

2020

# EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF SERVICE  
PROVIDERS FOR PERSONS WITH  
DISABILITIES



# WHO WE ARE

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Located in Brussels, the European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) represents over 17,000 support service providers for persons with disabilities.

Driven by our members and supported by a team of professional staff, EASPD strives to deliver high-quality services that promote the full participation and inclusion in society of all persons with disabilities. Alongside our 160 members we strongly believe that support services for people with disabilities play a major role in enabling people to enjoy their human rights on equal basis with others.

Since its establishment in 1996, EASPD has promoted the provision of effective and high-quality service systems across Europe which empower people with disabilities.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2020 was an intense year for Europe and the rest of the world, and the communication activities of EASPD have reflected this. The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown caused serious difficulties to the social care sector, as service providers had to adapt to ensure continuity of service due to staff shortages, lack of adequate equipment and scarce funds. Covid-19 also made persons with disabilities more vulnerable and at risk of being unable to enjoy their human rights on an equal basis to others. 2020 further proved social services are essential services and, as such, they should receive adequate support (in terms of both policymaking and funding) from the European Union institutions and Member States.

To raise awareness on such topics and to support its members, EASPD organised a Covid-19 webinar series running from March to June. Participants had the chance to exchange promising practices and hear directly from European Union representatives what measures and policies the European Union was going to adopt to support the social care sector. A dedicated Facebook group was also opened to allow its members to share good practices and advice on service provision during Covid-19 times.

In May 2020 EASPD launched its #SocialServicesAreEssentialServices Campaign, to raise awareness for the importance of investing into the provision of high-quality support services, and to draw the European Union institutions' attention to the challenges faced by the social sector that were exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.



Via its website, articles, regular newsletters, social media and video updates EASPD has continued to keep its members and external partners updated on the latest news, policy developments, events, publications and innovative practices related to our sector.

With EASPD committed to ensuring full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) and creating a more inclusive Europe for people with disabilities EASPD's communication activities have continued to play an important role in promoting their correct implementation and application. To find out more about EASPD's work, please read our 2020 Annual Report.

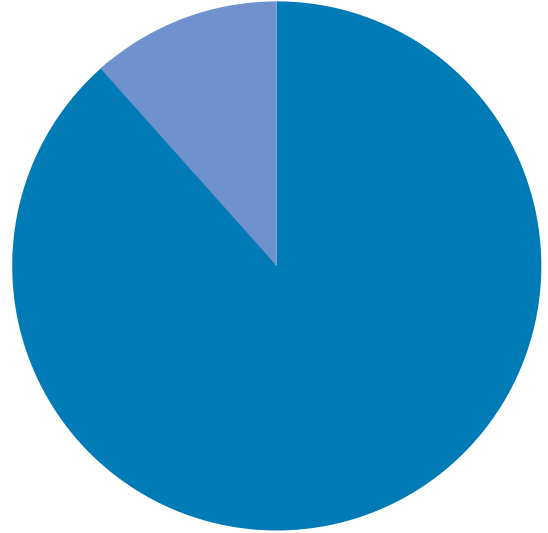
# EASPD WEBSITE

The EASPD website, [www.easpd.eu](http://www.easpd.eu), stands at the core of EASPD's online presence and it is the first point of reference for our latest news, events and publication. The website provides a platform for EASPD to share information that is most relevant to the disability and social services sector as well as our members. Updated daily with new articles and pages, the website provides readers with details on the latest policy developments, news of EASPD's activities, member new and project updates, as well as further information on upcoming conferences and events.

In 2020 65,041 users visited the EASPD website, an increase of 25% from 2019. Most of the website's users were located in America, Belgium and France. The majority of users accessed the EASPD website via a desktop computer, or a laptop.

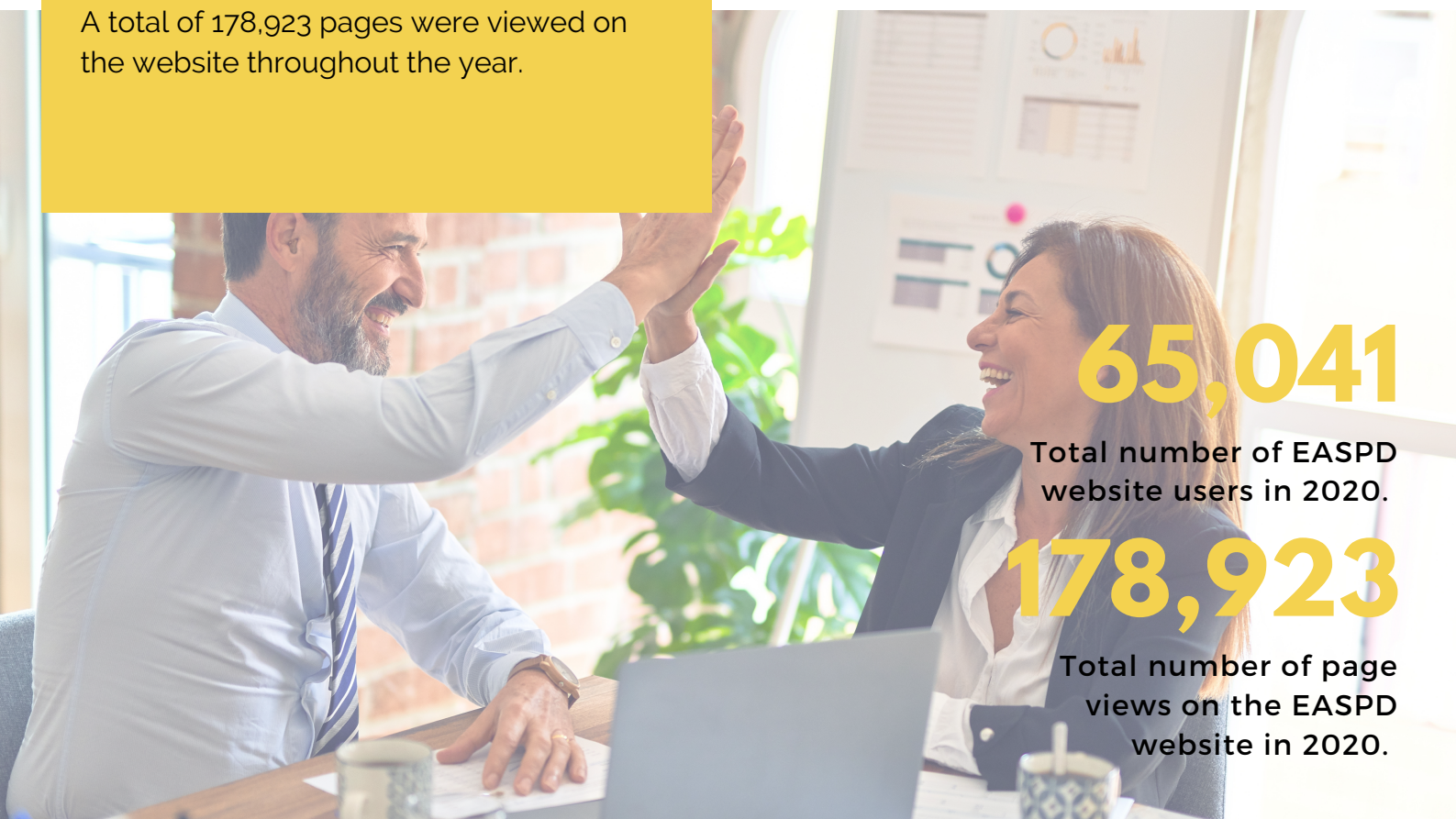
A total of 178,923 pages were viewed on the website throughout the year.

Returning Visitors  
11.6%



New Visitors  
88.4%

Proportion of new and returning users to  
[www.easpd.eu](http://www.easpd.eu)



**65,041**

Total number of EASPD  
website users in 2020.

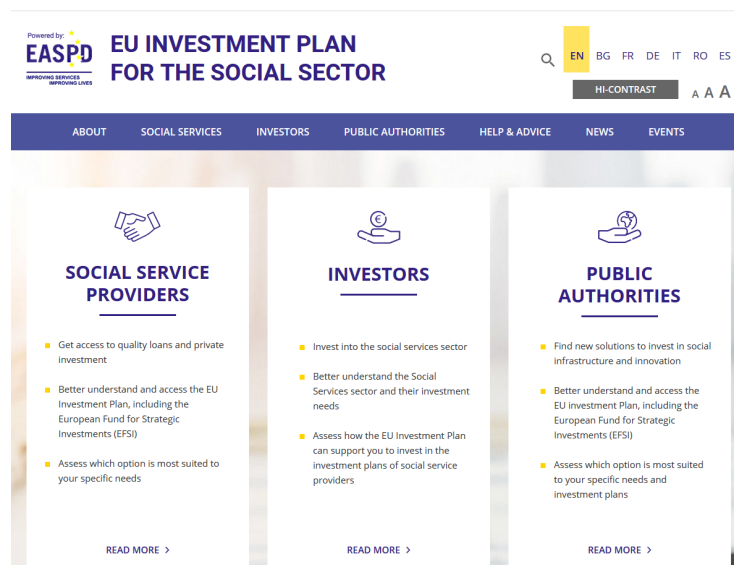
**178,923**

Total number of page  
views on the EASPD  
website in 2020.

# EFSI WEBSITE

In 2020 EASPD continued to provide Social Services, Investors and Public Authorities with information on how social service providers can access better loans through the EU Investment Plan and the European Investment Bank via its website [www.socialinvestment.eu](http://www.socialinvestment.eu).

In 2020 the website was updated with the materials of the Alliance for Inclusive Investment in Social Care and Support (A4i) project.



# D-LOT WEBSITE

EASPD's e-learning HUB provides tools, learning materials, advice and guidance about how to develop and sustain high quality support services for persons with disabilities. The learning platform is available for everyone wishing to offer or acquire new understanding/new skills and expertise in community-based services that can fuel the real change in the adoption of the social model of disability.

D-lot aims to be a space for training and knowledge sharing through Massive Open Online Courses, forums where debate can be generated and through sharing important pieces of information in the Knowledge Centre.

In 2020 the website has expanded with an additional 254 people registering to the platform (a 100% increase on 2018). 1 new Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) and 1 training course was added to the platform with 3 more remaining under construction.



# EASPD INITIATIVES

In 2020 EASPD implemented a number of initiatives to support it in its work to enhance its communication activities and better promote its work, the work of its members and the visibility of the sector.

## EASPD COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

In 2018 EASPD launched its Communications Network. Composed of those responsible for the communications within our member organisations the Network aims to promote the exchange of expertise, experience and knowledge to support the communication activities of our members.

To support the Network's members in increase their knowledge and skills the Network hosted the webinar: **'Making an Impact: Engagement with policy makers'**. This training explored possible tools and techniques that can be used by the communication officers to more effectively communicate with policy makers to achieve their policy objectives. The webinar aimed to set the foundation for next year, when we will invite comms officers to Brussels and encourage them to be more engaged in policy making at a European level.

If you are interested members can join by contacting Rachel Vaughan, EASPD external communications officer.



## #FUNDINCLUSION

In 2019 EASPD launched its #FundInclusion Campaign. The rationale of the campaign is to raise awareness for the need for increased social investment during and after the 2019 European Elections as well as gain the support from the new Members of the European Parliament on this issue. The campaign comprised of a number of leaflets and posters, as well as a series of interview with newly elected MEPS, to hear more about what they will be doing in the coming parliamentary terms to #fundinclusion. To find out more about the campaign, click [here](#).

As apart of the campaign, in 2020 EASPD hosted the online event: **'Fund Inclusion: should social care & support be not-for-sale?'** This webinar highlighted the extent to which public procurement, reserved markets and personal budgets can help social care and support providers to be more in line with the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities.

# EASPD INITIATIVES

## EASPD 'JOINING FORCES!' FACEBOOK GROUP

In March 2020 the 'Joining Forces! EASPD Covid-19 support space' Facebook group was set up. As the social sector was impacted particularly hard by the Covid-19 crisis, EASPD wanted to create a closed Facebook space where members could:

- Raise their concerns as service providers;
- Share the measures that they were implementing to ensure the safety of their staff and users while continuing to provide service to those in need of support;
- Access Easy to Read materials which could be used to inform their users of the basic preventative measures that they could take to protect themselves from the virus.

The EASPD team then directly contacted its members to collect their good practices and how they were preparing to deal with the virus within their services. The information was posted on the Joining Forces group to inspire its members, who were also encouraged to share their own stories and policies.

In 2020 469 members joined the group and 203 posts were published on the group page.



## #SOCIALSERVICESARE ESSENTIALSERVICES

In May 2020 EASPD launched the #SocialServicesAreEssentialServices social media campaign, in collaboration with other partner organisations. The campaign took place on Facebook and Twitter, where social service providers all across Europe shared pictures of their staff at work and why they believed the service they provide is essential.

The goal of the campaign was to draw the European Union's attention to the struggles experienced by grassroots organisations working with vulnerable groups everyday (persons with disabilities, homeless people, people living in an abusive home...) in order to take action and implement policies that would enable social service providers to effectively support their users during the Covid-19 emergency.

The campaign ran from May to June 2020 and culminated in a social summit that involved keynote speakers from the European Parliament and Commission.

# COMMUNICATION TOOLS

EASPD's communication tools are vital for it to communicate with both its membership and external stakeholders.

Central to our communication work is ensuring that our members, partners and stakeholders are informed on:

- new policy and legal frameworks developed at the European level;
- the latest innovations in our sector and
- important European news.

This is joined by our work to channel information and recommendations received from our members through EASPD policy work and communicate to EU institutions (European Parliament, European Commission, European Council and the European Economic and Social Committee) and the UN.

In addition to this, our communication activities also aim to promote the implementation of the UN CRPD and the European Disability Strategy amongst general audiences.

To do this EASPD uses key communication tools:

- Newsletters
- Publications
- Videoflashes
- Press Releases
- EASPD's News Feed.



## NEWSLETTERS

In 2020 EASPD released a total of 25 newsletters. These newsletters provide updates on:

- **EASPD news-** which includes news on our policy work, events and activities,
- **European news-** which includes the latest developments happening in Europe that are relevant for the sector
- **Project updates-** which provides information on EASPD's latest project activities, and
- **Member news-** which provides our members with the opportunity to share information on what they are doing and their latest events.

These newsletters were provided in English, French, Spanish, Bulgarian and German and sent out to EASPD's data base of 3,196 contacts from across Europe (EASPD members NGOs, associations, SMEs, decision makers, media, civil servants, research and education centres, universities, among others).

To read EASPD's 2020 newsletters, [\*\*click here\*\*](#).

# VIDEOFLASH

EASPD's videoflashes aim to improve communication with social service providers, especially EASPD members. It intends to report interactively through a brief video, the latest developments on EU policy, projects in the field of disability in the EU, and other relevant European wide information.

In 2020, 21 new videoflashes were published. The different episodes are posted on all EASPD communications channels (Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) and disseminated to our database of 3,196 contacts.

All videoflashes are available on **this link**.



# PRESS RELEASES

EASPD published 29 press releases during 2020:

- [Unlock the potential of Horizon Europe for inclusive healthcare for all](#)
- [Social services at risk of being left aside during COVID-19 spread](#)
- [EU invisible on social emergency of COVID-19](#)
- [New EU COVID-19 response brings no guarantees for social services](#)
- [47 MEPs: Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative must fund support services for persons with disabilities](#)



- [Message for Public Authorities: partner with civil society to improve COVID-19 response](#)
- [Social services go digital during COVID-19](#)
- [New Snapshot Report: Impact of COVID-19 on Disability Services in Europe](#)
- [Top EU officials organise constructive exchange on social services during COVID-19](#)
- [No to the discrimination of persons with disabilities in triage](#)
- [Inspiring innovations from the Employment for All Awards 2020](#)
- [Prioritise the Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the economic response to COVID-19](#)
- [Social services call on EU to uphold the rights and health of staff and users in next phase of COVID-19 response](#)
- [Fostering creative resilience – better access to cultural participation and arts as a tool to empower people in times of crisis](#)
- [Increasing access to digital learning opportunities crucial during COVID-19](#)
- [European Commission Promotes Dialogue with Social Services for COVID-19 Recovery](#)
- [Putting children with support needs on the agenda](#)
- [Stronger cooperation is needed to support Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership support services](#)



## PRESS RELEASES

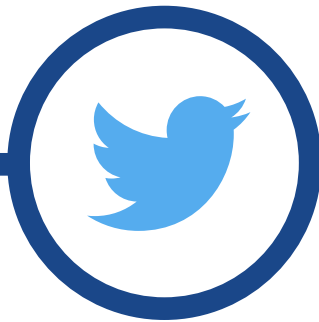
- [We need stronger commitment by the EU to ensure resilience of Social Services](#)
- [Investing in inclusiveness is key to ensure that persons with support needs can receive services where they live](#)
- [European Semester: services for children with disabilities need stronger legal and financial support](#)
- [The EU, Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership Regions must work together to promote community-based services for persons with disabilities](#)
- [New EU Investment Programme : No Guarantees for Social Services](#)
- [EU Commission tells Member States to develop Inclusive Education](#)
- [Clear strategy needed for meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream arts and culture](#)
- [EASPD welcomes new Executive Committee and Board during online elections](#)
- [Disability services must be addressed in European response to the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [EASPD and the EU address issue of inclusion in arts and culture at the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD](#)
- [European networks call on the EU to ensure an inclusive labour market](#)
- [EASPD's 1st Social Services Week: lessons learnt!](#)

# SOCIAL MEDIA

EASPD's key activities, news, calls, events and trainings are always promoted through its social media. EASPD updates its Facebook page and twitter feed on a daily basis alongside providing regular updates to its YouTube Channel and LinkedIn page.



FACEBOOK



TWITTER



YOUTUBE

4,457 page likes



This is a 14% increase from 2019

May was the month with most page views

Our most popular post reached 13,252 people

3,455 followers



On average, EASPD earned 5 likes per day

531,375 Impressions

73 uploaded videos



Over 8,000 views

Our #NoSchoolForMe video was our most popular video of 2020

## LINKEDIN

In 2020 EASPD's LinkedIn page followers grew to 976 people. EASPD's LinkedIn page is used to share information on our upcoming events, report releases, call for tenders and vacancy's. December was our most popular month with 477 page visits.

# PRESS REVIEW

In addition to EASPD's own communication channels, EASPD's work was promoted through other platforms including European, national and local media across the continent.

Click on the titles to read the full article.

## EUROPEAN PRESS

- **Zero Project:** [Last chance to nominate your promising practice for EASPD and LADAPT's 2020 Employment for All Award!](#)
- **Agence Europe:** [Social services are at risk of being left behind because of COVID-19, according to EASPD](#)
- **New Europe:** [We don't owe care workers a debt, we owe them urgent support](#)
- **New Europe** [Leaders discuss the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic](#)
- **Agence Europe:** [EASPD denounces lack of means and personnel in services for people with disabilities](#)
- **Press Club Brussels Europe:** [EASPD: Prioritize the Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the economic response to COVID-19](#)
- **COFACE Families Europe:** [Can personal budgets empower persons with disabilities and their families?](#)
- **Press Club Brussels Europe:** [European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities: Putting children with support needs on the agenda](#)

## NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL PRESS

- **Greece:** [ΤΕΦΑΑ: Τα πρώτα αποτελέσματα του Ευρωπαϊκού προγράμματος TeamU](#)
- **UK:** [EASPD impact report in COVID-19](#)
- **Spain:** [Grupo SIFU galardonado con el premio a la Práctica Inclusiva de Éxito otorgado por la EASPD](#)
- **Finland:** [Yle News](#)



# SUMMARY

In 2020 EASPD continued to strive to further promote the rights of persons with disabilities through the provision of high-quality support services, especially during such a critical time like the Covid-19 pandemic. Our communication work has aimed to support this goal and increase the visibility of the sector at a European, as well as national level.

Raising awareness for the need for increased investment into the sector has remained one of EASPD's top communication priorities of 2020. This was joined by the desire to ensure the full recognition for the important role of the support service providers sector in Europe, who demonstrated great flexibility in adapting their service provision to the social distancing measures.

We will continue this work into 2021, where EU's next long-term budget and a new European Disability Strategy will enter into force.

**For additional information, please contact:**

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**EASPD IS THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. WE ARE A EUROPEAN NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATION REPRESENTING OVER 17,000 SOCIAL SERVICES AND DISABILITY ORGANISATIONS ACROSS EUROPE. THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF EASPD IS TO PROMOTE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH EFFECTIVE AND HIGH-QUALITY SERVICE SYSTEMS.**

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