

JUNE 2011

## EASPD wants mistreatment in residential care to end

Triggered by the BBC documentary on severe abuse of persons with disabilities in a care home near Bristol in the United Kingdom, the debate with regard to quality of support services and the risks of neglect in large segregating settings is again on the political agenda across Europe. The documentary shows how staff mistreated service users in a systematic way. There was no sign of the key characteristics of good supportive services such as individualised support empowering people to make choices and above all involving them in the design and delivery of the service. From both a human rights and a service provider's perspective we reconfirm that community based, service user led support models are essential to minimise the risk of abuse and to ensure a high quality of life, and an active involvement in society. Community based services are services provided in the local community (independent living or supported housing services) freely chosen by the service users based on their support needs. The degree of abuse uncovered in the documentary was horrific. However the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) believes that the potential for abuse is endemic in all segregated and unregulated services, especially where market forces drive down costs.

### Support providers should be part of the solution, not of the problem

*"While watching this documentary I had different feelings", Franz Wolfmayr, President of EASPD, stressed. "Anger and shame. Anger because this type of abuse and violation of human right seems to still exist; shame for the good reason that services should support in such a way that people can live a decent life as respected citizens. Services should not degrade people. Authorities shall create the right conditions for the design of quality services".*

### Immediate actions are possible

EASPD calls on the Member States and the European Institutions:

To develop properly resourced deinstitutionalization strategies in all EU Member States and candidate countries. These plans should be set up in close cooperation with service users and providers

To avoid an excessive for profit and cost cutting approach by both commissioners and providers in the social and health sector

To fully use the Structural Funds to facilitate the establishment of community based support systems and

for the retraining of staff active in the sector

To ensure services are independently regulated

To provide sustainable funding and stable legal frameworks for innovative person centred services and to reallocate the funding of large segregating settings.

To include quality of life parameters, inclusion and community participation as key outcome indicators in the quality assurance systems. The quality assurance systems should be based on the voluntary Quality Framework launched by the Social Protection Committee.

To implement Life Long Learning strategies for staff and organize a real social dialogue looking at the working conditions in the sector.

EASPD representing over 9000 service providing organisations is committed to working with users, their families and other stakeholders to combat these dangers across Europe.

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### Coalition “Platform 19” urges for end of institutionalization

The coalition, called Platform 19, *“urges all political decision-makers to put an end to institutionalization by investing in the development of community-based alternatives. The human rights of all people with disabilities must be respected and their equal status with other citizens must be ensured.”*

The coalition argues that people with disabilities *“face social exclusion more often than other citizens and among people with disabilities those with intellectual and/or psycho-social disabilities are most often institutionalized and removed from the community”*.

The development of support services within the community would facilitate social inclusion of these vulnerable groups of citizens. According to the statement of the Coalition, *«the vast majority of people with disabilities in Croatia have no appropriate support to live in the community and almost 8,000 people live in in-*

*stitutions, segregated from society.”*

The petition recalls the basic principles of equal rights and social justice recognized by the Croatian constitutional system to ask for better inclusion of people with disabilities in the community. The international agreements ratified by Croatia in 2007 (*United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and its Optional Protocol, together with the *Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion of the Republic of Croatia* in the process of accession to the EU) provide also a legal basis committing Croatian government to take action in this field.

The Coalition is planning to meet with all decision-makers at local and national level within the first stage of this project. These meetings involve national MP’s from all political parties and representatives from 31 local governments. The launch of a public cam-

paign at national level is foreseen in the second stage.

EASPD supports the initiative of Platform 19 claiming for the basic right of people with disabilities to live included in society and encourages its members as well as general public to support and disseminate this petition. The rights of all people with disabilities must be respected and decision makers must provide the measures to put these rights into action.

### Project news on ABI (Acquired brain injuries)

Since the 1st October 2009, EASPD is involved in the project 'ABI'. ABI is an EU project, funded by the Leonardo Da Vinci programme of the European Commission and will last 25 months.

Acquired brain injuries (ABI) cause huge medico-social problems in the western countries. Many of the individuals, who have suffered a severe brain injury and who are living in the community today, would have likely not survived their injuries 25 years ago. They are facing, however, the often extensive and wide ranging consequences of ABI.

ABI is a lifelong injury, which has a huge impact on a persons' functioning across the lifespan. The long-term care these people need, poses new questions and problems, not well understood or treated.

As, so far, no formal specialised training is available for long-term ABI service providers in the partner countries, this project is responding to the growing need for training at European, national and institutional level, in order to improve the quality of services for persons with an acquired brain injury.

European experts in the field of long term rehabilitation and support for

persons with a brain injury and in the field of vocational education and training are developing a training programme in order to support care givers. During the last project meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> and the 27<sup>th</sup> of May 2011, which took place in Linz (Austria), the draft version was reviewed. The final version of the programme will be presented during the final conference of the project in Ljubljana (Slovenia) on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2011.

More information to be found on <http://www.abi-project.eu/>



### EASPD is involved in EGDMS, a project currently developing a European reference for the training for Guide Dog Instructors

EGDMS stands for European Guide Dogs Mobility Standards. This 2-year project is co-funded by the European Commission (Leonardo Da Vinci – Transfer of Innovation). It started in October 2010 and aims to develop a European-wide model for the training of Guide Dog Instructors, in order to improve the quality of life of blind and partially sighted people and to increase mobility oppor-

tunities for them. They will eventually have the possibility to chose a guide dog school meeting quality requirements defined at European level. The project will also help raise awareness about the fantastic potential of guide dogs (their potential is not recognised equally in all European countries) and might also increase mobility opportunities for guide dog instructors.

EGDMS is very innovative, as CEN (the European Committee for Standardization) is part of the partnership. In the timeframe of the project, a CEN Workshop Agreement should be finalised, which is a first step towards a future standard. The Workshop is open to all, so feel free to register and contribute !



### Fifth Music Festival for People with Disabilities “Supremacy of the Spirit – Devin 2011” in Devin, Bulgaria

From 24<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> August 2011, the Fifth Music Festival for People with Disabilities “Supremacy of the Spirit – Devin 2011”, a competition with a professional jury, organized by Start Foundation, Bulgaria will take place. The Music Festival is supported by BNT, BNR, Devin Municipality, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Az Buki Newspaper, Tema Magazine, Ars Digital Studio and Dynacord. With the implementation of the International Music Festival the organisers aim at motivating

children and young people with physical difficulties for creative realization. They would like to show their spirit, strength and to help them develop like everyone else.

The Bulgarian National Television traditionally broadcasts the Festival days from Devin on December 03.

The Start Foundation would like to invite talented performers with attendants from abroad to participate in the competition. Start Foundation will bear the expenditure for transportation /Sofia-Devin-Sofia/, food and

hotel for the first 6 people, the rest should pay 200€ participation tax, more people could be included.

categories:

From 5 to 29 years old

From 30 to 45 years old

They need to be able to sing, dance or play an instrument.

For further information, please contact Mrs. Stefka Djoneva or Mrs. Kristina Aleksandrova the “Start” Foundation on [fstart@abv.bg](mailto:fstart@abv.bg), [www.startfoundation.eu](http://www.startfoundation.eu)

### Registration for EASPD Conference on “Old – so what? Independent Living for seniors with Disabilities” on 30<sup>th</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011 in Linz still possible

On 30<sup>th</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011, EASPD, in close cooperation with Caritas für Menschen mit Behinderungen Linz, will bring together important stakeholders and experts from all over Europe to discuss independent living and individualized support in mainstream services for older persons with disa-

bilities. We are very much looking forward to welcoming you to participate in the debates and to exchange models of good practice from across the continent. Come and join us in Linz!

The full programme and registration is available at [www.easpd-linz.com](http://www.easpd-linz.com)

Registrations for the Project Development Workshop are also open. You can register on the general registration form of the conference <http://www.easpd-linz.com>

