

European Conference on Socio-Professional Rehabilitation

Report

7th March 2019

National Institute of Health and Disability Insurance

Avenue de Tervueren 211, Brussels

This report includes recommendations for policy makers and stakeholders and an abstract of the evaluation.

On the 7th of March in Brussels, European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR), Rehabilitation International (RI), and the Belgian National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance (NIHDI) hosted a conference on Socio-Professional Rehabilitation where around 100 people took part. The conference was opened by the intervention on Addiction Medicine in the Workplace by Dr Marsolais, president at Consultants et Expertises en Médecine du Travail et Addictions Inc., Canada. She brought her own experience and that of her multidisciplinary team in the therapeutic support on the work for people who have addiction problems.

Participants then had the opportunity to take part in multiple sessions organized by thematic areas:

Return To Work And Cancer, Assessment, Belgian And Spanish Initiatives As Inspiration For Other Countries, Vocational Rehabilitation: Where Can It Take Place? Following the presentations of projects and research from all over Europe, participants were stimulated to ask questions, express their opinions and discuss with each other.





Some EPR members actively participated, presenting their programmes and projects within the parallel sessions:

- Extended rehabilitation and process of returning to work with patients with tumor (case study) (University Rehabilitation Institute, Slovenia);
- Linking of the “Integration von Menschen mit Behinderungen in die Arbeitswelt” (IMBA) to the “International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health” (ICF) (GTB, Belgium);
- Implementation of the ICF in creating a Professional Profile (Theotokos foundation, Greece);
- Improving employability of young people with mental health problems. ONCE & Intrass Foundations, Spain), Vocational rehabilitation and return to work after an accident or disease (Centro de Reabilitação Profissional de Gaia, Portugal).

At the same time, a space was set up for poster presentations in which further organizations could introduce themselves and their work. EPR member Rehabilitation Center Heliomare with Michel Edelaar showcased their Functional Capacity Evaluation Research: Report from the International Functional Capacity Evaluation Research Meeting.

A final key note speech was given by prof. Reneman of Centrum Groningen on Functional Capacity Evaluation for the assessment of Residual Work Capacity. His intervention highlighted the relationship between the definitions and positions of Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE) and International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)

The conference closed with a last interesting note by Luc Henau on the word “rehabilitation”. Mr Henau argues that the word rehabilitation is discriminatory in itself. Using ri- as a prefix to the word we use to define ourselves and our intervention, we build a wall between us and companies, reminding them of the problem, focusing again on what does not work instead of focusing on resources. Professionals should focus on what PWDs can become, not only on what they are. Moreover, underlined Henau, there is only one true of rehabilitation, the social one. Social rehabilitation contains in itself all the sub-categories in which we are accustomed to cataloging it and represents the real "stairway to heaven" for our clients.

This conference was one of a series of national awareness-raising events organized across Europe over the past four years by EPR and various partners and members.

Recommendations for policy makers

- Policy should acknowledge that there is only fundamental type rehabilitation, the social one. Social rehabilitation contains in itself all the sub-categories in which we are



accustomed to cataloging it. Unifying different policy approaches on different sub-types of rehabilitation would support recognition and efficacy of the whole sector;

- To improve employability of young people with mental health problems there is need to bridging the wide gap between diagnosis/start of treatment and entry or re-entry into the labour market. This crucial transition is not covered by services, so policy and funds should support better this important step;

Participants were asked to rate the overall event from 1 (poor quality) to 5 (excellent). The average rating of the event was a **4.1 out of 5**.

All presentations are available on the EPR website [here](#).

