



newsletter

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15 years

## Tomorrow's support for today's people: moving towards a new perspective on service delivery

"Since its creation 15 years ago, the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) has brought together almost 10.000 service providers all over Europe and beyond. 15 years of decisive achievements and flourishing activities: we deeply thank all our members and supporters for the commitment and the effective cooperation proven all over the years. We also welcome new members and partners to become even more successful in promoting high level quality services and in implementing effectively the UN Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities.



During all these years EASPD has done its best to represent and fight for the needs of the sector at all levels, to inform its members about European and international policy developments as well as to support them in innovating for the benefit of persons with disabilities. However, prompt technology developments, the demographic change, new needs and wishes of persons experiencing disability already have a strong impact on our daily work and will increasingly challenge our structures and methods. Today, on the basis of our experience and commitment, it is our responsibility to be at the forefront of innovation in order to shape the future rather than to passively suffer the consequences of major societal changes.

This newsletter is a toolkit, which we encourage you to use when rethinking your vision and practices in the light of these challenges.

Enjoy the reading"

Franz Wolfmayr, EASPD President

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## Centre de la Gabrielle, France

"In 20 years time we would like to ensure that people can take care of themselves as much as possible (allowing them to stay at home, to be opened to the world)"



## Trajanka Petreska (33 years old, user of Day Center), Poraka, Skopje

"I'm using the service of a day center since it has been established, 10 years ago. At the beginning it was something very new for me. I was not alone any more. I learned new skills. My educators friendly talk with me, and I can make decisions about what I like or do not like. Today, I have a lot of friends, I'm more independent and I can do things by myself"

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## **The long way to equal opportunities: where do we come from?**

**Germain Weber, President of Lebenshilfe Austria and Dean of the  
Faculty of Psychology of the University of Austria**



During the last centuries, especially people with developmental intellectual disabilities and people with major mental disorders were considered as not having the "reason" capacity and based on that "evidence", were denied the status of a legal person. This way of thinking logically paves the way to actions of massive devaluation, discrimination, violation and segregation and these people were consequently shut away from mainstream society. Thus, society's majority defined the kind of support for the disabled people both, on the individual's level, as well as on a structural level. Resources for these supports originated either from the mission of religious orders and charity programs or came directly from the state. According to this model the service provider was entitled to know what is good for a disabled person!

This kind of paternalistic professionalism was very much fuelled by the so called biomedical view of disability, prominently prospering since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Within a specific period in recent history the radical biological view of disability was interpreted as a major threat for a nation's achievements. Consequently many nations set up programs to regulate the presence of people with disabilities in their population, leading to the "horrible period towards persons with disabilities". However, there were voices during all of these debates pointing to the fact that people with disabilities, very much as people without disabilities, have various talents, which when well nurtured enabled advanced autonomy also for the disabled person.

Further, postmodern societal analysis and discourses could effectively point to the fact that disability results from an interaction between the individual's impairment and societal circumstances he or she is offered by the majority. From this lesson society learned that segregating settings and inappropriate paternalistic settings would dramatically violate the person's individual rights, as expressed in the Fundamental Human Rights and as amplified recently in the UN-Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Debating disability nowadays from the human rights perspective challenges society as a whole with a unique opportunity to re-reflect basic values for living in a community characterised by human diversity, let it be disability, cultural or other sources of diversity, and constructing and promoting a model of social inclusion. In these days many service providers have changed their policy and mission statements towards the inclusion perspective. Consequently, often new living accommodations are set up according to the "community-based - small-living group" principle, this independently of the complexity of their needs for support. However, at a closer glance not a few of these "new principles" living arrangements continue to be operated in the traditional, a paternalistic, institutional style, without really considering the voices of those they

say they are supporting. We could, when supporting people with disabilities recommend as a goal standard for service managers and front line staff the ethical orientation "behave in that way towards people, as you would expect people to behave towards yourself in a similar situation".

This orientation now prominently codified in the UN-CRPD requires staff and managers to offer services that respect the individual rights of people with disabilities. Such services will be characterised by user-involvement and systematic monitoring systems.

Concluding, in the years to come we should encourage service providers, politicians, the civil-society as well as the self-advocate's level, to put the inclusive model in action and thus contribute to a sustained strengthening of the rights of people with disabilities. Such a process requires major changes, including the development of new models of governance that would foster person-centred decision making, social participation, and self-determination for people with disabilities. Finally, I am convinced that in this process EASPD will act in the 15 years to come as a major mentor and promoter and in addition, act as a European barometer while constructing an inclusive society in our European countries.

## Inclusiveness of services: the desirable next step

### User from the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies, Ireland

"I would like to be included as contributing citizen in my own community"

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF VOLUNTARY BODIES**  
*Providing Services to People with Intellectual Disability*

## Service Manager Taru Liimatta , Service Foundation for People with Intellectual Disabilities (KVPS), Finland

"The service user and his/her family should have a key position when planning, providing and evaluating services"



## Creating inclusive services for people with disabilities: Choice, control and community connections

Maureen Piggot, President of Inclusion Europe

In our quest for inclusion, providers of support services have a key role to play as the quality of life of people with disabilities is closely related to the support they receive. Truly inclusive services go beyond addressing the disability-specific needs enabling each person to become a valued and engaged member of their community.

If a service is to be inclusive, it has to be accepted by the community. The segregation of people with disabilities tends to strengthen public preconceptions and makes it more difficult for the individual to acquire local knowledge and networks. Inclusive services by their ethos, design and delivery enhance the status of the user, facilitate participation in the life of the community and involve interaction with a variety of people with and without disabilities. Inclusive services blend into their environment while meeting accessibility standards and accommodating the needs of individuals, taking into account characteristics of each community or neighbourhood.

Inclusive support is responsive, respectful and caring. Inclusive services promote the dignity, integrity and personal lifestyle of their users.

This can only be ensured through person centred approaches; taking into account the unique potential of the person served, their priorities, relationships, likes and dislikes, needs and habits; as well as views of their family, friends and significant others.



Most importantly, people with disabilities need to have real choice and control when it comes to selection of services. Not only have they the right to act as primary agents in their lives; they will also know best what suits them. Unfortunately, people with disabilities and particularly those with intellectual impairment, are less recognised and protected as consumers. In fact, they are often not aware of their choices, rights and responsibilities as customers. From early childhood, they should have the opportunity to practice making choices and taking personal responsibility. This needs to be accompanied by expectations of full and equal citizenship expressed in the behaviour of all who support them, accessible information and the power to influence.

In several countries of Europe, user control of support services is ensured by personal budgets or direct payment programs. In this way, the individual can select and purchase exactly the services that correspond to their needs and preferences. However, for the majority of people with intellectual disabilities in Europe, services are still provided in specialised settings. Even in these conditions user control can and needs to be safeguarded by active involvement in the design, management, delivery and evaluation of services. This can be achieved through partnership of service providers and users' organisations that exist in all European countries. As more providers adopt inclusive practices, experience is growing in the support, information and adjustments that are needed to ensure effective participation in these processes.

To ensure continuously improving quality and inclusiveness of services, it is most important to engage people with disabilities in the process of evaluation independently from the interest of service-providers and governments. Relatives, guardians, peers, professionals and other advocates should also offer their views and concerns but only to complement rather than replace users' views.

Under the shadow of the economic crisis, cuts in public spending, imposed by European governments, pose a major challenge to the delivery of quality and inclusive services. In the UK, for instance, the government proposes to remove the part of the Disability Living Allowance that helps people in residential care to pay transport and other mobility costs. It is up to us, representative organisations of users and service providers, to pressure governments to make sure that the rights of people with disabilities are protected even in times of economic recession.

On the occasion of its 15th anniversary, I would like to congratulate the *European Association of Service Providers for People with Disabilities* on the contribution made to promoting inclusion. Through supporting a growing network of service providers and leading successful initiatives to develop inclusive systems and practice, EASPD plays an important role assisting providers across Europe to deliver user-centred, accessible, affordable and adaptable services for people with disabilities.

Inclusion Europe:

<http://www.inclusion-europe.org>

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## Some words from Phil Madden, EASPD Vice-President

### **In which way does the need for inclusiveness challenge service providers' structures and methods?**

We should see this as an exciting challenge-something to embrace and not resist. The UNCRPD is fundamentally about people with disabilities realising choice and autonomy. The moral legitimacy of service provider organisations depends on them adapting their general approach and specific practices to help make this happen.

### **Inclusiveness of services for persons with disabilities is high on EASPD's agenda, what role will the European platform play to support its members in this area?**

We hope the European platform will take a lead on this-championing the idea amongst its members.



**Do you have any recommendation for service providers / EU institutions / National authorities / any other relevant stakeholder?**

The main task is to move from bland statements to precise action. At all levels there should be more systematic engagement with users and user led organisations-as well as others such as

the Fundamental Rights Agency, who have done some really important work in this area. There are many specific examples of user involvement-across the spectrum from true person-centred planning with the person at the heart of it through to involvement in governance and external evaluation.



Lieven Mels, Emiliani users, Belgium

“I would like to live together with the person I love with her in our own house, if possible with a pool. I would rather prefer not to live in the institution with her. The supervisors can come to our house in the case we would need them”.

**What does inclusiveness mean?**

**The new challenge of the UN Convention in services provision: Services to disabled people without their active participation and close cooperation with providers leads to dead end.**

Erzsébet Földesi, Vice President of the European Disability Forum

Social services facilitate the practicing of basic human rights for people with disabilities. Only people with disabilities themselves, and they alone, can tell how the services may make their lives easier, which is why their active involvement in planning and implementing those services as well as in analyzing their efficiency is inevitable and imperative to progress. For decades, people with disabilities have been denied full access to basic services, they could not participate in designing the most adequate services they need and institutionalisation was the immediate response to exclude them and their needs from

society. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) has put a legal end to this. But still, all disability stakeholders, and in the first place service providers, should work hard to make UNCRPD principles a reality.



An inclusive society, offering space to diversity and viewing the differences of people with disabilities as social values, is necessary for us to

practice our rights. An inclusive service does its job basically by taking the needs and the specific situation of the user into account. Another characteristic of an inclusive service is that the provider creates the structure, personnel, schedule in such manner that the service becomes as unnoticeable as possible, natural as it can be, like an integral part of life, for both the user and his/her environment. In this regard, “inclusive” means a service provider adapting to the fullest possible extent personal needs of the service user.

Of course, circumstances and opportunities of the service provider, including financing and legislative frameworks, also play a role in creating inclusive services; however, it is very important that the human dignity of the service users shall not suffer any damage. For us, people with disabilities, it is not a question whether to use the service or not: by refusing them, practicing our rights is made more difficult or impossible.

## The UN Convention set the rules

The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities upholds the necessary law to make sure we live equally with everyone else in the society. Services ensuring the exercise of these rights are the minimal services that are necessary for people with disabilities to be able to participate equally with others in e.g. education, employment, health-care, rehabilitation, etc. The Convention provides answers not only on the necessary services, but also on the criteria of quality of services.

On the whole, the text of the Convention refers to the quality of services in many sections.

The essence of the Convention, its General principles, the definition of reasonable accommodation, as well as the standards set in articles

provide the important and inevitable aspects of defining quality criteria for services. Above all, I would like to illustrate this through two articles.

## Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community

By implementing Article 19, we create and operate systems facilitating independent living, including personal assistance for people who need it. Furthermore, we ensure the creation and maintenance of in-house support services allowing people with disabilities to live in their own communities.

The quality of the above services can be measured by whether the provided support can ensure the personal support necessary for living in community and adapting into the community, as well as for preventing isolation or exclusion from the community. Important factor for quality measurement is the existence and range of options of residential services, including shared and sheltered accommodation adapted to the individual needs of its residents. And of course a quality measurement indicator for these services is whether the right of people with disabilities to living in the community and to free decision is ensured by them equally to others.

## Article 20: Personal mobility

By implementing Article 20 of the Convention, personal mobility of people with disabilities to the greatest possible independence is guaranteed, through help provided by humans or animals, or assistive technologies and devices for instance. Quality is to be evaluated by the availability of the convenient devices and relevant technologies for people with disabilities. It appears as a quality criterion that services facilitating personal



mobility should absolutely take individual needs into account. An inevitable element of high quality services is providing training on issues relating to mobility for people with disabilities as well as experts working with them.

## Persons with disabilities and service providers need each others

Service providers and disabled people are interdependent. Both roles are important, and it is not possible to reach success without a continuous dialogue between them. The dialogue is inevitable both on European and national level. In my opinion today a dialogue on European level exists but the situation in some of our countries is very desperate. Services to disabled people are established, run and evaluated without involving users themselves and organisations of people with disability. Service providers ignoring the voice of their users or pretending that they represent their voice should not be maintained.

For the success of services it is important that the service structure and the quality of the services are created with the involvement of the users, on the basis of their needs and living conditions. Service providers should be obliged to take into account the feedback from their users, who should play a decisive role in both the creation and the operation of the service system.

It is important that public authorities ensure legal obligations for quality standards in service provision. At EU level, a quality framework has been developed and it is important that at national, regional and local level, the rights recognized by the UNCRPD are legally protected in the service provision. This legal framework will benefit people with disabilities and will create clear common rules to ensure a rights-based-service provision; also beneficial for service providers.

As users of services, the disability movement should be included in the elaboration, operation and monitoring of the services. A better cooperation is crucial to improve services. Furthermore, the current economic crisis is obviously a common challenge for all of us. There is really a common ground to work together to ensure that inclusive services contribute to strengthen participation of people with disabilities in the society and that the individual is in the centre of the services.

Finally, let's congratulate the EASPD for their 15 years of activity and wish them success in providing services to the satisfaction of their users. We do consider the EASPD an important ally in Europe to improve the lives of persons with disabilities.

European Disability Forum:

<http://www.edf-feph.org/>



### Ms. Trude Stenhammer Wyatt, Director, The SOR Foundation, Norway

"Our hope is that the skill and knowledgebase close to the service user will be so high that only very few service users will have to be referred to specialised services in the future"

## Learning from each other: being innovative, being inclusive!

**Jere Metsähonkala, Service Manager, Service Foundation for People with Intellectual Disabilities (KVPS), Finland**

“Individual opinions of service users should be the starting point and criteria when evaluating quality of the services and effectiveness”



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## Atempo - Yes, together we can: full involvement of people with disabilities is a “win-win” situation

**Klaus Candussi, President, Atempo**

Equality of people is a huge goal that is not easily achieved. But every person can do something for it. That is why we from atempo frankly say: Let's get started!

We chose some domains that, in our view, are important for equalization. And we chose one principle: To involve people with learning difficulties and disabilities in all our work in important roles.

These domains atempo decided to focus on are:

### **Training and job coaching, leading our trainees to paid jobs on the open labour market.**

The special idea behind the atempo training is that even people with severe learning difficulties can and should gain competences in information and communication technologies because the

ability to handle computers in our times has become one of the key competences for employment.

### **Easy Language**

In order to be informed about their rights and chances, people have to be able to understand the information about it. As a lot of information is written in difficult language, access to information turns out as a key issue towards equalization.

In the atempo department “Capito” people with and without learning difficulties together translate difficult texts into easy language, design accessible web content and deal with the usability of different media. The variety of accessible



information products covers information folders targeting disabled people (e.g. on the Austrian Equalisation Law), but also websites of more and more commercial enterprises recognizing the benefit of accessible information. (more: [www.capito.eu](http://www.capito.eu))

More than 60 municipalities and over 100 tourism enterprises actually are using the competence of the CEDOS-Barrierfree-Network of atempo.

Again the special quality of the CEDOS-Consultancy for accessible tourism and barrier-free environment is based on the cooperation between experts with and without disabilities.

Together they check buildings, orientation systems cultural and tourism facilities and consult building projects (see [www.cedos.at](http://www.cedos.at)).

The atempo staff– in total about 77 persons – works in different domains and have very different education and training. For example they work as a trainee or job coach, as graphic designer, as software-engineer, editor, consultant or as evaluator.

In the atempo team there are more than 20 employees with learning difficulties or special needs. They are also experts in their domain, received a training and get paid like everyone else. They are employed as peer trainers in the education department, as consultants and checkers for accessibility and contribute to the design of easy to read information. One of the most successful examples for the high quality of services based on the involvement of people with learning difficulties and disabilities is the Nueva Evaluation Model.

## Nueva: People with disabilities improve the quality of services all over Europe

The development of the Nueva-Model of User-Evaluation is working since the year 2000. It is based on the ideas of empowerment and user involvement in the design and evaluation of quality of social services, in line with the most important documents in the disability work of the last decade:

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines its goals in terms of results of social services. Thus the Convention deals with the impact on the lives of people with disabilities. The Nueva model strictly follows this approach.

An evaluation which involves users – the idea behind Nueva – generates reliable output data because the user's point of view and concrete experience are taken into account. The Nueva-Model involves users in all stages of an evaluation: In the development of the quality dimensions and criteria as well as in the role of interviewers and interviewees in the evaluation process. The user-evaluators also lead the interpretation and analysis of the collected information. Their evaluation results thus provide authentic feedback to service providers and authorities on the quality of the output of a specific service and may complement any internal quality management systems. The team of Nueva evaluators actually looks back to the experience of over 5.000 interviews in five European countries and spreads out their experience through the Nueva Network. ([www.nueva-network.eu](http://www.nueva-network.eu))

The good message out of that experience: User involvement really creates a win-win situation, with benefits service users as well as service providers.

## The world's first television station by and for mentally and physically disabled people

Annette Riisager, TV- GLAD

TV- Glad began in 1999 as the world's first television station by and for mentally and physically disabled people, and with the guiding principle of fostering freedom of expression for everyone. In 2004 Glad Vocational School was established.

There are 220 employees and students spread over 4 TV-Glad departments in Denmark. Several local chapters to come. The main branch is located in Copenhagen and employs approx. 160 people.

TV-Glad transmit its programs on various local TV channels in Denmark. TV-Glad produces and sends 1 / 2 hour of TV every day. It is sent in both day and evening hours. The broadcasts can be seen by approx. 1 / 3 of the population.

At Glad Vocational School people with physical and mental disabilities are trained to do interesting jobs they are passionate about; jobs that allow them to express their individuality; jobs in the arts, media, design and gourmet kitchens; and jobs that people without handicaps would drool for.

Instead of focusing on care, they focus on developing skills that build self-confidence and create opportunities.

One thing TV-Glad students have in common is a disability that makes learning and working more challenging. But the similarities end there. Some are challenged with physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy, deafness or blindness – Others have learning disabilities such as autism, ADHD, and Down's syndrome.

In addition to education and skill development, the TV- Glad Foundation focuses on creating revenue-generating business areas for physically and mentally disabled people through innovative social enterprises – businesses that use capitalist strategies to achieve specific social or environmental goals.



The foundation's newest social enterprise is a designer cafe that serves up healthy, natural food and where everything from bread to sauces to desserts is made from scratch.

Café Glad is staffed by a mixed team of learning disabled students and non-disabled and disabled professionals. It's a regular business that provides the community with a high-quality product and service, but all the profits go back into the school.

Over the course of the three-year culinary programme, the students develop the skills they need for careers in restaurants, cafes, confectioneries, bakeries, catering and more.

In 2010 Glad Vocational School developed level 1 and 2 in NQF-Inclusive, to validate the students' professional progress and learning outcomes. The validation can help opening the doors to meaningful jobs and meaningful lives.

TV-Glad: <http://www.tv-glad.dk/>

## How to anticipate an ageing Europe?

An interview with John Harris,  
Coordinator of **ENVITER**, **HIPEN** and of the **SensAge Project**



Sensory impairments: a challenge for the future in view of the demographic change currently happening.

**You are representing 2 networks focusing on sensory impairments, both members of the EASPD. Can you briefly explain the history of these 2 networks and their activities?**

ENVITER is the European Network for Visually Impaired Training Education & Research (it will celebrate its 10th Anniversary this year); HIPEN is the European Network for Professionals working with People with Hearing Impairments – established along the same lines, is younger; it was founded in 2007. They naturally arose from the realisation by professional staff working together in EC projects that a more permanent, continuing forum was needed for the exchange of knowledge and good practice which will enable the continuing inclusion of people with visual and/or hearing impairments within their communities. This active, ongoing trans-national activity is especially important in the field of sensory impairments because they are 'minority disabilities'- the number of people with significant vision impairment or hearing impairment is between 1.5% and 2% of the general population – one of the benefits of the Networks is to counter the isolation which professional staff would otherwise feel.

**European countries are facing the start of an important demographic shift. Which kind of impact can we expect service providers for persons with disabilities?**

This shift will have a profound and increasing impact on service providers. UN figures show that the proportion of the world's population aged over 65 is set to increase from 7.6% to 16.2% by 2050, and that the cost of caring for these people will profoundly impact on the sustainability of public finances aggravated by the ongoing global financial crisis. Taking an example from recent research, in the Netherlands in 2008 79% of blind and partially sighted people were aged 65 years or older. Therefore, this shift will have a very direct and increasing impact on service providers for people with disabilities.

**Do you have any idea, on how service providers can anticipate this change?**

There is a clear need for services to develop more and more on a holistic basis, ensuring that all the needs and choices of the person concerned, the beneficiary, the ageing person with increasing disabilities, are at the centre of assessment and the resulting support services. This does not mean one all pervasive service provider; what it does mean is flexible and increased partnership working between organisations, the service user and where appropriate, the user's family and local community – evaluating and changing forms of support as the client's needs change. Similarly, this scenario supports increasing networking and partnership working between service providers, minimising isolation and the reinvention of wheels, maximising the use of specific skills and practices.

ENVITER & HIPEN are both involved in the SensAge Project ([www.sensage.eu](http://www.sensage.eu)), together with the EASPD. Could say some words about it?

SensAge, a project co-funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme, developing between 2011 and 2014, springs from the realisation by service providers and associations on a European level that a Network needs to be established, which will become the European Reference Point for the gathering, analysis and dissemination of the

increasingly widespread range of practices, thus enabling an active ageing of European citizens with sensory impairments, promoting their autonomy, quality of life and social inclusion. It also includes contribution to EU standards of support for lifelong learning for these beneficiaries, as well as political lobbying at European and National Levels. SensAge aims to become a central resource for all organisations working with and for ageing people with sensory disabilities.

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## Some words from Bruce Roch, Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Adecco Group France

### **Do you think that service providers for persons with disabilities and business world should tend to more cooperation? Why?**

Both are not that different! In fact, interaction is crucial for success-driven strategies at local level. And people at their level have connections, which create the positive environment to drive partnership and complementary actions between companies and service providers. However, a lot of progress is still to come: a better mutual understanding, more skills to be shared, long-term partnerships, also depending on individuals committing their organizations.

### **In your opinion, which form should take the cooperation between the business world and service providers for persons with disabilities in the near future?**

Subcontracting is the first step, which creates the added value and the contractual link between organizations. Step two could be transfer to the

open labour market for the persons with disabilities, with a right to return which is far from easy to set accordingly to regulation and available positions. Still, employability is the key of any cooperation.



Eventually, sponsorship can be a solution to contribute, if relevant, but not sufficient for strong cooperation.

### **What are the expectations of business world representatives towards service providers when thinking about a closer cooperation?**

Corporate Social Responsibility creates a real opportunity for dialogue between the business world and other stakeholders. Service providers become closer therefore and should make pro-

posals in line with mutual expectations, bearing in mind the challenging timeframe of the business world. Retention, attractivity and citizenship complete the picture, with more and more employees wanting their organization to “walk the talk” on social issues and CSR.

However the real cooperation will start by recognizing the skills of persons with disabilities and their working environment: business world is now ready to work with service providers whenever the outcomes are efficient to their business case: Skills will make the difference!

### President Mr. Georgi Georgiev, National Alliance for Social Responsibility (NASO) Bulgaria

“There must be an explicit agreement and distribution of functions among contracting authorities, funding bodies, providers and users”



## Arduin: a good example of a fast and efficient de-institutionalization process

Dr. J.H.M. van Loon

Arduin is a Dutch organization providing services for people with intellectual disabilities. Established in 1969, ‘Vijvervreugd’ (Arduin), was a residential institution serving persons with intellectual disabilities. In terms of deinstitutionalisation, it is known as a European best practice. The organisation switched from institutionalised to community-based settings in a very successful way, adapting the support to the individual situations and needs of its users. The process of deinstitutionalisation followed the separation between the three life spheres—living, work/daily activities, and leisure—and the promotion of quality of life. Find out more on our webpage: [www.easpd.eu](http://www.easpd.eu)



## Making social innovation work in Ireland

Madeleine Clarke, Executive Director, Genio

Genio works with the public, private and non-profit sectors with the aim of stimulating and supporting social innovation in Ireland that makes economic sense. The Genio Trust currently combines Government health innovation funding and contributions from the Atlantic Philanthropies. Grants totalling almost €3m have been awarded in 2010 and 2011 to support over 400 people to move from, and to avoid, institutional care. A further €2.45m in grants has been awarded to develop the capability of those who use services, families, advocates and service-providers to develop and implement plans that will make individualised, community-integrated supports a reality for many more - now and in the future.



Find out more on our webpage: [www.easpd.eu](http://www.easpd.eu)

### Brian O'Donnell, Chief Executive, National Federation of Voluntary Bodies, Ireland

“Instead of service providers saying John needs a residential place; the need will be framed very specifically to describe exactly what John needs: *John needs an accessible place to live and the supports to live a full life*”.





# International frameworks shaping tomorrow's services: an overview of relevant legal instruments

## Interview with Mr. Thorsten Afflerbach, Head of the Division for the Integration of People with Disabilities, Directorate General of Social Cohesion, Council of Europe, Strasbourg



### **Could you briefly explain the role of the Council of Europe in the disability field, its competencies and priorities in this respect?**

Ever since its creation in 1949, the Council of Europe in Strasbourg has worked to protect and promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. An integral part of this work has been – and still is – the disability field. What started in 1959 with only a few member states within the Partial Agreement on the Social and Public Health Field and its focus on the rehabilitation and integration of people with disabilities in 2006 became an activity for all 47 member states, thanks to the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015<sup>1</sup> and its focus on protecting and promoting the rights and full participation of people with disabilities as well as improving their quality of life.

### **In which way is the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015 anticipating the challenges to come for the disability sector in Europe?**

The Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015 provides a roadmap for member states how to translate fundamental principles of non-discrimination, equal opportunities, independent living and full participation into concrete actions. It is a flexible framework that allows – and requires – adaptation to the specific circumstances and conditions of each member state when implementing it at national level. Consequently, it is flexible enough to accommodate new trends or challenges in the disability field.

<sup>1</sup> Recommendation Rec(2006)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Council of Europe Action Plan to promote the rights and full participation of people with disabilities in society : improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe 2006-2015, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 5 April 2006.

**From your broad experience in the disability field and the outcomes of the ongoing dialogue between the Council of Europe and civil society representatives, which key challenges can you mention for services in the near future?**

The key issues in service provision can be summarised as follows: availability, accessibility, affordability, appropriateness, awareness, attractiveness, usability or ease of use, client orientation, user participation, continuity, sustainability, and last but not least quality, quality and quality. Key to assuring the quality of services provided to people with disabilities in the training of staff and that includes initial vocational training as well as further training (lifelong learning) both in disability-specific and in mainstream services. That is why the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015 lists the quality of services and the training of staff under the same heading in the implementation strategies of the Plan.

Services should be user-driven, individualised and tailor-made. Greater coordination and cooperation between different services, e.g. in the social, health, education and employment fields, are needed in order to reduce overlap and to improve efficiency and effectiveness and produce better outcomes for the users ("integrated social services"). The most important level for such integration is the level of the individual service user, for example through "case management"

of by providing "one-stop shops" or "single points of contacts (SPOCs).

**The Council of Europe published a mid-term review of its Action plan in 2010: can you briefly summarise its core outcomes and the way it can support services in getting prepared for the future?**

The 2010 mid-term review report on the national implementation of the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015 acknowledges that certain progress has been made in several key action lines of the Plan identified by member states as priorities, such education, vocational training, employment and accessibility. However, the report also identifies areas in which progress still needs to be made, such as community living/deinstitutionalisation, participation in political and cultural life, incl. tourism, leisure and sports. In addition, more action is required on the so-called "cross-cutting aspects" of the Plan, i.e. groups of people with disabilities who may face multiple discrimination, e.g. women and girls with disabilities, children and youth with disabilities, the elderly, people with disabilities in need of a high level of support, and disabled people from minority groups such Roma, refugees, asylum seekers or migrants. Service providers should take account of these findings.

Council of Europe Action Plan:  
[http://www.coe.int/t/e/social\\_cohesion/soc-sp/Rec\\_2006\\_5%20Disability%20Action%20Plan.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/e/social_cohesion/soc-sp/Rec_2006_5%20Disability%20Action%20Plan.pdf)

**Erika, service user of Kézenfogva Alapítvány (Hand in Hand Foundation), Hungary**

"My work is really good, I feel good when I'm at the centre. But I would like to have the opportunity to have a holiday and a better financial situation".



## The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: what are the patterns for the future of services to persons with disabilities?

Interview with Prof. Gerald Quinn, Director of the Centre for Disability Law and Policy at the NUI Galway School of Law

Thanks to the UN Convention we are not longer talking about the language of needs and services, on the contrary the main discourse is now related to citizenship, participation, involvement and engagement as key words for the future of services.

Persons all along their lives rely on services and this is the case especially for people with disabilities. A lack of involvement and engagement of people with disabilities into services is no longer acceptable. In the past, the way services were shaped and delivered did not take enough into account the involvement side, the challenge is to try to redesign services to make them prime people for a life of participation and active citizenship. Indeed, the UN Convention is the trigger of this changing paradigm. Many of these ideas were circulating previously, but the UN Convention provides means for these ideas to be fully applied into our societies. As a result, it accelerates the trend to re-designing services toward a more citizens'-friendly approach

Concerning services to people with disabilities, the UN Convention delineates several provisions related to them. The most relevant Convention article concerning services is article 12. It states the equal recognition before the law and the assumption of legal capacity to make on decisions and have them respected. This article clearly restores voice and emphasizes the right of people with disabilities to chose the life they are living. Nevertheless, this is also requiring other parties

to respect the voice and part, putting the system upside down.

Article 19 of the Convention is also imperative as it expresses the right to live independently and being included in the community. This article contains a very interesting language on the right of people to services. We are not longer talking about a vague concept of welfare neither about needs, but we are really making sure that services serve this primary purpose of respecting voices and giving people options on how they want to live their lives.



### What are the main implications of these provisions?

The UN Convention is both a moral and a legal instrument, although it might have several concrete impacts in our societies. The Convention makes a distinction between what is immediately achievable and what is progressively achievable. This dichotomy is expressed in article 4 paragraph 2 which obliges States, with regard to social and economic rights in the convention to achieve them progressively. Also of great significance is Article 4 paragraph 3 where for the development and the implementation of policies States Parties "shall closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including with disabilities, through their representative

organizations.” This gives concrete legal expression to the slogan ‘nothing about us without us.’

According to most of legal commentators article 12 has to be immediately achieved. There is no way today service providers can or should deliver services without respecting the voice of ‘consumers’. Article 19, on the other hand, needs to be progressively realized. It includes the right to choose where to live and with whom. Clearly, this is going to take time to be fully implemented. Ireland has just published a report on how to close down institutions: they foresee 7 years of process, which is quite realistic due to the complexity of the issue.

Primary health care practitioners do not normally well know how to communicate with people with mental disabilities. Community services will have to be up to standard in order to close down these institutions. These two articles together are supposed to redesign services towards a more community oriented approach with a more positive dynamic trend.

Concluding, some of the provisions in the Convention should be immediately achievable, like the article on active consultation and involvement: no excuse can be accepted concerning these provisions. Unfortunately there are no substantive provisions on the family although there is a very positive language in preamble paragraph x which mentions the right to family support, to respect the privacy of families as a means of enabling persons with disabilities to flourish.

### **What are services doing in order to fully respect what the UN Convention inscribed as fundamental rights for persons with disabilities?**

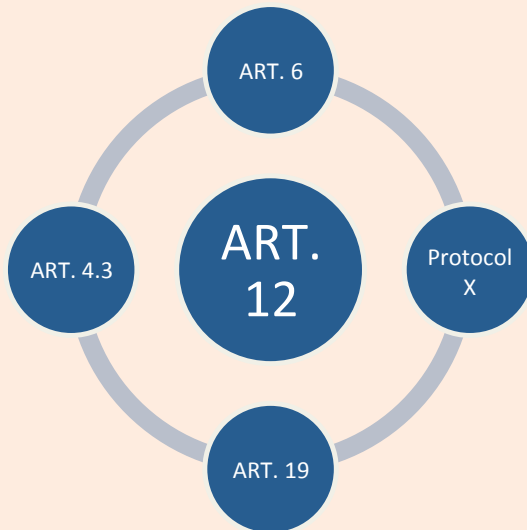
There is a stronger trend in the Anglo-Saxon Countries on the conceptualisation of the role of the citizen as well as on the empowerment of consumers. In these countries, services can be purchased by-passing the common service provider. The traditional model is driven by a protection mentality. It is probably time that services go in the direction of respecting more the dignity of risk of the individual. Article 12 provision affirms that people have the right to take their own risks and to make their own mistakes. “We cannot teach people how to behave”. Indisputably the State has a duty to protect. That is the essence of Article 16 (duty to protect against violence, exploitation and abuse). But this duty – which must be implemented ‘on an equal basis with others’ - must now be re-balanced bearing in mind the autonomy of the person.

Hopefully, the Convention evaporates the paternalist spin on the natural protective impulse through article 16.

Services have an opportunity to re-imagine themselves, changing how they work in order to really respect wishes and preferences and making sure people have real options in their lives.

In conclusion, services in the old sense do not have a future. The old language of needs and services needs to be changed so that it is clear that the role of services in the future is to underpin personal choice and create options for persons with disabilities.

## UNCRPD Provisions (articles) relevant to service providers



UN Convention of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

LL. Master in Law in International and Comparative Disability Law and Policy, NUI Galway, Ireland: [http://www.nuigalway.ie/law/documents/prospective\\_students/LLM%20Disability%20P2.pdf](http://www.nuigalway.ie/law/documents/prospective_students/LLM%20Disability%20P2.pdf)

### **James Churchill, EASPD Board member and Chair HR SIG, Association for Real Change (ARC), UK**

Future: "service transformed into a 'user-chooser' approach where people have a range of possible services and a personal budget for their use"



## A look at developing countries

Dr Indumathi Rao BSc, DEHC, PhD

The needs of persons with disabilities and service providers supporting them may vary between the industrial world and developing countries. Dr Indumathi Rao explains what challenges this situation triggers when trying to implement the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the light of her experience as Chair of the Global Partnership for Disability and Development.

Find out more on our webpage: [www.easpd.eu](http://www.easpd.eu)



### Ilizaveta Grigorova Lefterova, National Alliance for Social Responsibility (NASO), Bulgaria

“There is a need of resource support in the school. The care for integration of the children with special educational needs and their rehabilitation and socialization, have to become a priority of the state policy, not only of the NGO’s.”

## Interview with Johan ten Geuzendam, Head of Unit for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, DG Justice, European Commission

### What kind of impact can we expect on the way to manage and implement services, from the UNCRPD & main EU policies/legal instruments concerning disability?

A positive impact, with an even stronger focus on the empowerment of the users and on the quality of the services as it is perceived in the first place by the users themselves. Nevertheless more cooperation will be required. Service providers will have to be part of services providing networks, also involving less traditional actors.

### What are the challenges/opportunities brought up by these policies/legal instruments?

The main challenge is the broad coverage and scope of the commitments that the EU and its Member states have entered into at a time of great economic and financial uncertainties.



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Our reply to these is the EU Disability Strategy and its links to the main flagships of the EU 2020 Strategy. The overall aim of our strategy is to empower people with disabilities so that they can enjoy their rights and participate fully in society. The European strategy identifies actions at EU level and it identifies the support needed for funding, research, awareness-raising, statistics and data collection.

The strategy focuses on eliminating barriers across eight main areas: accessibility, participation, equality, employment, education and training, social protection, health, and external action. These areas were selected on the basis of the overall objectives of the EU Disability Strategy, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the related policy documents from EU institutions and the Council of Europe, as well as the results of the EU Disability Action Plan 2003-2010, and a consultation of the Member States, stakeholders and the general public.

The organisation and management of services for persons with disabilities, such as access to personal assistance, the quality of such services and possible financial entitlements for using such services is the primary competence of the Member States. As is set out in the European Disability Strategy, the EC undertakes actions

to reduce social exclusion by targeted support of concrete actions through the European Social Fund under the framework of the European Platform against Poverty and ensures that disability specific issues are covered in any revision of legislation concerning pensions and benefits portability. Moreover, in the EU Disability High Level Group, the EC promotes the exchange of good practices among Member States.

### **What are the expectations of all concerning the future services for persons with disabilities?**

We must be careful with simply extrapolating current trends. There are very diverse expectations. One thing is certain: the process of ageing of our society will continue and that can only be a good thing for all of us, provided we manage to create a more inclusive and accessible society in which we use all means to enable citizens all life long to lead an active and independent life. Service providers will have to continue adjusting to that type of society. Because of economic reasons but also because of increasing staff shortages the technological and self-help components of those services are bound to become more important.

European Commission, DG JUSTICE, Unit for Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/index_en.htm)

### **Dr. Vasilka Dimoska, Program Manager, PORAKA, Skopje**

“Reforms cannot be done on project-based programmes without strong commitment of the authorities”



## Public and social services should be at the heart of Europe's concerns

Interview with Françoise Castex, Member of the European Parliament, President of the "Public Services" intergroup

### What are the main challenges facing public and social services today?

Public and social services comprise a sector that is not-for-profit. The situation of disabled people in society lies at the heart of the divide between commercial principles, which promote the exclusion of disabled people from society, and the guarantee of equality of access through appropriate specialised services within a mainstream environment.

It takes strong political will to ensure that public services are accessible and satisfy the needs of disabled people. Major and costly investments financed from public expenditure are essential.

### When do you expect to see full recognition by the European Union of the status of social services, their characteristics and specific needs?

Looking at social care providers, they are often private establishments, whether set up by a charity, by family members or a foundation. There are a whole series of establishments that are not yet recognised at European level in terms of status. The Commissioner Michel Barnier has promised us a European foundation statute, but that is not enough in itself and we do not have exact information regarding the time frame for establishing this statute.

All types of establishments providing social services which satisfy this not-for-profit principle should be recognised and should have special status releasing them from the rules on public contracts.

At present, competition is the motor that powers the European market. The single market does not sufficiently take social services into consideration. Competition should give way to the interest of the general public or social interest (i.e. not in itself general, but with a significant impact on social cohesion). Currently everything is left to the individual who may or may not have the means to access care services, which in turn leads to unacceptable inequality.



This is in fact the main concern of the intergroup "Public Services" which has stated that not everything can operate based on the principle of competition. What is needed is a special status and not a series of exceptions. In fact, we need positive recognition, not negative.

The recently-adopted De Rossa report (dealing with the future of social services of general interest, or SSGI) is still only an own-initiative report, the last in a long series. Now it is up to the European Commission to act. We need motors other than competition (solidarity, redistribution, etc.). We cannot use the pretext of a common market to sweep aside existing structures in order to impose a single model.

### How hopeful are you about progress on the directive on public procurement?

Personally, I am 'reasonably' hopeful because we have to continue fighting for it. You have to acknowledge that the rules enshrined in the Trea-



ties are important and work is needed to interpret the Treaties in a positive manner. However, you need a strong political will. The Competition Commissioner Joaquín Almunia said that he is bound by the Treaties in his handling of the case of SSGIs.

To take a specific example: in Italy, in the Emilia-Romagna area around Bologna, traditionally a religious order has been responsible for providing transport for sick people, running hospices, etc. This has effectively become a monopoly. This tradition has been maintained over centuries, while the services provided have been modernised to make them more effective. A complaint was submitted recently by private commercial services with respect to breach of competition law. The case is still on-going, nothing has been settled yet. The European Commission is facing a dilemma: in principle a call for tenders should be issued and the service should respect the right to competition, but this is not the case and in fact the service is operating very well with the current set-up.

Public authorities are not always 'clients' who issue a call for tenders in order to purchase a service they wish to offer the population. There are community services which function well. This is where a private initiative and the public interest meet. The rationale of government contracts does not apply and it would be absurd to hold a call for tenders.

To date, the Commission fully rejects this idea. And yet you cannot withdraw the right of a public authority to make political choices. However, since 2004, with the Services Directive, the field of services operates according to market principles.

### **What tools have been put forward by the Treaty of Lisbon for managing social services of general interest?**

The article on competition appears very late in the Treaty of Lisbon, only in Article 106 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), whereas Article 14 of the TEU deals with general measures. Recognition of the special nature of SSGIs is included in Article 14 and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The European Commission has misread the Treaty in saying that Articles 106 and 107 of the TEU take precedence over Article 14. That is to say that the right to competition takes precedence over any other principle within the framework of a single market. However, Article 14 is more specific with regard to SSGIs than Articles 106 and 107 which deal with state aid.

Law is not an exact science. The intergroup will need the support of civil society in order establish a balance of power with the Commission, because it alone can take the initiative in legislative terms and can choose the legal basis (giving precedence to Article 106 over Article 14 of the TEU). The intergroup is not representative of the European Parliament as a whole; however, thanks to the support of civil society the Parliament could be obliged to take a more enlightened attitude to SSGIs.

A meeting was held between the intergroup and civil society and it went well. We have to continue in this direction by thinking along the lines of political campaigning.

The intergroup will do everything in its power to prioritise debate with civil society in order to maintain a constructive and open approach to other key players. The intergroup has allies in the parliamentary inquiry commission, trade unions, and certain associations of selected rep-

representatives. The aim is to continue working in this way which could be the role of the intergroup (as an organ of coordination).

**In the last two and a half years there has been talk of a financial and economic crisis. Financing for the social sector is dropping while needs rise. What role can the “Public Services” intergroup play in this context?**

In the legislative package for economic governance (6 directives on the table) the Socialists voted against the negotiated text. The reason for this decision was that certain components were not included. For example, the Commission wants a rapid reduction of debt. The Socialists would like future social expenditure and investments not to be included in the volume of debt. You have to invest in the future! But this has yet to be achieved. For the present, the Parliamentary majority has approved these austerity measures.

In conclusion, the most vulnerable groups in society bear a double burden principally due to the difficult economic situation, because they are experiencing a reduction in support mechanisms and are the first to be hit by the crisis itself (redundancy, general instability in the workplace).

Intergroup Public Services:  
<http://www.publicservices-europa.eu/>



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## The role of technology in improving lives of people with disabilities

### Interview with Klaus Miesenberger, President of the Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe (AAATE)

**AAATE anticipated at an early stage the need to make the best use of available technologies for the benefit of persons with disabilities. Where does the association come from, what role does it play?**

AAATE was established in the 1990's following workshops, exchange and cooperation at the European level of researchers, service providers, companies, etc. The focus was the potential of new technologies, the need for accessible



mainstream technologies and the need for research, standardisation, guidelines and appropriate public policies in this field.

This led to the “critical mass” of interested pioneers who decided to start AAATE.

From the beginning AAATE had a strong contact with EU institutions. It was one of the driving forces to put in place programmes like TIDE (Technology Initiative for Disabled and Elderly). E-Inclusion is still high on the agenda of the European Commission and AAATE has been playing a major role in launching and accompanying this development.

AAATE plays the role of a platform for all stakeholders related to AT and its application in practice for the benefit of people with disabilities and the ageing population. AAATE is driven by its members and one of its key roles is to support members in their activities: dissemination, co-operation, exchange.

AAATE organises and co-organises events for exchange and co-operation, keeps in close contact with the European Institutions as well as national decision makers. It is also involved in projects where dissemination and involvement of stakeholders at national level are needed.

### **Can you give some typical examples of new technologies used nowadays in order to improve the life of persons with disabilities?**

It's a difficult question, as there are many new assistive devices becoming available for different target groups. Possibilities are actually unlimited! However, I have some examples in mind:

New navigation systems (based on GPS or even Galileo technologies) can support people with disabilities and ageing people to acquire or preserve their autonomy. In the past, navigation

systems were quite heavy and big; whereas they can now work on a smartphone you have in your pocket, taking into account your specific needs, including emergency features enabling you to feel safer. Miniaturization opens a world of possibilities in the AT field!

There are also sensor-based systems allowing people with severe mobility impairment to interact with ICT systems: they allow them to use very specific controlled movements or activities of users when interacting with ICT and thereby with all systems and services using ICT in our society.

Finally, I would like to mention systems supporting translation in “easy to read” language for better understanding for people with cognitive or learning difficulties, or even recent migrants who are not able to properly understand the language of the country they arrive in.

### **In your opinion, what kind of impact can we expect from new technologies on the way to manage/implement services for persons with disabilities?**

New technologies enable more and more people with disability to experience a greater autonomy. This allows and requires service providers to imagine new organisational structures and systems as they adapt to a rapidly changing situation. The needs are different in terms of staff training, time management, etc.

### **What are the key challenges/opportunities brought up by these new technologies?**

The potential of these technologies lies within the interaction with mainstream ICT systems and services: Everywhere, where ICT is used - and this is almost everywhere nowadays - assistive devices and functionalities provide a potential to

get access to the systems, but this only works, if the mainstream sector also respects and implements accessibility requirements. But accessibility of ICT is often not taken into account, or not enough, when it should be integrated from the earliest stage of design of any product.

### **Are specialised technologies doomed to disappear with the generalisation of a Design for All approach?**

I'm quite sure that specialised assistive technologies and services will not disappear as the situation is always an individual one. We will be able to provide access to more systems and services, but we will always need personal assistive tools and in particular personalised services.

### **What are your recommendations for the future?**

I have in mind a series of key action points:

- ★ **User driven research:** We still have to better address individual needs.
- ★ **Assistive and mainstream devices should be more customisable and adaptable:** The interrelation between specialised and mainstream technologies must be further explored in order to reach equal opportunities.
- ★ **The need for a better implementation of accessibility in the mainstream sector:** Instead of investing too much in specialised devices, further efforts should be made to promote Design for All.

★ **Technology is nothing without people able to use it!** Service providers for people with disabilities and people with disabilities themselves should be equipped with the needed competencies and approaches to get the best out of already available Assistive Technologies, as well as new ones.

AAATE: <http://www.aaate.net/>

### **User of the Norwegian Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (NFU)**

What we need is: "More individualized service, a more inclusive school, more jobs and more meaningful daily activities".



### **User of the Service Foundation for People with Intellectual Disabilities (KVPS), Finland**

"My opinions have been asked and taken into account when activities have been planned"



## The future of services to people with disabilities: *Where does PCT (Person Centred Technology) fit?*

Steve Barnard, Director of Information Strategy, Hft

The term, PCT, arose as part of a project funded by the European Social Fund, out of a resistance to putting traditional technology based solutions used by people with disabilities into 'silos', for instance Telecare for people who are ageing and environmental controls for people with physical disabilities. We are still in a technological revolution with new devices in the home and, particularly, mobile devices, being invented and marketed almost weekly. At the same time Europe is experiencing a major economic recession which EASPD are fighting to try and ensure that this is not seen as an obstacle to the 'personalisation' agenda.

PCT embraces all technologies, mainstream such as 'easy to use washing machines', 'low tech devices such as a device to warn you when the bath is full, and mobile devices to help you get around. PCT is not disability specific. There are an increasing number of stories showing how people's lives can be greatly im-

proved, making them less dependent but still safe by the use of technology. Technology can improve all people's opportunities to access their communities, increasing independence and employment opportunities while reducing statutory support. Although a great deal of effort and resources, allowing for the natural disparity between European partners, goes into the support of children and some specific disabilities there is still not the real drive to use technology generically to support all people living in the community.

EASPD have been leading the 'ImPaCT in Europe' project looking at PCT across Europe that has reinforced the view that many barriers to the use of PCT exist even though the evidence highlights the social and economic benefits.



### Hand in Hand Foundation, Hungary

"We think that it is really important to provide services individualized to the persons needs, and we believe every disabled person should get the help and support they need, but just as much they need"



## EASPD's strategy for the future: the next generation of support services!

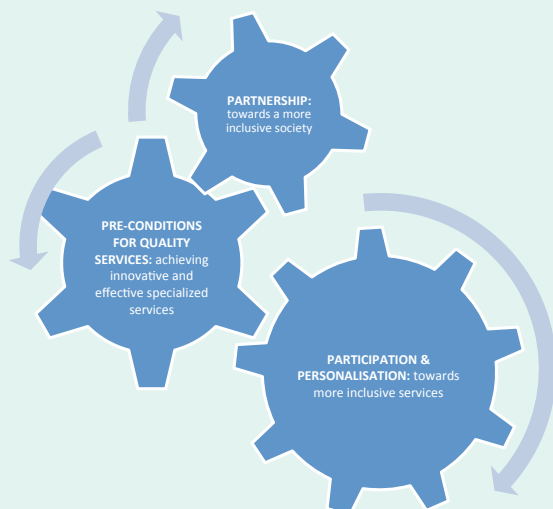
During 2011 all governance bodies of EASPD were invited to discuss the strategic orientation of the organisation. We live in a fast changing world and have to operate in rapidly shifting environments, as illustrated by the current economic and financial crisis. The UN adopted Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is now signed and ratified by more than half of EU member states and by the European Union. Thanks to this the way we perceive disability is changed forever.

When celebrating the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of EASPD we launched our **3 A's**. Services should be **Available**, **Accessible** and **Affordable**. Later we added **Adaptability** as a key concept symbolizing the capacity to follow changing needs.

Five years later EASPD clustered its work around three pillars, the so called **3 I's**. **Information**.... from the grassroots level to Europe and the other way around, **Innovation**... the promotion of research based developments in our sector and **Impact**. It was and is our ambition to give a voice to the concerns and contributions of service providers as the key sector representative at all levels in Europe.

New developments are leading us to a new approach. Services of the future should be based on **Partnership** amongst stakeholders from the social and health sector, mainstream and specialised. The overarching goal of services will remain **Participation**: support should be designed through a participative approach, facilitating inclusion in society. Services must respond to the changing needs and wishes of the individual. This is only possible through **Personalisation**, following the initiative and lead of the service user. In order to help achieve this, **Pre-conditions** for quality of services have to be in place, i.e. correct funding, stable and empowering legal frameworks and availability of skilled workers. The EASPD strategy 2011-2014 is built on **Partnership**, **Participation**, **Personalisation** and **Pre-conditions** for quality.

### OUR STRATEGIC CHOICES



### **PARTNERSHIP: towards a more inclusive society**

- ★ Development of a European network of social service providers to strengthen their voice
- ★ Structural relations with the ageing, assistive technology and social housing sector ensuring a disability support perspective.
- ★ Tailor-made support on the basis of cooperation between mainstream support providers and specialized services
- ★ Active participation in the Disability High Level Group of the EU and the Disability Platform of the Council of Europe
- ★ Intensive collaboration and open communication with organizations representing persons with disabilities and families, respecting the principle: 'nothing about us without us'

### **PARTICIPATION & PERSONALISATION: towards more inclusive services**

- ★ Promotion of inclusive service models in all sectors (education, employment, independent living, etc.)
- ★ Structural involvement of service users in quality assurance mechanisms and funding systems
- ★ Active cooperation with the Expert group on deinstitutionalisation
- ★ Promotion and further development of Lifelong learning schemes based on UNCRPD principles

### **PRE-CONDITIONS FOR QUALITY SERVICES: achieving innovative and effective specialized services**

- ★ Development of social dialogue instruments enabling employers and employees to address issues such as training, shortage of staff, working conditions.
- ★ Involvement in the debate on Social Services of General Interest, to make sure that quality of services is defined by the outcomes in terms of quality of life and not solely by costs.
- ★ Monitoring the impact of the crisis and promoting correct funding for services

Inspired by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, we hope to contribute to the development of a more accessible, social and caring Europe which respects and empowers people in need.



Our major challenge is to bring the support as much as possible to the people instead of bringing people to the support, building up new relations with all relevant stakeholders (schools, employment agencies, etc.). These stakeholders will become our new indirect clients, in addition to persons with disabilities, we will use our experience and skills to help them support people in an appropriate way to build inclusive communities and empowering services.

Indeed, ambitious plans require strong structures and skilled people. I'm convinced EASPD can fulfil its goals thanks to its very devoted team in Brussels and especially thanks to its committed membership.



Luk Zelderloo, Secretary General EASPD

Find more interesting contributions on our website at [www.easpd.eu](http://www.easpd.eu)



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#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact the EASPD office at [info@easpd.eu](mailto:info@easpd.eu) or  
Oudergemsesteenweg / Av d'Auderghem 63  
B-1040 Brussels ★ T +32 2 282 46 10

*This newsletter was prepared by Elisa Bruno and Hervé Gauthier. Feedback and comments are welcome and should be sent to [elisa.bruno@easpd.eu](mailto:elisa.bruno@easpd.eu).*



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