

epr newsletter

December 2007

FULL MEMBERS



ASSOCIATE MEMBERS



Editorial

Dear EPR members,

Although I suppose all of you these days are longing for a nice and quiet holiday period, there are many reasons to already look forward to the beginning of a new year of EPR activities. After a period of consolidating the changes and innovations within EPR, I have the feeling that all elements are in place to take in 2008 another step forwards in the development of our network.

Probably the most significant development is the increase of our **membership** numbers, and in particular the number of full members. In less than one year time, we grew from 9 full members to 15 full members, and it is most likely one or two more organisations will join in the coming months.

Continues on the next page..



*Delegates at the EQUAVET Conference met to gain new insight the European approach to Quality of disability-related Social Services
(22 – 23 November 2007, Verona, Italy)*

Inside

Editorial – page 1; **Upcoming EPR events & meetings** – 2; **News from the members** – 3; **Member in focus** – 6; **Centre Coordinators meeting** – 8; **EQUIP** – 9; **Projects** – 10; **Public Affairs** – 11; **Professional Development** – 11; **EPR website** – 12.

This **growth** not only strengthens the representativeness of the network, it also opens a new window of opportunities in terms of access to high-level and diversified expertise and a more dynamic participation in the various activities. In this way, both the network and the members will benefit from the enlarged membership which allows the EPR to engage in new ground-breaking activities.

Starting from the main EPR objective to provide services to its members, new organisations entering the network represent a large responsibility which obviously reflects on the Annual Work Plan 2008. Therefore, the focus shifts slightly from external projects to the **Centre Action Plans** (CAPs). In this context, the optimisation of internal communication is also defined as a priority. More members in combination with the setting up of sophisticated and innovative activities call for a new governance model which will be explored in the coming year. Finally, the Board of Directors decided to reinforce the EPR secretariat in 2008 with additional staff and more office space.

2008 will also be a major for the EPR activities in the field of Quality, which are now integrated and streamlined within the European Quality Initiative for Personal Services of General Interest (**EQUIP**). Certification (EQRM / EQUASS), training and consultancy activities are organised as a separate unit with its own Business Plan 2008-2010. With quality of social services on the top of the European Social Agenda, the Board of Directors decided to use this momentum and speed up the dissemination of EQRM/EQUASS via a professionalisation and decentralisation of the approach, and an injection of additional resources during 2008.

Finally, 2008 is also a year of **new leadership** in EPR. As from 1 January, Jeronimo de Sousa (CRPG) and Eric Demandt (PWG) become respectively the President and Vice-President of our network. They will be accompanied in the Executive Committee by Stefano Schena (ODC) and Frank Flannery (National Learning Network). I would like to use this opportunity to express on behalf of all EPR members and the secretariat a great thanks to Stefano Schena for his tremendous efforts and great success in moving the EPR forward under his Presidency over the last four years.

As a final comment from my side, I would like to say that a European network which is clear about its strategy and able to arrange the succession of leadership in a smooth way, can look with confidence towards the future. On behalf of the entire staff of the EPR secretariat, I would like to wish you all a nice and peaceful holiday period, and we are very much looking forward to working again with you in the coming year.

Jan Spooren
General Secretary



EPR events & meetings* **January – December 2008**

January

- CAP centre visits in SRL, Heliomare, PWG, Fretex, ODC, Astvedt
- Executive Committee meeting, *31 January, Brussels*
- EQUIP Management Committee meeting, *31 January, Brussels*

February

- Board of Directors meeting, *13 February, Brussels*
- Training Seminar Ageing Workforce & Disability, *14 February, Brussels*
- CAP centre visit in CRM

April

- Executive Committee meeting, *22 April, Brussels*
- EQUIP Management Committee meeting, *22 April, Brussels*
- Centre Coordinators Meeting, *Brussels (exact date tbc)*

May

- Strategic Workshop for Directors (possibly including a Board of Directors meeting), *29-30 May, Malta*

August

- Executive Committee meeting, *28 August, Arendal*

September

- Board of Directors meeting, *17 September, Maastricht*
- EPR Annual Conference, *18-19 September, Maastricht*

October

- Centre Coordinators Meeting, *Brussels (exact date tbc)*

November

- Training Seminar "Reintegrate project", *11-12 November, Porto (tbc)*
- Executive Committee meeting, *18 November, Brussels*
- EQUIP Management Committee meeting, *18 November, Brussels*

October – November

- In-house Needs Assessment in all full members

December

- Board of Directors meeting, *Brussels, (exact date tbc)*
- Public Affairs Event & EQUIP Awarding Event, *Brussels, (exact date tbc)*

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

News from the members

National Rehabilitation Conference in Norway



On 16-18 January 2008 AVRE will organise a National Conference in Oslo. The main goal of the Conference is to get input to our association from our national politicians and the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation (NAV), and to give the opportunity to our enterprises to showcase their commitment to diversity within this sector. Durapart is going to participate in the programme with two different presentations on the following topics: (1) **Quality**: Our Quality Manager Karl Wiggo Jensen is going to talk about "Indicators, benchmarking and bench learning – a tool for the future?" (2) Rehabilitation project called **"PIA"** (Patient In Activity – Person at work): The Manager of our Rehab department Harry Svendsen is going to present a service he and his staff have been developing since 2004. This service is on the borderline between medical rehab and vocational rehab and has been appreciated by our service users, NAV and national politicians.

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The Eden Foundation celebrates Down Syndrome Awareness Week 2007: Down syndrome Awareness Week 2007 was celebrated by The Parent and Child Educational Services within the Eden Foundation, between 4 and 10 November 2007. PACES, the name of our programme that seeks to meet the needs of persons with Down syndrome organised this week of activities. The aim was to raise awareness of the condition and to showcase the abilities and skills of people with Down syndrome.

A variety of events were organised throughout the week, all with the aim of enhancing this knowledge and educating people about Down syndrome. Besides being recreational some of the activities also aimed at bringing together a group of people who share the common experience of living with a person with Down syndrome. Some of these events included a Family Fun Day, a visit to his Excellency the Archbishop of Malta as well as others.

The Eden Foundation Community Technology Learn Centre that was opened in September 2005 continues to be popular both with our own trainees as well as with the community at large. The centre focuses on specific training for clients of the Eden Foundation but the same services are also available to all members of the community and the general public. The Centre offers free access to Internet & Wi-Fi, Training (diverse courses spanning from Basic Computer Literacy to advanced Business Related Workshops, and E. Government Services. The Centre has total accessibility for people with special needs. These are some topics that we can share in the space allotted. We wish all EPR coordinators good wishes and sterling work in their organisations on behalf of persons who count on our professional commitment.

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Report 2006 on Health status and quality of the health assistance in the Italian Regions: on 30 November 2007 at ODC don Calabria Centre in Verona the "*Osservasalute 2006 Report on Health status and quality of the health assistance in the Italian regions*" was official presented to Regional and key stakeholders. The Report is the main outcome of the National Observatory on Health Status in the Italian Regions and it adopts a comparative methodology analysis and indicators validated at international level, with two main perspectives: first to give continuity to the

initiative, developing comparison during the time and with other surveys concerning topic of interest; second to adopt a European approach to build a benchmarking activity for the health status and health care assistance in the European regions.

The ODC "Gym" toward the autonomy: The "*Autonomy & Community project for an independent life*" was officially launched on 3 December 2007 with the opening of the new home for independent living. The ODC pilot project, which has been also defined as a "gym" toward autonomy, will give to five people with physical disabilities the opportunity to test their skill and abilities, to train themselves and their limits in the path to an independent life in the community.

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Take your pencils and paintbrushes ... Rehabilitation: painting as a therapy

For a few months, the painter Michele Ackerer has been leading a Workshop of artistic practice with dominant painting for a group of trainees in the Centre of Rehabilitation in Mulhouse.

A revealing playful imagination

Laurence mixes some grey in the blue according to her mood. "There are depressed days ... I always painted, the abstract art is more difficult, but what I like is to learn to work together, to constantly improve in contact with others."

As for Michele, who considers that "artistic practice, by the creativity which it awakens and the value which it brings, leads to a new mode of relation to the world for the participants." She reminds us that the fresco patchwork created by 71 trainees and staff for the 60th anniversary of the Centre and exhibited in the hall was a catalyst. The majority of the participants found one moment of escape, forgetting their often difficult everyday life through the act of creation. In this art opening, Adeline Montangé, a psychologist, observed: "the situation where we see the trainees expressing themselves in a playful imagination and the person in front of herself evolving in a group, it is revealing the personality of each."



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Successful Conclusion of International Project DLAN/PALM in Slovenia



An international symposium entitled, ***Traditional handicrafts: Chances and prospects for invalids and trainers***, was organized in September 2007 in Maribor, Slovenia, as the conclusion of the DLAN/PALM project, a Leonardo da Vinci programme. All 4 project partners demonstrated their work, including two in the field of vocational rehabilitation (Institute for Rehabilitation of Republic of Slovenia, also coordinator of the project, and Josefsheim Bigge from Germany), the environmental organisation Bluewaters from Austria and the educational organisation KRKK from Hungary.

The project presented the need for development of appropriate work and educational programmes for people with disabilities, who have limited opportunities on regular labour market. These programmes would equip them with adequate knowledge and skills that under professional supervision and support would strengthen their possibilities for vocational and social inclusion. The project was aimed to develop educational programmes and practical skills trainings in the field of traditional craft and preservation as well as revival of natural and cultural heritage. Over a period of two years we developed 10 different programmes in various fields for training of people with disabilities and their trainers. The programmes were designed in modules, therefore they offered individual application regarding needs and existing knowledge and skills of participants. Each educational programme was complemented by a manual in printed and DVD format, in which the methodology and didactical directions as well as practical examples lead the performers and participants of the training through the whole process.



The contents of the symposium attracted participants from different fields – rehabilitation centers, organisations for people with disabilities, educational institutions, the Employment Centre, the Chamber of Crafts, employers, as well as representatives from the local and national government. The symposium was extensively covered by the Slovene printed media as well as radio and TV stations. After the presentation of results of a very successful and fruitful cooperation, the project partners invited participants of the symposium to discuss possibilities and opportunities that field of traditional crafts offer to people with disabilities. During the symposium the project partners put on an exhibition, which presented project results – manuals for trainers and participants of programmes as well as traditional crafts products produced during duration of the programme. The exhibition was widely appreciated. In cooperation with representatives from different institutions we established basis for further development and certification of programmes.

After a successful symposium and positive evaluation of the project we will now present and offer the educational programmes and manuals to other interested organisations.

Contact: jasna.bozic@ir-rs.si ; Project website: http://www.dlan-palm.si/index_en.html



Due to a demographic change in Germany and for people with disabilities who would like more individual support, Josefsheim Bigge will change its offers and services in the future. That is the

main result of a **Conference at Josefsheim in mid-November 2007**. The growing demand of service users for ambulant assistance is already evident today. Increasing life expectancy will add to people's request in the coming decades. The impact on centres like Josefsheim is massive. In addition to professional skills, the staff of the future will need social competence as well as flexibility much more than today.

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BIG Lottery Fund for Momentum

The work put in by Momentum staff to secure the Big Lottery Fund has finally paid off - in a BIG way! Momentum's Brain Injury services have been awarded £500,000 over a four year period. This money will go a long way towards helping to develop the services which have made a huge difference to brain injury clients like Philip Hume, who suffered a massive brain haemorrhage.

Momentum pioneered the UK's first specialist service to help people with traumatic brain injury return to work in 1993. Now more than 80 per cent of our brain injury clients who have undertaken a vocational rehabilitation programme are supported into employment or further education and training each year.



We also offer community integration programmes to help people to take the first steps towards living independently following a brain injury.

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The Symposium on Persons with Disabilities took place in Northern Greece in the city of Giannena from 5 to 7 December 2007. The key speaker was Dr. Andrew McDonnell, clinical Psychologist and Consultant on issues of challenging behaviour. The Director of Theotokos Foundation presented on the topic of "Supported Employment and Success within Greece". The Symposium was a great success for staff in small neglected services in this part of the country.

In an upcoming meeting at the **Specialised Centre of Professional Learning** Ms. Katsouda Ekaterini will present also on "Supported Employment."

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Member in focus

In this edition of the Newsletter EPR brings you an interview with Thomas Hänsgen, Chairman of tjfbv in Germany – a centre, strongly focused on training and education of people with disabilities via intensive the use of innovative ICT tools and techniques



Thomas, tell us a bit about your organisation and your own role?

I am the Managing Chairman of the **Technischer Jugendfreizeit- und Bildungsverein (tjfbv) e.V.** which I founded in 1991. tjfbv has dedicated itself to the goal of combining scientific-technical contents and socio-educational opportunities. The Organisation is recognised as a sponsor of the Freie Jugendhilfe in the Federal State of Berlin. Children, young people and multipliers in various locations within the capital can participate in scientific-technically oriented projects. Under my direction – among others – the projects "JugendTechnikSchule", "Jobwerkstatt Mädchen", "KONzepte der TEchnikarbeit in der PraXIS – KON TE XIS" and "barrierefrei kommunizieren!" were started.

The project with which we have become a member of the EPR is **Barrierefrei kommunizieren!** Barrierefrei kommunizieren! (barrier-free communication!), a nationwide expertise and reference centre, is a centre for information, advice, training, communication and administration, with locations in Berlin and Bonn. From its locations, it directs its attention all across Germany to disabled people, the politically responsible, communities, businesses, employers, representatives of sponsoring organisations, multipliers and programmers as well as facilities that work with or for disabled people. Disabled people, their family members as well as professional people should learn to overcome their reservation about the computer and should be encouraged to become aware of the opportunities offered by the computer and internet usage. An interdisciplinary team of rehabilitation and social pedagogues, IT and media specialists as well as medical professionals meet these high challenges.

Some fields of our work include: Assistive technologies for computers and the internet; Supportive planning, accompaniment and service; Accessible internet and international cooperation and Training centre, schooling centre and convention centre. Barrierefrei kommunizieren! has many aspects. In general, it is about the overcoming of communication barriers and, thus, the possibility of communication for virtually all people.

Barrier- free communication" is the motto of tjfbv e.V. (Barrierefrei kommunizieren!) but how far is this a reality today?

There are increasing possibilities for a real barrier-free communication but, unfortunately, these possibilities are not known well enough. Today over 40 million people with disabilities live in Europe. Nowadays, exposure to computers is a necessary component of everyday life. For example shopping, online banking, online learning, communication with e-mail, chat, newsgroups, online job offers, etc are only some of the increasing possibilities of the internet. It is for example quite difficult for a disabled person to find the optimal assistive technology. This is the reason why we created our two centres for accessible technology in Berlin and Bonn. Here everybody can come, receive counselling and find the right assistive technology.

What can be done to improve access to ICT for disadvantaged groups?

Conditions must be created, preferably from the very beginning, whereby people with difficulties of all kinds – seeing, hearing (deaf and hard-of-hearing), neuro-muscular and learning – can have the same access to computers and the internet as people without disabilities. For example, there should be a regulation for all websites to be accessible. In Germany, such a regulation exists only for governmental websites. There should be regulations for the design of digital media, binding for all European institutions and the institutions of the EU Member States.

Which was the last EPR event you attended and what were your impressions?

In May 2007 I participated in the General Seminar and side meetings of the EPR in Mulhouse, France, organised on the theme of promoting European cooperation in the field of the rehabilitation. Our goal is to establish a partnership with the responsible bodies and service organisations within the network of the EPR in order to support our efforts.

Do you cooperate with any EPR members on a bilateral basis?

At present, we are intensely discussing together with other members of the EPR the start of a European project. In this project, disabled young people and multipliers are to test and use the barrier-free eLearning platform developed by barrierefrei kommunizieren! in several European countries. The platform and the course are to be translated into the languages of the participating partners. Furthermore, it is intended to train multipliers to teach Blended Learning and to offer training for young people. The goal is, on the one hand, to provide people with disabilities with the opportunity to reach the same qualifications as people with no disabilities. On the other hand, learning contents are to be adjusted to the country-specific education requirements. Thus, also other young people in Europe with a disability are to be enabled to use them.

This summer, you visited the EPR Secretariat in Brussels. What was the aim of the visit and how do you think EPR can be of help in the realisation of your goals?

We are very much interested in establishing a network with other European EPR members who work with people with disabilities. A further goal is the cooperation and the development of European projects which deal with the topic of barrier-free communication such as the development of assistive technologies, barrier-free learning or barrier-free design of digital media.

What is the general situation of people with disabilities in Germany today? And of the rehabilitation/service sector?

With the Ninth Book of the German Social Code, SGB IX, and the Equal Opportunities Act for disabled persons, BGG, a fundamental process of re-thinking in the politics for people with disabilities has been started in Germany during the last years. Barrier-free access to all areas of life for the approximately 8.6 million people with disabilities or even severe disabilities in Germany. This is the key element of the Federal Government's Equal Opportunities Act for disabled persons (BGG) which has been providing the legal basis for the equal participation of the disabled since May 2002. People with disabilities should cope with their everyday life as independently as possible and preferably without the help of others. The legal and statutory fundamentals have been created in the past years in cooperation with the disabled and their interest groups. 5 years after the law's coming into effect, many requirements have already been implemented. Let me mention some other developments:

1. Personal budget: with the personal budget, the people with handicap obtain the extended option to receive their participation benefits as pay-outs. Thus, they can choose for themselves which kind of support they would like to receive and from whom. **2. Accessibility of public buildings:** new buildings of the public authorities have to be built in a barrier-free manner and already existing buildings have to be refitted with barrier-free entrances in the course of re-structuring. **3. Barrier-free internet services:** in public invitations to tender, it is more often required, that the service has to be barrier-free. In addition, the websites of public facilities such as the German Ministries are being increasingly designed according to barrier-free requirements.

However, legal measures alone are not sufficient in order to integrate people with disabilities. There is still the need for concrete measures – above all in the field of vocational rehabilitation. The unemployment rate of people with disabilities has not decreased – in spite of the generally falling unemployment in Germany. People with disabilities need – among other things – a service of mediation which should be individually adjusted to their requirements. One important issue in this context is the assistance in accessing and using the computer and the internet, for example, to be able to write an online application.

Computer and internet usage are gaining more importance in the present time. Thus, there are many new job opportunities emerging for people with disabilities. Especially people whose mobility is limited can take advantage of online shopping, working from home via the internet and informing themselves about job offers through the web. In order to improve and foster the professional integration of people with disabilities, it is necessary to enhance the legal fundamentals. One example for that is the obsolete regulation BITV which is to be adjusted to the new developments such as Web 2.0 applications. Moreover, framework conditions have to be created to ensure that people with disabilities have the same opportunities of an advanced vocational training. Further education programmes, for instance, should principally be barrier-free.

Barrierefrei kommunizieren! supports exactly this process through various services. Under the guidance of skilled consultants, the people concerned can choose from over 250 supporting technological applications, find out which ones are the most suitable for them and learn how to use them. Job-relevant skills are then conveyed in disability-adequate training courses. For this purpose, a barrier-free eLearning platform is placed at the disposal. Furthermore, barrierefrei kommunizieren! sensitises and gives advice on the topic "Barrier-free Websites".

For further information on the Technischer Jugendfreizeit-und Bildungsverein (tjfbv) e.V. please visit www.tjfbv.de or contact Thomas Hänsen at th.haensgen@tjfbv.de

Centre Coordinators meeting

The second meeting in 2008 of the EPR Coordinators took place on 26 October 2007. The agenda was composed of three different parts, which are outlined below. The formal meeting was preceded by a social event during which the participants spent the evening preparing their own food and tasting different wines.

1. Preparation of the EPR Annual Conference 2008

The theme of next year's Conference, which will be hosted by SRL in Maastricht, the Netherlands, on 18 and 19 September, will be "Outcome measurement." In working groups, the coordinators made several suggestions for the content of the Conference programme. On this basis, a Draft Programme will be created by EPR and SRL in the coming weeks. This first draft will be sent to all EPR members for their feedback and additional input. The Annual Conference will be revisited again at the first meeting of the Centre Coordinators, in April 2008. All practical details of the conference should also be available by then.

2. Members forum

This forum again offered the Coordinators the opportunity to talk on a bilateral basis about a topic of their choice. Hopefully the discussions will lead to concrete initiatives at a later stage. In addition, EPR believes that this type of forum enables experts to participate much more actively in a meeting, leading to more outputs and satisfaction on an individual level.

3. Training Session on Communication Strategies

Communication has a major impact on the success and effectiveness of an international network. In this respect, the main focus of this Coordinators meeting was on the *Communication Strategies within EPR*. As EPR members and the EPR Secretariat invest a lot of time in communicating with each other, the aim of the Session was twofold: (1) To reflect upon the practices and instruments within the network and to generate ideas for improved communication and (2) To gain an understanding of what constitutes effective communication and to familiarise the participants with some key principles and tips

The EPR Secretariat contracted *GELLIS* - an independent communications company - to prepare and facilitate the session. The approach proposed by *GELLIS* was based on the active involvement of EPR Centre Coordinators.

It was confirmed that EPR is a growing organisation which needs to rationalise its communication patterns to reflect its evolution. No major risks/problems concerning the communications within EPR were identified and in general the available tools and practices are being used in the right circumstances. EPR members feel enthusiastic about their participation in the network, a positive internal dynamics and a "spirit of camaraderie" exist. Nevertheless, better partnership facilitation and the creation of a culture of engagement should be continuously stimulated. Three additional issues must be addressed as a matter of priority: prioritising and structuring the large volume of information; collecting feedback from coordinators; and exploiting the full potential of the website

GELLIS presented the main findings from the groups and the recommendations with the assistance of a matrix describing the different communication instruments used by EPR and their levels of urgency and confidentiality. EPR will now use the results of the work done to streamline and improve the way it communicates both internally and externally.



One-on-one – the best way to get to know each other



The EPR spirit alive – producing and learning together



Work in smaller groups is always more productive



High Level Group refers to EQRM & EQUASS in position paper on Quality of Social Services

In recent weeks, the EU Disability High Level Group (DHLG) made a significant contribution to the debate on Quality. The DHLG approved a position paper providing guidance and inspiration on how to promote quality social services addressing the particular needs of people with disabilities. The DHLG basically consists of senior officials from each Member State plus several NGOs, one of which is EPR. The Group meets on a regular base to exchange information with each other and the Commission on various disability matters.



The paper on "Quality of social services of general interest (SSGI)" describes common features and corresponding criteria for quality of social services borrowing heavily on the EQRM Nine Principles of Excellence. It also refers specifically to the EQRM and EQUASS as examples of good practices in the sector. The document is endorsed by all members of the DHLG. This acceptance implies recognition of the Principles of Excellence, which will support the promotion of the EQRM and EQUASS systems in all European countries.

The position paper is available upon request from the EPR Secretariat.

EQRM Awards 2007

We are pleased to announce that in 2007 the following organisations have been awarded with the EQRM, Mark of Excellence in service provision:

- **RehabCare (Ireland)**

The EQRM Award in 2007 includes: CEO office in Dublin (Headquarters); Department Research and Development; Resource centre in Dublin (Dunlaoghaire); Resource centre in Dundalk; Resource centre in Sligo; Resource centre in Limerick.

- **National Learning Network (Ireland)**

The EQRM Award in 2007 includes: NLN Limerick; NLN Sligo; NLN Wexford.

- **Pluryn Werkenrode Groep Arbeid (the Netherlands)**

The EQRM Awarding in 2007 includes: PWG Arbeid location Groesbeek; PWG Arbeid location Arnhem; PWG Arbeid location Groningen.

- **Centre de Réadaptation de Mulhouse (France)**

The EQRM Award in 2007 includes: Unité d' Evaluation, de Réentraînement et d'Orientation Sociale et/ou professionnelle (UEROS).

- **Institute for Rehabilitation of the Republic of Slovenia**

The EQRM Award in 2007 includes: Vocational Rehabilitation Centre in Maribor with Murska Sobota unit

The Organisation "**PANAGIA ELEOUSA**" in Greece successfully finished the EQRM Initiation Programme (including Quick Scan) and signed the recommendation for improvement. The organisation has been awarded with the recognition 'Committed to EQRM'.



NLN (above) and the Institute for Rehabilitation (below) receiving their well-deserved Awards



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Projects



PROVET project comes to an end

This 18-month project came to an end on 31 October 2007 after a successful completion of the activities. Among the major outcomes, the partners have tested and promoted various tools and practices which helped them to innovate their VET service delivery and strengthen cooperation with other centres in Europe.

Thanks to the various testing activities and events, the partners gained knowledge and expertise in the field of transparency of qualifications, access to guidance services and benchmarking/benchlearning methodologies. Their knowledge and expertise was shared during international seminars that they have successfully organised and which were well attended. According to the evaluation reports, PROVET has reached one of its primary goals: inform and train service providers on common ways to modernise VET service delivery in order to offer to people with disabilities better chances of education and employment.

All the findings and the tested tools in the project are described in the paper "VET tools and opportunities of cooperation for providers of services to people with disabilities" (http://www.epr.eu/Projects/provet_finaldoc.html)



EQUAVET Final Conference

The last activity carried out in the framework of the EQUAVET project was the Final Conference **"European Quality strategies in Vocational Education and training - a European approach to quality of disability-related social services."** This event took place on 22 and 23 November 2007 and was hosted by ODC in Verona. About 100 rehabilitation professionals and stakeholders from the VET and social field in Europe participated.

The Conference provided information on European approaches for Quality Assurance and Excellence, advanced the viewpoint of the main European stakeholders in the disability and social sector and promoted the European Model for Quality Assurance, which is the Common Quality Assurance Framework. Special attention was given to the results of research and pilot activities carried out in the framework of EQUAVET. The project partners described the main outcomes, such as the cross-reference study on Quality Assurance systems, the online self-evaluation tool and the new Quality Assurance Indicators tailor-made for the VET and rehabilitation sector.

This important event offered to the participants the possibility to exchange views with peers and for networking in a nice and welcoming Italian atmosphere.



The Council of Europe's representative making his point

For more information visit http://www.epr.eu/Projects/equavet_final_conference.html

For more information about all project activities at EPR contact Nadège Jibassia: Tel. +32 2 736 54 44 ; Email: nadege.jibassia@epr.eu

Public Affairs

EPR attends European Day of Disabled People (EDDP) 2007

Jan Spooren, Stefano Schena and Martin Ohridski represented EPR at this keynote event of the year in the disability sector. The EDDP 2007 was organised on the topic of ***People with disabilities: Active players in the Internal Market***, on **5 and 6 December 2007 in Brussels**. During two days, experts from all over Europe analysed the gaps and proposed solutions to allow disabled people's participation in EU Internal Market.

The European internal market rules aim to facilitate the mobility of workers, goods and services within the European boundaries. If these rules have as a main objective to develop the competitiveness of Europe's economy, they are also part of EU main principles and rights to be applied to all citizens.

In his speech, Vladimír Špidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities states: "The rights of disabled people to an independent life are at the heart of the internal market. All people with disabilities should be able to move freely while keeping their rights as regards social welfare, they should be able to make their own choices as consumers and therefore, have access to quality goods and services at the best practice".

> All documents related to this Conference can be downloaded from the European Commission website:
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/events/event_en.cfm?id=1005

> Download the European Commission Communication: "Situation of Disabled People in the EU: the European Action Plan 2008-2009" (November 2007):
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/events/2007/eddp/com_2007_0738_en.pdf

Professional Development

EPR organises Training Seminar on Ageing Workforce & Disability

In response to the strategic priorities and demands of our members EPR will co-organise a one-day Training Seminar with Workability Europe on the topic of ***Ageing & Disability: strategies & services to meet demand***. The Seminar will take place on **14 February 2008 in Brussels**.

The event will be of interest to rehabilitation service providers and employers of people with disabilities who are looking to acquire new insights into the phenomenon of "ageing workforce." The aim is to deliver practical training on how to develop innovative solutions and practices for two sets of different target groups but with similar needs: ageing people developing vocational disabilities and disabled employees getting older.

Key elements in the Programme include:

- Older workers – issues in job retention and recruitment
- Analysis of strategic options in service delivery
- Successful work integration approaches
- Development of new services
- Opportunity for exchange and networking

To download the detailed Seminar Programme and the Registration form, please visit
<http://www.epr.eu/MainActivitiesNew/ageing.html>

Deadline for registration is **18 January 2008**.

Please contact Martin Ohridski in the secretariat by email at martin.ohridski@epr.eu or by phone at +32 2 235 66 64 should you require more information about this activity. We look forward to your participation.

EPR website: what's new?

Upcoming events

EPR will organise a Training Seminar "Ageing & Disability" on 14 February 2008 in Brussels. The programme of the Seminar and the Registration form can be found at: <http://epr.eu/MainActivitiesNew/ageing.html>

EQUAVET Links

On 22-23 November 2007, the International Conference "A European approach to quality of disability-related social services" took place in Verona, Italy. The new website section contains the Conference report, presentations and speeches, pictures, the programme of the event, and background information of the Conference. The page is available at the following link: http://epr.eu/members/Projects/equavet_final_conference.html

PROVET Links

The new updated page contains the PROVET paper "VET tools and opportunities of cooperation for providers of services to people with disabilities", other general documents about the project, as well as reports of the meetings, seminars and conferences associated with PROVET project. Everything is available at the following link: <http://epr.eu/Projects/provet.htm>

EQUIP Links

A description of EQUIP, the new European Quality Initiative for Personal Services of General Interest, the promotion material on the initiative, as well as the advert for the new position of EQUIP Coordinator, are available at: <http://epr.eu/Projects/equip.html>

EPR Centre Coordinators' Meeting

On 25 - 26 October, EPR organised its bi-annual Centre Coordinators Meeting at the Secretariat General office in Brussels. A selection of pictures, the report of the *Session on Communication within EPR*, the PowerPoint presentations on *Communication Tips and Practices* and on the *Findings and Recommendations for EPR communication* are available at the following link: <http://epr.eu/members/MainActivitiesNew/2NDLEVEL/centrecoordinatorsmeeting261007.html>

We are currently in the process of redesigning our website. Early next year we should be able to invite you to visit our new website and to give us your feedback!

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