



EASPD NEWSFLASH

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EU NEWS



Editorial: Three proposals for a European Spring

It is confirmed.... springtime has finally arrived in Europe, after a long, dark and rainy winter. Some might view that as normal, coming from someone living in Brussels. Yet, for once, even the Mediterranean countries had to wait a while before thermometers started to warm up and show a more respectable temperature.

However, disappointingly, our long-awaited political spring has yet to come. The same could be said regarding the dire state of our economy!

Indeed, the political headquarters in Brussels , Berlin, London and Paris and the various economic barometers keep telling us that this crisis is far from over. Although there does seem to be a few glimpses of light at the end of the tunnel.

Previous crises have shown us that the social and health sector is always hit later by a crisis than other sectors in society. Please forgive what might appear to be a sarcastic remark but it clearly takes Authorities quite a bit of time to convince their citizens that reducing support to those most in need is the right thing to do, and that indeed they are necessary measures to fully recover from the crisis. Indeed, it's a

tough job! Not only are these sectors hit later but the impact also lasts longer and goes deeper. Even when the economy regains speed the downwards trend keeps on going for an additional few years for our sector.

So it is an evidence-based statement saying that the crisis has only just began for our sector. The crisis and its consequent austerity will hit our sector harder and deeper than it has already recently done. Services will have to work with fewer resources, working conditions will further deteriorate and persons with disabilities will have to face an even less disability-friendly environment over the upcoming years. Despite all the goodwill and promises, despite the UN convention and a change in approach at EU level – thanks to the Social Investment Package – the inconvenient truth is that the poor, the disabled and the home/countryless will pay the highest cost for this crisis; increasing poverty, exclusion and marginalization on its way. Yet again, forgive my sarcasm... but it is clear that they'll probably just only have to pay a speck more than the royals we celebrated so enthusiastically over the last weeks, as well as than the CEOs from industry and the bankers.

Dear Mr. Barroso, Mr. Van Rompuy and Mr. Schulz, we're only one (1) year away from very important European elections, elections that will have a decisive impact on the future of the Union... You have to act now! Urgent action is needed to restore trust in the institutions and to prove the relevance of the EU for its citizens, unless we want the nationalist UKIPs of Europe to rule.

The importance of the EU regarding peace on the continent might be convincing for the older generations but not for the rest of society. For them decent jobs, cultural enrichment, social justice and real involvement in building the Europe of tomorrow would be more convincing.

Dear European leaders, you might argue back that what was said previously is easy to say but to act on a lot harder. Well in response, here's a few useful ideas the European NGOs and civil society which we believe could help you out.

Being active in the disability sector, I'll focus on 3 disability specific proposals which would bring optimism to those people in need and currently suffering from austerity measures throughout Europe.

1. Member States have to present their reform plans addressing the challenges they see with regard to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. This is the so-called European semester machinery. We call on the EC to include in its remarks (country specific recommendations) a well-developed disability perspective. By promoting inclusive education, decent jobs and community support as alternatives to segregation and exclusion the EU would give people the "hope" they so necessarily need. Please make sure to communicate this correctly...the relevant organizations would obviously be willing to help.
2. Develop an instrument to assess austerity plans and policies evaluating the effect of this policy, plan or strategy on the quality of life of those most vulnerable. Quality of life indicators were developed in the disability sector years ago. By mainstreaming this type of instruments we can avoid the distorted effects of – let's hope – well intended policies. It would prove the EU cares for the quality of life of their citizens. This instrument should become part of the mechanism available to develop qualitative legal frameworks at both EU and Member State level. Again, we'd most certainly be able to give a hand.
3. In some counties, our service providers are facing serious shortages of staff. This is somewhat odd in the middle of a crisis having high unemployment rates and a huge increase of unmet needs. Obviously the social and health sector have lost their attractiveness and young people seem to have other career expectations. For sure we, the not-for-profit employers, have to work on this but Europe could also contribute through the creation of a European framework providing solutions to the various bottlenecks we are experiencing. With the right support our sector could easily create 1 million jobs; jobs that would also facilitate the full enjoyment of human rights for persons with a disability. If that is not a win-win situation I'm not sure what is! We would fight both unemployment in Europe whilst also create a more inclusive society. The institutions should help us to unlock the job creation potential through a framework launching a Europe-wide awareness raising campaign, by supporting social dialogue in the sector and by promoting investment in people.

What type of Europe will people vote for in a year from now? A Europe that gently pushes people in to poverty and exclusion or a true union that gives hope by promoting solidarity and investment in social cohesion?

I think and hope that we all know the answer to that.

Luk Zelderloo

European Innovation Partnership established by the European Union

PERSON CENTRED TECHNOLOGY (PCT): WHY WOULD YOU WANT SOMEONE SLEEPING IN YOUR HOUSE IF YOU DON'T NEED IT?

It is common practice in some cultures for paid or family carers to sleep in someone's house just in case they may be required to intervene, for instance if they have an epileptic seizure or if leaving their room creates anxieties. Person centred technology can provide the means for someone to be supported in their home without the need for carers to be present, whilst maintaining their safety. The recession is putting pressure on national and local governments to reduce the cost of care. Night cover is regarded as a high cost. Consequently, commissioners are asking for technology to be used for a reduction of night covers to reduce the financial burden. Does this mean that if there was a boom in the economy commissioners would be happy to increase night cover, whether someone needed it or not? Surely the values of care providers and EASPD is to strive to support people to increase their independence and safety, however the particular culture interprets these values.

Members of the Interest Group on Person Centred Technology have been looking for a vehicle to take the work forward. It still remains quite difficult to secure an EU or ESF meaningfully-funded project for a variety of reasons such as structures and bureaucracy. Particular reference should be made of the work of AIAS in attempting

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to secure a meaningful project that would capitalize on the work of EASPD and AAATE.

The European Union has now established a European Innovation Partnership, which for the first time brings together different directorates. Although this does not generate additional funding opportunities, it might lead to projects that have more emphasis on social outcomes which would be of real interest to the EASPD membership.

One confusing outcome of the restructuring of the EU directorates is that the e-Inclusion department has been taken out of the newly formed DG Connect, which is responsible for the Digital Agenda!!!!

Steve Barnard
Hft,
Director of Information Strategy

In 2012 EASPD restarted its special Interest Group on Person Centred Technology (IG on PCT). This interest group will monitor all relevant policy and technology developments, important for the disability sector.

If you want to be part of this interest group or would like to keep informed, please contact Sonia.staskowiak@easpd.eu (facilitator IG on PCT).

The evolving concept of sheltered workshops in the EU: realities and future developments

On the 27th of March, EASPD, BAG:WfbM, Unapei and ETA, in cooperation with MEP Mr *Ádám Kósa* and MEP Dr Dieter-Lebrecht Koch held a conference in the European Parliament on the evolving concept of sheltered workshops in the EU.

Stakeholders, relevant organizations, disabled people organizations and experts from all over Europe gathered to discuss realities and future developments of sheltered workshops in Europe with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities (UN CRPD) as the starting point.

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During the event, the results of the two-year cooperation between EASPD, BAG:WfbM and Unapei on the sheltered workshops sector in Europe were presented. The aim of the research project was to understand the role and the value of sheltered workshops as European policies focus almost exclusively on the open labour market. Moreover the debate focused on the needed future developments for the sector in light of the UN CRPD.

Four main topics were highlighted during the debate at the European Parliament:

- The unclearness in the definitions used in Europe jeopardizes the full understanding at EU level of issues related to work and employment of persons with disabilities and of the disability sector
- Sheltered workshops give working opportunities to persons with disabilities that meet their needs and that are not yet available, for many of them, in the open labour market. They also offer possibilities for vocational rehabilitation, training and ad-hoc support in all fields of life
- The implementation of the UN CRPD is challenging for this sector and calls for some adaptations: a full and joint cooperation of different stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, is needed to preserve and to enforce the rights of persons with disabilities working in sheltered workshops
- The EU should help to realize the rights of persons with disabilities by promoting the development of a spectrum of services, ensuring that every person receives the support needed to enjoy the right to work and employment

EASPD, BAG:WfbM and Unapei call for a stronger commitment of the EU to speed up the efforts to create an inclusive working environment and labour market.

A newsletter and three factsheets on sheltered workshops, as well the full reports of the study conducted in cooperation with BAG:WfbM and Unapei are available on the EASPD website.

For more information please contact Ms Sabrina Ferraina at:
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Sabrina Ferraina

6th Fundamental Rights Platform meeting

Since January 2103, EASPD is part of the Fundamental Rights Platform (FRP), the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) network for cooperation with over 300 civil society organisations working on a variety of fundamental rights issues across the European Union.

Every year the FRP organises a meeting in order to facilitate exchange and debate between its members. This year the focus was on non-discrimination and hate crime. Issues such as the 2008 draft 'horizontal' anti-discrimination directive, its freeze, and the reasons why it is needed were tackled during engaging panel discussions.

An important moment for FRP members was the 'Floor is yours': an open space where participants were invited to hold workshops on diverse issues related to human rights. EASPD took part to this session on behalf of the European Expert

Group on the Transition from Institutional to Community Based Care (EEG)¹ with the workshop 'Locked-up... Keys thrown away?', on the right to community living.

The objective was to give a comprehensive view on what institutions are and on the work done by the EEG in order to facilitate the move to community based care. This was helped by the introduction, where Pamela Sanders talked about her real-life experience as a former care-user of a child institution. After that, Gabor Petri, Mental Health Europe human rights officer, presented the report 'Mapping Exclusion'² the first European report on institutional and community care in the mental health field in Europe. His intervention focussed on the difficulty of finding reliable data and information on institutions and people living in institutions, related to the lack of clear definitions on institutional care. Finally, Irene Bertana, EASPD Policy Officer,

¹ The EEG is a broad coalition gathering stakeholders representing people with care or support needs including children, people with disabilities, people experiencing mental health problems, families; as well as service providers, public authorities and intergovernmental organisations. The EEG consists of the following organisations: [COFACE \(Confederation of Family Organisations in the EU\)](#), [EASPD \(European Association of Service Providers for People with Disabilities\)](#), [EDF \(European Disability Forum\)](#), [ENIL/ECCL \(European Network on Independent Living/European Coalition for Community Living\)](#), [ESN \(European Social Network\)](#), [Eurochild](#), [FEANTSA \(European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless\)](#), [Inclusion Europe](#), [Lumos](#), [Mental Health Europe](#), [OHCHR Regional Office for Europe](#) and [UNICEF](#).

² http://www.mhe-sme.org/publications/reports/mapping_exclusion_report.html

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presented the work made by the EEG on the “Common European Guidelines on the Transition from Institutional to Community Based Care” and the “Toolkit on the Use of European Union Funds for the Transition from Institutional to Community Based Care”³, explaining how the work of the Expert Group started and the reasons behind these two publications.

The overall impression on these two days conference was very positive. FRA is doing a lot of efforts to involve the FRP members in a meaningful way and to facilitate a real exchange of good practice among them. The only bad point to this meeting, also present in the agency working programme for the next years, is the lack of focus on economic and social rights. Only one brief session was dedicated to them during the conference and this was on the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) system of collective complaint. It goes without saying that not everything should be focused on economic and social rights, but, particularly in this moment of crisis, not mentioning the lack of access to these rights is limiting the understanding and the analysis of phenomena such as the raise of hate crimes. Of course, it might be a bit difficult for an EU agency such as FRA to insert the crisis and its social consequences into the picture, when at the same time the EU is pushing for austerity measures throughout Europe. EASPD is determined to positively contribute to the general work of the platform also by trying to bring this kind of perspective and approach.

Social Investment Package and the social dimension of EMU

Over the last few months, civil society organisations committed to the social field worked significantly to analyse and react to the Social Investment Package (SIP), published by the European Commission in February.

EASPD is working on its own reaction paper that will be published after the General Assembly that will take place in Thessaloniki on 1st June. At the same time, we also

³ [deinstitutionalisation guide](#)

contributed to the Social Services Europe Response⁴ to the SIP and to the one from the Social Platform of European Social NGOs⁵.

EASPD is one of the co-founders of Social Services Europe, the network of social service providers representing 100.000 service providers throughout Europe. Their response to the Package generally welcomes its paradigm shift, from an approach to social expenditure seen as a cost to the focus on return of investments. As such, Service providers have offered a partnership to the Commission in the implementation of the package, underlining that this will depend on the co-operation of national and local governments, the appropriate use of the EU Structural and Innovation Funds, the governance process of the European Semester and the partnership approach with social service providers at EU, national and local level.

The Social Platform of Social NGOs also underlines the opportunity that the Package represents for re-orienting policies towards a re-balancing of social and economic policies both at EU and member state level and towards an alternative to the current austerity measures. However, the Platform also expresses some concern on some of the elements of the package, and in particular to the lack of emphasis on human rights, as well as on the use of the term “conditionality” when talking about social investment. Their third point refers to implementation, recommending to include in it references to anti-discrimination legislation, to the role played by the State as social investor, to the need for quality employment and to the job creation potential in the social and health sector. Additionally, they underline that an effective implementation of the Country Specific Recommendations is crucial to allow the implementation of the Package.

On 2-3 May EASPD representatives attended the conference of the European Commission presenting the SIP⁶, where participants were invited to contribute to the discussion on the implementation of the SIP around the three pillars of investment, innovation and involvement. Our general impression from this event is that the Commission is trying to establish a meaningful dialogue with civil society and that the overall direction of the EU towards social policy in particular -and policy as a whole- is changing towards a positive direction. On the other hand, there is a real risk that the impact of the package could be reduced to good intentions by the European institutions followed by little concrete action by Member States. Indeed, the

⁴ [easpd website](#)

⁵ http://cms.horus.be/files/99907/MediaArchive/MembersRoom/Steering_Group_%28SG%29/20130426_SocialPlatform_positionpaper_SIP_final.pdf

⁶ Conference conclusions: [europa.eu- press release](#)

Package's main problem is that is not binding for Member States and that its implementation is in the hands of the European Semester, which currently has a very limited impact upon the policy-making process of each Member State.

One of the elements that will play a key role in the near future on the implementation of SIP and in the shift towards an increasingly social Europe is the debate around the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). The European Council of June 27th and 28th will decide on a roadmap for its implementation. EASPD will intervene in this debate calling for the need for a more socially-oriented Europe.

For more information please contact Ms Irene Bertana at: irene.bertana@easpd.eu

PROJECT UPDATES



European Thematic Network on Assistive information technology (ETNA)

EASPD is involved in this project, supported by the European Commission through the CIP ICT-PSP programme. The ETNA network involves 23 European leading organisations, each with acknowledged commitment to ICT and Assistive technologies (AT) in 13 countries. It is coordinated by the Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer of the Don Carlo Gnocchi Foundation (Italy). This project aims to co-ordinate - over a period of three years - the implementation of a European Web Portal which provides information on ICT-based assistive products and e-accessibility solutions which are available in Europe, as well as on related organisations and services.

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AT, especially based on ICT, is a powerful driver for inclusion and quality of life for people with disabilities. By providing compensation for functional limitations or allowing access to mainstream products or services, ATs play an increasingly central role in equalising opportunities for people with disabilities in all aspects of life, as they help to cope with barriers in all types of environment.

The ETNA and the ATIS4All networks are jointly working on the creation of a European Web Portal. The Portal – expected to be released at the end of 2013, in agreement with the EASTIN Association, with the name EASTIN 2.0 – will evolve from the current EASTIN system (EASTIN website). It will include the ETNA information system and a community connecting all stakeholders.

Overall, the ETNA Thematic Network is proceeding towards the achievement of its objectives:

- Make information on available AT products and e-accessibility solutions more transparent and easily available to everybody, in such a way to contribute to 1) the empowerment of citizens with disability in relation to the knowledge and the choice of AT, and 2) the advancement of the AT market, which will have to respond to a wider audience of informed, demanding and responsible consumers across the whole European Union;
- Connect developers, providers and suppliers of AT solutions from all over Europe, by improving exchange of knowledge, ideas and open source tools, overall contributing to the advancement of R&D and help companies benefit from a wider market potential;
- Connect researchers, developers, professionals, and end-users of AT. This way, the network will help include the user's viewpoint and improve public service delivery systems, by making transparent across Europe the variety of regulations, standards and procedures, and bringing to light best practices that can be adopted and localised;
- Support mainstream developers in the development of ICT products intended for the general public, enabling them to find information and resources instrumental for creating more accessible products, or products that are compatible with current and future AT products.

For more information on the ETNA project: info@etna-project.eu or [etna project website](#)

Or via EASPD: Katrijn.Dekoninck@easpd.eu



The ETNA Consortium in Linz, July 2012

My Rights – My Voice (MR-MV)

STAFF TRAINING BY PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ON THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



As we are approaching the midway point of the 3 year project MR-MV, it is time for a round-up and a glance at future developments. Having finished the training in Bulgaria, Hungary and Germany, we still have another upcoming training session in Wales in June.

People who have already received the training are now ready to become trainers of professionals working in the field of service provision. Working with and around the content of the UNCRPD has demonstrated its added value. Trainees felt that because of the training the importance of their rights became clearer. As a result the trainers expressed their hope that the new trainers will continue to receive high quality support after the lifetime of the project so they can work as professional trainers on the UN Convention.

After the last train the trainer session in Cardiff, Wales, this programme will be further evaluated and the next steps discussed. The training course will then be adapted into a 3 day course to be used in 2013/2014 to train service providers. Pictures, quotes and evaluations can be expected in our next newsletter, which will be distributed in September. Until then, have a look at our website (www.myrightsmyvoice.eu). If you want to learn more about the project you can contact the project coordinator Johannes Ungar (johannes.ungar@innovia.at), or Sonia Staskowiak (sonia.staskowiak@easpd.eu). The project newsletter and the easy to read leaflet can be downloaded from the website.



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The TIDE project kicked-off in Cardiff!

On 13th and 14th May the partners of the TIDE project, Towards Inclusive Development Education, gathered in Cardiff for the project's kick-off meeting. The project is financed by EuropeAid, the Commission's Directorate-General responsible for designing EU development policies and delivering aid through programmes and projects across the world.

Since people with disabilities who have intellectual, learning or speech and language disabilities are a considerable proportion of the population (between 2% and 5%), TIDE's objective is to involve teenagers and young adults with intellectual or multiple disabilities in development education activities and in programmes that aim to create a wider support in society for fairer relationships between developed and developing countries.

In order to reach this goal, TIDE will develop communication channels and appropriate contents, adapted and geared to the specific needs of people with

disabilities to ensure that they enjoy full access to relevant sources of information. This project wants to show that having a disability is not an obstacle to become promoters of justice, human rights and sustainable lifestyles.

The partnership comprises EASPD and 7 organisations from 4 European countries⁷ from both the disability and the development fields. The Development Education experts from Cyfanfyd, COSPE and the Cromo Foundation have a long track in designing and implementing development education activities in formal and informal education. Yet, they have less know-how regarding how to address the challenge of working with people with intellectual disabilities outside formal education. Partners such as Learning Disability Wales, AIAS Bologna, EFOESZ and FAIDD have expertise in supporting young people with disabilities in their process of developing their full potential, but might lack knowledge regarding global issues and the international networks of development NGO's. The logic is that each partner will be able to benefit from the others' expertise in order to achieve the project objectives.

The partners will collaborate in establishing a broad common framework for learning workshops and for the materials and resources that will be the project's end-products. During the closing stages of the project, a range of development education and awareness raising materials about the MDG's in accessible formats will be produced, used and disseminated across Europe. The results will be presented in Bologna in September 2015 during the project's final conference that will involve EASPD members.

EASPD, representing more than 10000 service providers in 32 European states, will host on its upcoming web site the project outputs and play a key role in disseminating the project results across its membership.

For more information please contact Ms Irene Bertana at: irene.bertana@easpd.eu



This project is funded by the European Union

⁷ Learning Disability Wales and Cyfanfyd from Wales, COSPE and AIAS Bologna from Italy, Cromo Foundation and EFOESZ from Hungary and FAIDD from Finland.

EVENTS NOTIFICATION

EASPD's Conference: additional information

EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: RAISING AWARENESS & EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

27-28 SEPTEMBER 2013, ISTANBUL

Market place

In the afternoon of the 2nd day of the conference, a market place will be held in the conference venue.

During the market place, different individuals, organisations and project partnerships will have the opportunity to show and present their work, their projects, the services offered by them and their current areas of interest and research. The market place will be an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas and best practices, display PR material, booklets and leaflets and to network on topics of common interest.

Organisations applying and shortlisted will have a stand to display their information.

To apply for a place at the market place and for further information, please contact Ms Sabrina Ferraina at sabrina.ferraina@easpd.eu.

NEWS IN BRIEF:

New languages available for the Common European Guidelines and the Toolkit on the use of Structural Funds

The common European Guidelines on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care and the Toolkit on the Use of European Union Funds for the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care are now available in the following languages: Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Polish, Lithuanian, and Romanian.

All versions are downloadable from the following website:

[deinstitutionalisation guide](#)

Other languages will be uploaded in the upcoming weeks.

Change in EASPD Staff

It is with regret that we have recently seen the departure of two of our trainees, Francesco La Rocca and Riccardo Beltrame. Both had been working for us over the past year and have contributed significantly to the work of the office during this time.

EASPD wishes them luck in further developing their respective careers, be it in their home country, Italy, or elsewhere. We can be sure that they will bring an added value to whatever professional opportunity they find in the future, each with their own respective qualities.

However, with every departure, we seem to welcome new trainees to the team.

Raffaella Palumbo has recently joined us and will work with both the Policy and Communications team and the Projects team, over the next 6 months. Similarly to both Francesco and Riccardo, her traineeship for us will be financed by the Fondazione CRT, which gives Italians the opportunity to work with civil society organisations through a generous grant system. We wish to thank Fondazione CRT for yet again allowing such a talented young professional to join our team in Brussels.



European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD)
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Thomas Bignal has also recently joined the team for the next three months in order to help us improve the content of our upcoming website. As a native English-speaker with already some experience in European Affairs, he will be working with everybody in the office to gather data in order to provide our future web-visitors with useful and interesting information about what we do and how we operate as an organisation.