

FEBRUARY 2012



EASPD contributed to the Public consultation with a view to a European Accessibility Act

In the [Communication of November 2010 on the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#), the European Commission proposed to use not only legislative instruments but other measures, such as standardisation, to optimise accessibility for persons with disabilities and the elderly. It committed to explore the merits of adopting regulatory measures to ensure accessibility of goods and services through a 'European Accessibility Act'. This is a business-friendly proposal that will have the aim of improving the proper functioning of the internal market for accessible goods and services.

EASPD participated to the Public consultation with a view to the European Accessibility Act, launched by the European Commission, DG Justice on the 12 December 2011 and that closed on the 29 of February.

In its contribution EASPD pointed out that the UN Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities (UNCRPD) approach to disability should be upheld in the European Accessibility Act. Accessibility has a central role in ensuring an ac-

tive participation of persons with disabilities in the society and its achievement gets through a change in the shape of physical and human environment. This change requires a strong awareness about different needs.

EASPD underlined that a comprehensive approach of the UNCRPD should be taken into account to ensure accessibility of persons with both physical and intellectual disability.

The role of the European Union is to set out a general legislative framework, stating the main principles outlined in Article 9 of the UN Convention. It should be inspired by the most advanced laws on disability in force in European Members States and by a selection good practice in Europe. It is important that the European Accessibility Act issued by the European Commission will have a binding nature and that sanctions will be foreseen.

European, national, regional and local authorities have to cooperate to achieve full accessibility by working closely with specialised service providers and persons

with disabilities that can supply them with expertise, knowhow and sensitiveness. Services providers for persons with disabilities should rely on sustainable and predictable legislation and financial resources in order to play their role in an effective way, consequently enabling users to enjoy full rights as citizens in the society. Service providers can support authorities in achieving these goals, by creating agencies, working in close cooperation with persons with disabilities to provide expertise on accessibility (physical accessibility, e-accessibility, assistive technology...).



Vice-president and commissioner responsible for justice, fundamental rights and citizenship.

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“How the EU’s austerity policy is undermining the lives of people with disabilities”: ENIL hearing at the European Parliament

For more information on the event: [ENIL website](#)

On the 9th February 2012, EASPD participated to the public hearing at the European Parliament organized by ENIL and the European parliamentary group GUE/NGL (European United Left/Nordic Green Left). Its focus was to show the negative impact of the current EU austerity policies on people with disabilities. Three MEPs participated in the hearing/ Kartika Liotard, MEP, Netherlands, Cecilia Wikstrom, MEP, Sweden and Paul Murphy, MEP, Ireland.

The hearing was divided in two different panels. The first panel investigated the impact of the austerity measures on persons with disabilities. Throughout this first panel, four themes emerged: disability and policy, de-institutionalisation, disability and the media and individual accounts.

The second panel addressed the threat of cuts to people with disabilities’ rights at EU level. Some actions were identified to address the current situation and ensure that the rights of people with disabilities in the EU are upheld.

Simona Giarratano (European Disability Forum) explained how the cuts of local authorities funding can have knock on effects to other social services. On a societal level it is necessary to invest in people and in the quality of services for a Europe after the financial crisis.

Peter Lambreghts (ENIL and Onafhankelijk Leven) expressed the need to change the political leaders’ approach to disability. He pointed out that promoting social inclusion and reducing

poverty should be at the heart of the European Parliament’s agenda.

The hearing in the European Parliament was noteworthy for many reasons. Firstly, it raised awareness of the issues people with disabilities are facing in the current financial climate. Secondly, it conveyed the message that austerity measures are negatively impacting people with disabilities’ lives in a number of ways. These issues and how they are addressed should be at the heart of the European Union’s project. Finally, suggestions on further actions to be taken to ensure people with disabilities’ rights as citizens of the EU were addressed.





The European Ombudsman intervenes in NGOs behalf in a dispute with the European Commission

The European Ombudsman, Mr Diamandouros, received a complaint from a non-profit NGO towards the European Commission concerning an EU project.

The non-profit NGO Migration Policy Group (MPG) carried out an EU-funded project from 2004 to 2005 which involved 20 partner NGOs for a total amount of 600.000 € budget. After an audit in 2009, from the European Commission, a recovery order was made for the amount of 130.000 € because of documented staff costs had delivered too late. The coordinator,

MPG, justified it by that fact that it was difficult to gather information from the 20 partners in time.

MPG presented a complaint to the Ombudsman who stated the follow:

“The Ombudsman understood the complainant's argument that it was difficult for it, as leader of a project involving more than 20 different partner organisations from a number of EU countries, to retrieve originals or copies of the individual pay-slips of experts who were not directly engaged by MPG, but by partner orga-

nisations. The Ombudsman also found it reasonable to assume that such difficulties inevitably increase with the passage of time”.

The Ombudsman proposed to the European Commission to explain the conclusion of the audit and to possibly modify the decision made in the light of the documents received (staff costs from 20 partners).

Finally the European Commission refunded MPG of 70.000 €, thanks to the Ombudsman intervention.



For more information: [website of the European Ombudsman](#)

EASPD supports the European Year of Citizens 2013 Alliance

On 11 August 2011, the European Commission proposed to designate 2013 as the “European Year of Citizens” to mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the European Union Citizenship under the Maasticht Treaty in 1993. European civil society organisations and networks members of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) Liaison Group have created a civil society Alliance aiming to advocate on MEPs for a

broader understanding of European citizenship within the proposal to designate 2013 the European year of Citizens

The first meeting of this alliance took place on 27th January, in Brussels, chaired by Jean-Marc Rorant, President of the European Civic Forum.

The Alliance consists of European level civil society networks, EASPD included, which aim to coordinate the input of

its members towards the preparation and implementation of the next European Year.

With the coordination of the European Civic Forum, the Alliance will continue its lobby efforts to feed and endorse the work of the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Parliament in drafting their reports on the European Year of Citizens 2013.

For more information, [click here](#)

Committee of Experts on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CS-RPD): nominate new delegates

The Committee of Experts on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CS-RPD) is renewing its formation and will nominate new delegates.

The main tasks of the CS-RPD are

- ⇒ to assist member states in the promotion, implementation and follow-up of 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”;
- ⇒ to provide a platform for the exchange of informa-

tion, experience, knowledge and examples of innovative practices in a structured way, and for the development of co-operation and technical assistance projects;

- ⇒ to effectively coordinate relevant intergovernmental and intra-institutional co-operation in this area, taking into account the activities of other international organisations.

The CS-RPD - Committee of experts on the rights of people with disabilities will work in the light of the CoE Disability Action Plan 2006-2015 (cf. CM/REC(2006)5 here attached). In 2012, it will focus on the fundamental rights of children and

young people with disabilities (cf. Programme and budget 2012-13 - Human Rights - Equality and diversity).

Governments of member states are invited to appoint representatives with the relevant qualifications and/or responsibility in the field of protection and promotion for the rights of people with disabilities. Furthermore international organisations (as United Nations Organisation, World Health Organisation (WHO); International Labour Organisation (ILO) etc...) may also send their representative.

EASPD as observer member of this committee together with the European Disability Forum (EDF) and Rehabilitation International (RI), will send its representative to contribute to better implement the CoE Disability Action Plan 2006-2015.



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



EASPD supports the Freedom Guide of the European Disability Forum (EDF)

EDF Freedom of movement campaign states that: "Freedom of movement is a right under the EU treaties. Through the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) this right is further strengthened and clarified. Accessibility is a tool to benefit from freedom of movement, in addition to being a right in itself"

According to EDF:

- ⇒ 62,2% of Europeans with disabilities claim that existing barriers have already prevented them from travelling to another Member States;
- ⇒ 63.1% of interviewees do not believe that persons with disabilities can enjoy Freedom of movement under the same condi-

tions as other European citizens;

- ⇒ 56.4% of interviewees with disabilities consider transportation between EU Member States uneasy to use;

EASPD fully supports EDF's campaign:

"Freedom of movement" as persons with disabilities still cannot fully enjoy their Freedom of movement and have difficulties accessing mainstream goods and services, under the same conditions as any other EU citizen. EASPD believes in the equalisation of opportunities for people with disabilities through effective and high quality service systems. Therefore EASPD calls for provisions granting the right to access support services for people with disabilities. These services should be

made available and accessible for all who need them, and provisions should be taken to promote the training and professional development of staff working with people with disabilities so as to better provide the assistance and services needed for people to enjoy their rights fully (see Article 4, (1.i) UN Convention)".

For more information on the Freedom guide: [link to the EDF campaign](#)

we want



for All

EASPD launches the Linz Declaration on Independent Living for Ageing Persons with Disabilities

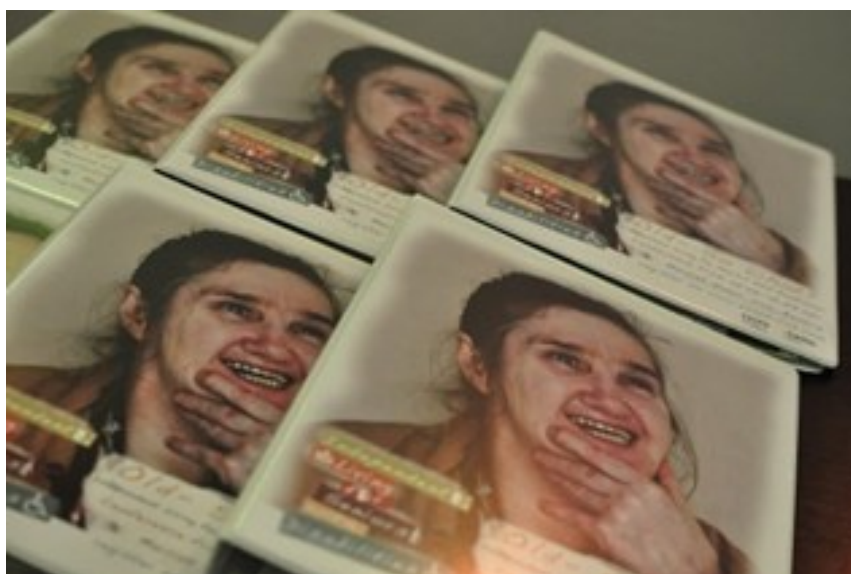
Today people with disabilities in Europe are living longer and in better health conditions thanks to positive developments in health treatment and societal achievements. In addition, people generally are living longer, and so many will acquire disabilities as part of that longevity. As a result, society is increasingly appreciating the contribution which older people with disabilities can make. These developments in longevity, welcome as they are, bring new challenges for persons with disabilities, social and health service providers, as well as fami-

lies and policy makers at a national and European level.

Therefore, EASPD launched the Linz Declaration on Independent Living for Ageing Persons with Disabilities supporting full inclusion of seniors with disabilities in society as a contribution to the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. It summarizes the most important political recommendations required to effectively implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It

also details the policies needed when developing a more inclusive society and high quality support systems for ageing persons with disabilities. The Declaration is based on the outcomes of the EASPD conference “Old? So what? Independent living for seniors with disabilities” which took place in July 2011 in Linz, Austria.

For more information on the Linz Declaration, please [click here](#)



WORDS FROM MEMBERS

The impact of public authorities' decisions on service providers in Romania

Hans Spalinger Association Cluj-Napoca is a NGO that supports people with disabilities. They developed 3 services: day care, curative education and counselling centre for 16 children with disabilities and their parents. This organisation is a non for profit organisation, giving services free of charge to the entire community of Cluj-Napoca.

Unfortunately, in 2011, the association lost the building allocated for these services by the Municipality. The contract with the Local Council Cluj-Napoca mentioned the building as unclaimed and it was given for free to the Hans Spalinger Association Cluj-Napoca. Afterwards another department of the local authority recognized the building to belong to a former owner, who was claiming for it. In the contract they signed, there was no specification that former owners were in court hearing

with the Municipality trying to regain it.

After important renovations of rooms were made, Hans Spalinger Association Cluj-Napoca has now to find another place where to run their important services. Moreover, the local authority did not take any action in providing another space for this association to continue working to support people with disabilities and their families. The negative answer from the municipality made impossible for the association to continue running its services in the same way as before.

Nevertheless, the services are currently running

thanks to a donation from a German sponsor, who offered to pay the rent until the 1st of July 2012. Moreover, the owner of the building is now renting out the building to the association for a symbolic amount of money.

The main issue now is to solve this situation by convincing the local authorities to pay for the rent for next year or to allocate a new structure to be used by the association.

Local authorities should proactively fund the work of organisations such as Hans Spalinger Association Cluj-Napoca, which are supporting people with disabilities in their

every day's lives. Public authorities should indeed promote services that are beneficial for their communities and not be of obstacle for them.

EASPD is supporting Hans Spalinger Association Cluj-Napoca by claiming public and local authorities to recognise the importance of having such a service in the community and to come in the hand of the association and therefore to people with disabilities as such.

A special thanks goes to Ovidiu Damian, Executive Director of Hans Spalinger Association Cluj-Napoca for providing us with this solid and authentic contribution.

For more information: <http://www.ahs.ro/>



Event Notification

**EASPD conference Ljubljana, Slovenia:
ME AND ME, Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities: Dual
Diagnosis?**

Austria Trend Hotel,
Ljubljana, 23-25. May
2012

Registrations are
now open:
[here!!](#)

People with intellectual disabilities are at higher risk of developing mental disorders in comparison to the general population. These disorders may also present themselves in different ways, which can mean they are not properly identified and therefore people do not receive the required support. Diagnosis and subsequent support process can be challenging and complex, especially for people who have severe and profound devel-

opmental disabilities.

EASPD, the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities, is organising an exciting conference taking place on the 24th and 25th of May 2012 in Ljubljana, Slovenia on the topic of dual diagnosis.

The conference “Me and Me. - Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities: Dual Diagnosis?” will be

organised in close cooperation with the Slovenian umbrella organisation SOUS and two of its member organisations Zveva Sonček and CUDV Draga.

We hereby invite you to participate at the conference.

For more information,
please contact:
[Sonia Staskowiak](#)



**International Workshop: Service Delivery Systems for
Assistive Technology in Europe**

Copenhagen, Bella Centre, May 21-22, 2012

The Workshop is organized by the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, in collaboration with the AAATE (Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe - the interdisciplinary pan-European association devoted to all aspects of assistive technology, such as use, research, development, manufacture, supply, provision and policy), the EASTIN Association (the European Information Network on Assistive Technology) and Health and Rehab Scandinavia (the biggest exhibition of assistive products in Northern Europe, taking place on May 22-24).

For more information on the event [AAATE website](#)

Participation is free for the invited speakers, for the Ministry officers and for the members of the AAATE and the EASTIN.

Other people who want to participate may wish to register as AAATE member or register for the Danish Assistive Technology Conference (at that time check the “Health Rehab Scandinavia” [website of the conference](#) for further details on how to proceed.

EASPD is participating to the seminar on the rights of workers in the workshop working environment, Forum Europe

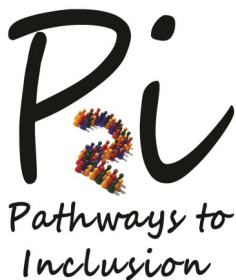
On the 9th of March the seminar *Status of the person in the workshop working environment* will take place in Nurnberg, Germany, in co-operation with BAG:WfbM.

The seminar is part of the annual Workshop Fair/Werkstätten Messe (www.werkstaettenmesse.de), organized by BAG:WfbM, taking place from the 8th to the 11th of March 2012.

For questions on the seminar please contact Sabrina Ferraina at: sabrina.ferraina@easpd.eu

13– 14 September 2012
Budapest, Hungary

Conference Pathways to Inclusion Inclusive education and learning: Challenges and opportunities



Organised by EASPD and the Association of Lifelong Learning in Hungary, in close cooperation with the 'Pathways to Inclusion' consortium.

The right to inclusive and high quality education is universal and applies to all children, youth and adults, including those with disabilities. Since the Salamanca Statement of 1994 and the UN Conven-

tion on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006, political initiatives have been taken in the field of legislation and educational reform within the 27 EU countries. In practice, however, reaching the goals of a society guaranteeing equal opportunities for all is still a challenging process. In many special as well as mainstream schools still much uncertainty and a lack of knowledge can be seen. For that reason, the *Comenius network 'Pathways to Inclusion' (P2i)* was developed almost 3 years ago.

As a follow-up, the Network's final Conference in Budapest on 13-14th

September 2012 will reflect on the current situation of inclusive education in terms of both policies and practices and identify the possible answers to today's challenges. While the focus of attention on the first conference day will be on the results of the P2i network, the scope on the second day will be broader, introducing the concept of inclusive education for all forms of lifelong learning, from pre-school to adulthood.

Online registration, programme and general information can be found on [website of the project](#) from May 2012 onwards.

Please note that the con-

ference programme is published in the database of the European Commission (<http://ec.europa.eu/education/trainingdatabase/>), which gives you the opportunity to apply for a grant at your National Agency until 30th April 2012.

It is a pleasure for us to invite you to this conference. For more information please [contact Ms Avau](#).



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