

## EASPD Provider Forum Greece

Athens, 29/10/2015

### Narrative Report

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## 1. CONTEXT

This Provider Forum was the follow up of last year's successful Provider Forum in Athens in November.

The Provider Forum was organized in combination with the final Conference of a project implemented by ESTIA with topic: Human Rights in Practice.

This time the PF was organised to bring together different stakeholders in the disability sector to highlight the importance of implementing Human Rights. The aim was to point out how you can proceed from theory to practice.

An importance issue was to inspire service providers to join networks and through them make the difference for people with disabilities.

Greece is in the middle of a very difficult period of financial decrease and the importance of networking and cooperating through EU programmes with organisations from other countries is of more importance than ever.

Everybody has to be alert on the danger of cut downs in the social security sector. This will make the people with disabilities even more excluded from the society.

The importance of highlighting the implementation of the rights for people with disabilities and especially people with disabilities is most significant.

## 2. PROVIDER FORUM PROGRAMME AND DISCUSSIONS

The Provider Forum was attended by representatives from important stakeholder groups: central authorities, regional authorities, local authorities, employers, parents, people with disabilities and representative from the Council of Europe, European Network, national funding foundations and the ombudsman for people with disabilities and service providers.

The event was attended by:

- The Deputy Commissioner of Social Policy in Attica region- Ms Catherine Thanopoulou
- The Mayor of Filothei-Psychiko- Mr. Pantelis Xyridakis,
- The Head of Cultural Affairs of the Embassy of Norway- Ms. Christina Sorbine
- The Director of disability from the Secretary General of Welfare- Ms. Manthopoulos
- The President of EASPD – Mr Franz Wolfmayr
- President of the Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Council of Europe Mr. Dimitrios Nikolsky
- From the he Foundation Bodossaki the general Manager of the Program "We are all Citizens"- Mr. Laganopoulos and Project coordinator- Ms. Tsene
- Expertt in the field of social protection of the Ombudsman- Ms. Skyllakou,,

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- The Vice President of Social Solidarity, Culture and Sports in the municipality of Filothei-Psychiko- Ms. Angelaki,
- President of Meledoni- Mr. Stefanidis
- The President of Meropeio Foundation- Ms Thanogianni
- President of the Association of Friends of ESTIA “Minima Agapis”- Ms Paleokrassas presidents and staff from service provider organisations in the ATTICA region.

In the first part of the forum, with speakers: the President of EASPD Mr. Wolfmayr, the President of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the Council of Europe Mr Nikolsky, the Special expert in the field of social protection of the Ombudsman, Ms. Skyllakou, the Expert by Experience Ms. Kotti trainee of Estia and the Director of Estia Mr. Kasimatis issues related to the provision of services to strengthen the rights, the strategies of the Council of Europe for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, accessibility issues for people with disabilities to social benefits and personal experiences of disability were discussed.

More specifically the main speakers and their topics were:

- Franz Wolfmayr (President EASPD): “Services as enablers of rights”.
- Dimitrios Nikolsky (President of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the Council of Europe): “The challenges and opportunities ahead” The Council of Europe’s strategy for the protection of Human Rights of pwd.
- Evangelia Skyllakou, (specialist in the field of social protection of the Greek Ombudsman): “The difficulties of accessibility for pwid to social services”.
- Maria Kotti (Expert by experience ESTIA): “Talking about my disability”
- Vasilis Kasimatis (Director ESTIA): “Delayed rights ceases to be rights”

In the second part of the forum with speakers on the panel the Mayor Filothei-Psychiko, The head of International Relations POSGameA, President of EASPD, the Social Worker of the Division of Social Solidarity of the municipality of Athens and the head of Human Resources at AB Vassilopoulos SA (a chain of Supermarkets) answered questions raised by self-advocacy groups of trainees from ESTIA and the Theotokos Foundation (Interactive Debate).

The PF ended with a business lunch in which networking capabilities and communication needs between Greek organisations and the European Association of Service Providers for persons with Disabilities (EASPD) were discussed.

### 3. OUTCOME AND FOLLOW-UP

The representatives of the service provider organisations expressed their interests and their needs to being involved in networks both in national and international level.

The strength of cooperation over the borders is the only way of reaching the target of changing attitudes and way of working.

The influences and exchange of Good practices between organisations is the road to changing the situation for people with disabilities.

Several of the service providers’ organisations took the decision to join the EASPD network.

## 4. PARTICIPANT LIST (attachment)

The Director of disability from the Secretary General of Welfare- Ms. Manthopoulos  
Deputy Commissioner of Social Policy in Attica region- Ms Catherine Thanopoulou  
The Mayor of Filothei-Psychiko- Mr. Pantelis Xyridakis,  
The Head of Cultural Affairs of the Embassy of Norway- Ms. Christina Sorbine  
The President of EASPD – Mr Franz Wolfmayr  
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The Vice President of Social Solidarity, Culture and Sports in the municipality of Filothei-Psychiko- Ms. Angelaki,  
President of Meledoni- Mr. Stefanidis  
The President of Meropeio Foundation- Ms Thanogianni  
President of the Association of Friends of ESTIA “Minima Agapis” - Ms Paleokrassas  
Representatives from the following organisations:  
ERGASTIRI- Association of Parents Guardians and Friends of People with Special Needs- Athens  
AMYMONI- Panhellenic Association of Parents and Friends of People with visual impairments and additional disabilities- Athens  
Kentro Ygeias Rafinas – Heath Centre –Rafina  
PETAGMA- Supported Housing- Athens  
THEOTOKOS Foundation-Athens  
Etairia Prostasia Spastikon  
ALMA- PanHellenic Association of Adapted Activities for people with disabilities- Athens  
MARGARITA- Special Vocational Training Centre for PWID- Athens  
PANAGIA ELEOUSA- Special Vocational Training and Rehabilitation for People with Intellectual and Associated Disabilities – Prefecture of Etoloakarnania Messolongi- Agrinio  
Meledoni - Panhellenic Association of Support for Persons with Intellectual Disability  
Instituto Endoepikoinoniakis Apokatastasis  
PAMMAKARISTOS -Foundation for Disabled Children — Nea Makri  
ERMIS  
AB Vasilopolous Supermarkets- employer  
E.PSY.M- Society for Psychosocial Studies –Athens  
KOKKORI Foundation- supported housing for people with Intellectual Disability- Athens  
ARGO-The Association of Naval Parents of Children with Special Needs – Athens  
KEA -Special Education centre for people with intellectual disabilities- Thessaloniki  
MERIMNA-THERAPEUTIC EDUCATION CENTRE FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY – Patras  
ELEPAP- Rehabilitation for the Disabled- Athens  
ESTIA – Support & Social Care Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities- Athens  
OKANA  
MAXITES  
Stavros Niarchos Foundation  
Foundation Bodossaki  
PEGKAP- National Association of Parents of People with Intellectual Disability-Athens

*See signed participant lists.*

## 5. EVALUATION RESULTS

An important issue to the success of the provider forum was the fact that it was combined with a final conference. The topic addressed was of significant interest to the participants.

More than 100 persons attended the event. The stakeholders represented covered many fields: Central authorities, Regional authorities, local authorities, employers, parents, persons with disabilities and representative from the Council of Europe, European Network, National funding foundations, the ombudsman for persons and service providers.

The approach with direct questions to a panel of decision makers by a group of self-advocates received positive feedback from all the participants.

The implementation of the rights of people with disabilities from paper to real actions has become high priority for several service providers. Hopefully these issues will also be put on the agenda of the Greek and European decision makers.