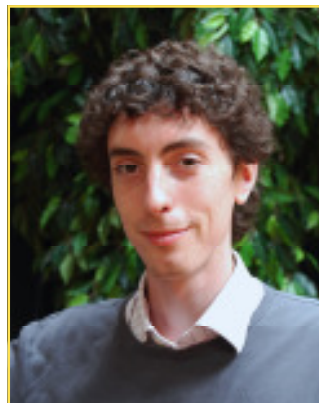
Julie will support the overall coordination of the EQUASS unit by maintaining the website, organising EQUASS events, communication with applicants and auditors and maintaining internal database of contacts. She is also responsible for EQUASS related PR materials, and she provides various types of support in the implementation of projects.

Ben will support the Public Affairs Officer with communications activities, including events, communications strategy, website maintenance, and internal contact with members.

This development was a useful opportunity for secretariat staff to lead a full induction of the work of EPR for the first time. This took the form of presentations from each member of staff about their specific areas of work. The session was much appreciated by new and older staff alike as a chance to refresh as well as to learn anew.



Julie Buttier -  
EQUASS intern  
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Ben Holbourn -  
Communications intern  
[intern@epr.eu](mailto:intern@epr.eu)





## European Platform for Rehabilitation



The European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR) is a network of leading European providers of rehabilitation services to people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups. EPR's member organisations are influential in their countries and stand for high quality service delivery in the fields of vocational education and training, reintegration, medical rehabilitation and social care.

EPR assists its member organisations in achieving continuous professional improvement, best practice and competitiveness in every aspect of service delivery. Through its Public Affairs activities, EPR enables service providers to contribute to the formulation of European social policy, and facilitates access to EU funding.

Recognised as an important player on the European scene, the network receives structural funding under EU's Lifelong Learning Programme. EPR has a seat on EU's High Level Group on Disability and has participatory status with the Council of Europe. EPR cooperates actively with all key sectoral stakeholders.

EPR on the web!

For regularly updated  
information on EPR and its  
activities, please visit our  
website:

[www.epr.eu](http://www.epr.eu)

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## EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR REHABILITATION

*The network of leading service providers to people with disabilities*

The EPR newsletter is issued three times a year.

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