

**EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR REHABILITATION**  
*The network of leading service providers to people with disabilities*

# NEWSLETTER

## Editorial

### Special:

- Latest developments in EPR member centres
- New EPR member
- Public Affairs
- Projects
- Farewell Jan Spooren

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Dear EPR Members,

This editorial concludes a period of exactly 14 years during which I had the privilege to be the Secretary General of EPR.

14 years of working with so many interesting and great people throughout Europe, committed to the disability sector, eager to learn and to exchange. I can only be grateful to EPR and to all of you for so much job satisfaction, so many friendships and plenty of great experiences.

But my biggest reward is that I leave an EPR that can look to the future with a lot of optimism and self-confidence. EPR managed to get a clear profile as a network of social service providers, maintained its (financial) independence, and developed sound governance systems. The main challenge is without any doubt to review the membership formula and related packages of services and activities. Recent discussions on a new strategic plan 2015-2017 revealed promising ideas and a great commitment in this respect.

In this world of globalization and a European Union that continues to develop, it seems self-evident that international co-operation is a

priority for every forward-looking organisation that wants to lead change. Hence, the need to demonstrate the added value and concrete results of an engagement in cross-border activities has never been as strong as today. Consequently, European co-operation requires a strategy, a methodology and a lot of thinking on the 'what' and 'how' of it. EPR offers a stable and professional environment to do so.

After 14 years in EPR, I am more than ever convinced that rehabilitation managers and professionals face similar challenges across Europe and even in other parts of the world. And I still strongly believe that mutual learning and transnational co-operation is the most effective way to come to the best solutions. But the most important added value of European co-operation is without any doubt to widen the view of people. To offer them an opportunity to take some distance to reflect on their daily realities, and to inspire them with new ideas. This has of course a cost that should be carefully considered, but preferably taking into account the benefits for the professional, the organization and our sector at large.

Jan Spooren  
 Secretary General



## Calendar of EPR Events 2014

- **Strategic Workshop for Directors**, 2-3 October 2014, Lisbon, Portugal, open to Associate Members
- **EU Funding opportunities**, training seminar, 28 October 2014, open to Associate Members, Oslo, Norway
- **EU Employment and social policy**, training seminar, 29 October 2014, open to Associate Members, Oslo, Norway
- **Supporting employers in working with people with mental health difficulties, service pilots**, November 2014 (date tbc), Spain
- **Job coaching**, webinar, 25 November 2014, open to Associate Members
- **EPR General Assembly**, 2 December 2014, Brussels
- **EPR Centre Coordinators Meeting**, 2 December 2014, Brussels
- **Learnabil-IT Final Conference**, 3 December 2014, Brussels
- **EPR Public Affairs Event on Employment of people furthest from the labour market & transition from school to work**, 3 December 2014, Brussels

*This list is subject to change and is regularly updated as new events are planned.*

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Please consult EPR website for the most up-to-date information: [www.epr.eu](http://www.epr.eu) or contact EPR secretariat  
Tel: +32 2 736 54 44, e-mail: [claudedelfosse@epr.eu](mailto:claudedelfosse@epr.eu)

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## News from the members

### Durapart participates during Arendalsuka



Arendalsuka is an annual forum where national delegates in politics, society and business meet each other and the public, for debates and to develop policies for the present and future. Arendalsuka is politically independent, and aims to strengthen the beliefs in politics and political debate. Arendalsuka will help to strengthen the power of our democracy.

Besides being a political meeting place, Arendalsuka aims to help organisations and individuals to get in direct contact with Norway's key national politicians and business leaders.

In August, Durapart participated with a booth in the center of Arendal together with 106 organisations, including all political parties.

Our purpose was to meet common people, employers and job-seekers to promote ourselves. Our booth was very busy with lots of visitors. To draw people to our booth, we also offered a free duplicate key with our slogan: "Durapart, your key to employment". We also offered coaching in CV writing and job-seeking.

Our participation during this important event gave us a great opportunity to market our services and to network.

### Durapart

### Workshop on Supported Employment

On 3 and 4 September we had different workshops with Mike Evans at Durapart in Arendal, Norway. Supported Employment being the professional platform, the workshops addressed themes like: "Work Experience Placements"; "Employer Engagement"; "Organization, Structure, and Caselolads"; "Leadership Challenges"; "How to make best use of our Job&Career Centre"; and at the end of day two we had an "Open Agenda".

All our job-coaches were invited to attend, and we had two days with interesting discussions and many new inputs and ideas to work with in the near future.



*Guri Monserud, Kari Vaule Arentzen and Mike Evans*

## Astangu increases focus on international competence sharing and introduces new cooperation opportunities for EPR members

The last years have seen a rise in international interest towards Astangu and its competences from increasingly far-flung corners of the world, and we are preparing for even more active international cooperation.

In June this year, Astangu hosted a delegation from the Government of Greenland looking to gain knowledge and inspiration for opening and organizing a vocational rehabilitation centre for people with disabilities. The topics discussed included physical environment, collaborating with other agencies and local community, specialization, among many others. In early September, Astangu introduced its services to Dime Spasov, the Minister of Work and Social Policy in Macedonia.

However, cooperation with governmental institutions is only one part of Astangu's role as an international partner. With new Erasmus+ mobility projects on their way, Astangu invites all EPR members to consider us as an internship site for their clients who would like practical experience in the fields of IT, bakery, carpentry, home maintenance and cooking. Equally welcome are partners who would like to offer similar internship opportunities for Astangu's clients.

All cooperation requests and related questions can be sent to [keiu.talve@equass.ee](mailto:keiu.talve@equass.ee).

## Flash News from Heliomare

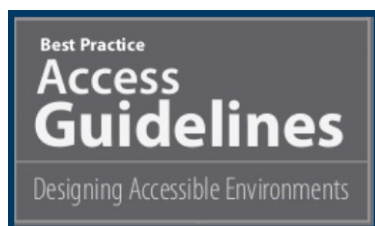


- ◆ Heliomare's rehabilitation doctor and manager R&D, Coen van Bennekom has become an "academic" in Rehabilitation and Labour at University of Amsterdam (UvA). The Chair focuses on knowledge development around education-integration of people with NAH and implementation within the rehabilitation settings, proper alignment with clinical doctors, occupational physician and re-integration companies.
- ◆ Heliomare participates in scientific research from September 2014 to September 2015 concerning the nationwide "Hersenz" project. Hersenz is a treatment for people with brain injuries who want to get more grip on their lives and can use intensive support. This is possible directly after the emergence of the brain injury but also after long periods of time. The research is done by Maastricht University under supervision of academic Klinical Neuropsychologist Caroline van Heugten.
- ◆ Official opening of Heliomare College in Alkmaar: The first of three planned KJC's (Child and Youth Centre) where 170 students get daily education and support. Heliomare prepares the realisation of two other KJC's (Child and Youth centres) Those new building in Centre's in Heemskerk and Heerhugowaard (province of Noord-Holland) will offer Rehabilitation, Sport and Education services. The idea is to create unique concept: education objectives as well as rehabilitation objectives which are fully integrated in the individual plans. Those building plans also will have the effect of expected in future ending of Heliomare education activities in Wijk aan Zee after 84 years!
- ◆ Heliomare also started to deal, as from 18 August, with "passend onderwijs" - the new Dutch laws which have the intention to place children with disabilities as much as possible in mainstream schools. The idea behind is "normal education if possible, special education if needed". This means necessary (internal) changes/relocation of staff and more public tendering with for financing this new education services.



## Irish Wheelchair Association

### Best Practice Access Guidelines



The IWA Best Practice Access Guidelines were recently launched at an event held in the Aviva Stadium. Designed to inform, raise awareness

and influence future legislation, the guidelines are a valuable tool for those working to improve access standards, writes IWA Communications Coordinator Anita Matthews.

IWA's Best Practice Access Guidelines were welcomed by people with disabilities, representative organisations, architects, engineers, planners and developers as the publication was launched on Independence Day, Friday, 4 July 2014.

The launch took place in the Aviva Stadium, which is now recognised as one of the most accessible venues in Ireland. Many of the recommendations and guidelines set out in this IWA publication were incorporated by architects and developers during the rebuild of the stadium in 2010.

The publication of the guidelines is timely because on 1 March this year, The Building Control Amendment Regulations, which outline the statutory requirements and obligations relating to the certification of the design, build and completion of a building, became operative. It is expected that the amended regulations, along with the requirement for Disability Access Certificates, will bring significant improvement to the levels of compliance with the Building Control regime in Ireland, in particular the accessibility standards for people with physical and sensory disabilities.

The launch of the Best Practice Access Guidelines was facilitated by: Olan McGowan, RTE broadcaster, journalist and member of IWA's Board of Directors; Martin Murphy, Aviva Stadium Director; and Séan Stagg, Project Manager, Sisk Group, who oversaw the rebuild of Lansdowne Road. Speaking at the launch, IWA CEO, Kathleen McLoughlin explained: "IWA was consulted during the planning phases of many recent designs, including Terminal 2 at Dublin Airport; the regeneration of Grafton Street; and the Aviva Stadium, which is an important example of how accessibility can be easily incorporated into the blueprints of a public facility resulting in an outstanding venue which

accommodates all individuals regardless of age, ability or disability."

She added, "The Business Case for adherence to the Best Practice Access Guidelines indicates that there is a significant potential return for minimal investment. By catering for the requirements of people with disabilities, businesses can open their doors to potentially untapped streams of revenue, including people with disabilities, their families, friends and broader social networks."

The Building Control Regulations require that Disability Access Certificates (DACs), showing compliance with the 'Building Regulations (2010) Part M Access and Use' are in place. By following these guidelines, developers, planners and local authorities can build according to the highest possible standards, thereby ensuring that the needs and requirements of people with disabilities are fully met. The IWA Best Practice Access Guidelines are also an excellent resource for individuals who wish to make adaptations to their own homes or premises.

IWA has a dedicated National Steering Group on Access. Members of the group work with others to improve knowledge and awareness of the importance of accessibility, and are available to support architects, planners and developers. For a copy of the IWA Best Practice Access Guidelines, or for information and advice, please visit [www.iwa.ie/access](http://www.iwa.ie/access) or email [access@iwa.ie](mailto:access@iwa.ie)



*At the launch of the IWA Best Practice Access Guidelines are (front) RTE broadcaster, journalist and IWA Board member Olan McGowan with IWA CEO Kathleen McLoughlin; and (back) Seán Stagg, Project Manager, Sisk Group; Martin Murphy, Stadium Director, Aviva Stadium; and IWA Chairman, Lt General Gerry McMahon*

## ONCE Foundation

### “Portalento.es” - a gateway to employment for people with disabilities

FSC Inserta, ONCE Foundation’s entity, expert in labour mediation services for people with disabilities, presented last April the renewal of Portalento.es, a platform co-financed by the ONCE Foundation and the European Social Fund that coordinates job offers from over 4,000 collaborating companies and assists over 190,000 job-seekers registered in their database.

Equipped with the latest technological innovations, the employment platform is at the forefront of labour mediation and allows their users to directly interact with FSC Inserta’s experts in order to get updated on the broad training offer and job opportunities available. The platform also gives the companies the possibility to manage their job offers in real time and access the information of all candidates meeting the requested profiles.

But the distinguishing element of Portalento.es is the fact that it combines the potential of new technologies with human involvement, thus setting a new paradigm in labour inclusion.

Portalento.es is much more than a website, much more than a tool; it is an open fully inclusive meeting place for job-seekers with a disability, companies offering jobs, public administrations or interested persons; open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

#### “A thousand reasons” campaign

Together with the new Portalento.es, the ONCE Foundation launched the campaign “A thousand reasons” with a double objective: on the one hand, to inform and encourage people with disabilities, including entrepreneurs, to use the website services such as guidance, training and support to increase their options to get a quality job, and on the other, to try to raise awareness of employers and business owners.

As the campaign states: “for many people with disabilities the day couldn’t start any better”, because every day more persons with a disability find a job thanks to the ONCE Foundation through Portalento.es. The campaign also consists of a free mobile application (‘Despertador Por Mil



Razones’- ‘A Thousand Reasons Alarm Clock’, available on the Apple Store and Google Play) so that users can post morning tweets saying one of the ‘thousands of reasons’ why getting up every morning is so good, using the hashtag #razonesparalevantarse (‘reasons to get up’).

#### Mediation services for more than 50,000 job offers

Since its creation in 2009, FSC Inserta has processed over 50,000 job offers for persons with disabilities, and it has also provided its registered job-seekers with over 3,000 courses and workshops where about 30,000 students with a disability have been trained. A training and work mediation activity is absolutely free for its beneficiaries thanks to the financing by the ONCE Foundation and the European Social Fund.

Under the Inserta Program, the ONCE Foundation signs collaboration agreements with many SMEs and about fifty large national and multinational companies, some of them being the most important Spanish companies in the banking, energy, distribution and construction sectors, such as Ikea, McDonald’s, Ford, KPMG, Barclays, Repsol, etc.

Watch the campaign on:

( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQO4unsWLto&feature=youtu.be> )

## Workshop “Panagia Eleousa”

### Opening of the second residential facility in the city of Agrinio

Panagia Eleousa, on Sunday, 22 June 2014, had a very successful opening of the Assisted Living Facility for 9 people with intellectual and associated disabilities in the city of Agrinio.

The Residential Facility was named George A. Tsoutsos, in memory of the son of the former President, Mrs. Mary Tsoutsou, who was the reason for creating the organisation Panagia Eleousa. Having always as their main target to improve the quality of life of the service users, Panagia Eleousa made great efforts through the difficulties of the economic crisis plaguing Greece, to build from scratch an Assisted Living Facility, in the city of Agrinio, which meets all specifications to accommodate people with disabilities, while aesthetically it is a very warm and welcoming place for people who are deprived of family environment.

The opening event was attended by representatives of the Greek state and the Region of Western Greece, the mayors of Agrinio and Messolonghi cities, Members of the Parliament and representatives of the Ministries. Also, the local community of Agrinio and the surrounding area embraced, with love and genuine interest, the construction



and operation of the Assisted Living Facility and many citizens attended the opening, supporting in this way the work done by Panagia Eleousa.

In addition, the fact that people who attended the opening brought a tree as a gift to be planted in the yard of the facility, to beautify the surrounding area, was very moving.

The construction and operation of this second facility is the continuation of the efforts made by Panagia Eleousa, making full use of NSRF programmes, to defend and promote the right of the service users, who live in the region of Agrinio, to decent living. The first step was made with the operation of the first Residential Facility of Panagia Eleousa in Messolonghi city in October 2012.

## Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre

### ARTABILITY - Empowering people with disabilities through art



Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre (Lithuania) together with ANTIGONE (Greece), Tlab (Italy) and Cogami (Spain) started the project “ARTABILITY”, which aims to increase access for people with disabilities to cultural and recreational activities, as well as to help them develop their professional knowledge and skills. The main project activities - weekly visual art laboratories - involve at least 60 people with disabilities from 4 participating countries.

Additionally, interactive workshops on new art techniques and on organising exhibitions will be held and will allow participants to gain not only artistic, but also marketing skills. It is expected that these laboratories and workshops will not only be a meaningful leisure activity, but they will also help participants' future employment.

Another important aspect of the project will be an opportunity for participants to exhibit their art works in national exhibitions for wider audience. Project partners will present the project results in the autumn of 2015 in the final conference in Thessaloniki, Greece. Moreover, project results are presented in the website <http://www.artability.eu/>, final exhibitions and by other innovative means, such as e-catalogues, virtual exhibition for Android applications and videos created by people with disabilities. The ARTABILITY project is implemented with the financial support of the European Union, within the Grundtvig programme.

## Welcome to the new member

### EPR is enlarging its membership in East-Europe



**EPR welcomes EKON, the new associate member starting from the 1st of July 2014!**

EKON Association is a Polish non-governmental organisation established in 2004. It is a social enterprise with the aim of creating workplaces for persons with severe and moderate level of disability, mostly with mental diseases, who are at risk of exclusion. EKON Association is a marked-oriented entity which generates over 80% of revenues, employs 1149 vulnerable disabled persons out of which 365 persons are working in the sheltered workshop in the field of environment protection; 784 persons render services in many international companies as Auchan, Metro, Carrefour, Hilton, Radisson, OBI, Real and others.

EKON has advised and assisted in creating a dozen or so social enterprises that employ about three thousand people with disabilities. EKON is also supporting government in creating new vocational and social rehabilitation system in accordance with European standards.

## Centre Action Plans (CAPs)

### Assistive technologies and technical aids

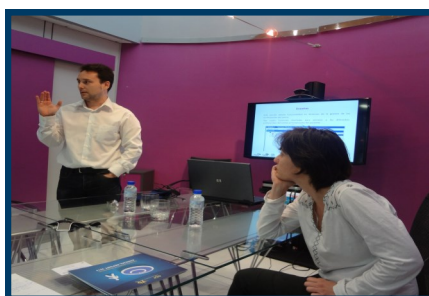
#### Visit to Technosite and Via Libre in Spain

On 21 and 22 May 2014, professionals from GREP (Norway), Astangu VRC (Estonia), Centre de Réadaptation de Mulhouse (France) attended the site visit to Technosite and Via Libre in Madrid, Spain. The site visit organised by EPR in collaboration with ONCE Foundation, aimed at exploring the state of art of technological aids and ICT solutions enhancing the functionalities and opportunities for people with disabilities.

Participants gained an overview on how the individual requirements of a user can be satisfied by adapting AT solutions and allow disabled people to communicate, work and so on. Different products were presented and testing by participants during the day as the Automatic Teller Accessible, the Meditutor and the use of switches for autonomy improvements.

The group visited also the Sensory Stimulation Laboratory at the Juan XXIII Foundation for Intellectual Disability, a private company working in the non-profit sector to improve the quality of life of adults with intellectual disabilities and to promote their social integration through comprehensive care covering educational, therapeutic, and psychosocial aspects.

The visit was well appreciated by participants (average score: 4.2 out of 5) who expressed their willingness in developing further collaboration on specific topics.





## Outcome measurement in Vocational Rehabilitation (OMVR)

The benchlearning group met on 25 June in Cologne in the margins of the EPR Annual Conference. Continuous improvement strategies were discussed, notably with regards to the administration of the QOLIS questionnaire, impact on services delivered and impact of policy changes. The group worked towards the finalisation of the easy-read QOLIS questionnaire and on a collective paper to be published by EPR in an academic peer-reviewed journal. Since June the group welcomed a new member (the Fagerh), and Pluryn announced its intention to use the tools at national level.

## EPR Annual Conference 2014



### Impact assessment in rehabilitation — A driver for sustainability and continuous improvement

This year EPR, in close collaboration with the host member organisation Josefs-Gesellschaft (JG), held its annual conference in Cologne, Germany on 26-27 June 2014. Over 130 delegates, including experts and professors from USA, Canada and Austria, attended the event.

The conference focused on the common challenges faced by EPR member organisations in assessing and demonstrating the impact of their activities.

The programme of the conference proposed to reflect on different aspects of the theme, from the perspective of the clients, the services and the funders. Evidence-based approaches of impact assessment have been presented, as well as their effects on the organisations and their importance for clients and funders.

The EPR Annual Conference 2014 was well perceived by participants as showed in the evaluation forms distributed during the event. The conference scored a mark of 4.1/5, an opportunity to reflect on the novelties and improvements realised and a great satisfaction for all those who have worked hard to make this event relevant and successful.

## Innovation Prize Contest 2014

The Winner of the 2014 Innovation Prize Contest is the Dutch organisation Pluryn, which was invited to present the conference delegates their project titled "The online intervention the Growth Factory: Developing a Growth Mind set!"

The project aims to optimise the treatment for youth with intellectual and/or physical disabilities by adding a short online intervention the "Growth Factory" to its treatment. The Growth Factory is an application that allows youth to understand the learning process and to improve their performance. The Growth Factory has been developed in collaboration with scientists, clinical practitioners, and clients. The online intervention is under the user-pilot period. Overall aim of the project is to contribute to a more effective and efficient treatment for youth with intellectual and/or physical disabilities in a fun way!

The practice was selected amongst 17 candidates as the most innovative project, with a high level of benefits and added value for its target group.

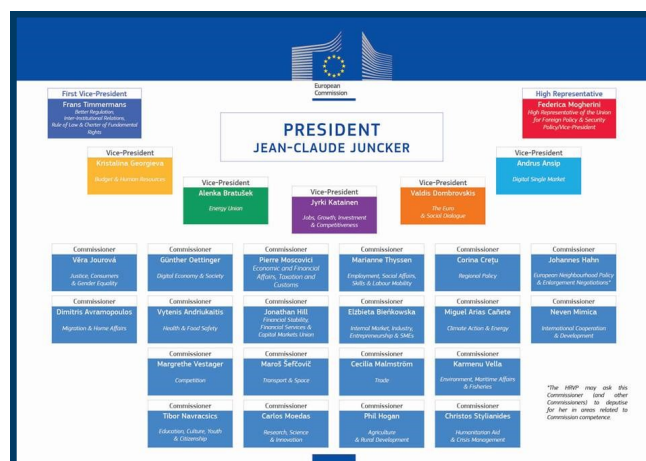


# Public Affairs

## New EU Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs

Jean-Claude Juncker, the new President of the EU Commission, announced on 10 September the distribution of portfolios within his team in Brussels. He has nominated Marianne Thyssen (Belgium) as new Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs. As such, she will be leading the most important Directorate of the European Commission for EPR and its members. The proposed composition shows a clear new working shift in the Commission, especially the decision that has been taken to create a coordination team made up of the seven Vice-presidents, which will have the power to carefully supervise all the initiatives that will be developed throughout the Commission. If confirmed in a Parliament vote in October, the European Commission will take office on 1 November 2014.

Between 22 and 30 September 2014, the European Parliament will hold the hearings for the Commissioners-designate. During this process, Members of the European Parliament can question the Commissioners-designate on their suitability for the role and potentially refuse them. In the hearings, each parliamentary committee will be given the chance to ask the relevant Commissioner-designate a series



of questions focusing both on their aptness for the position, as well as on their plans for their mandate.

Social Services Europe fully welcomed this process which brings added democratic legitimacy and transparency to the decision of whom should be our next European Commissioners and called for MEPs to ask relevant questions on job creation potential in the social services sector and on safeguard of quality public services in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations.

## Social Services Europe launched the new website 2.0



Social Services Europe is pleased to announce the launch of its website 2.0 at [www.socialserviceseurope.eu](http://www.socialserviceseurope.eu). The interface and accessibility have been improved, as well as the way the information is organised and structured. The new user-friendly design of the website is divided into 5 sections: about us, working areas, projects, publications and news. Each page provides detailed information on all the important aspects of the organisation, as well as links to our member organisations.

EPR invites you to explore this new online space which will be regularly updated. EPR contributed at the website development and implementation within the framework of its affirmed cooperation with Social Services Europe.

For more information, please, do not hesitate to contact Cinzia De Letis at [cinzia.de.letis@epr.eu](mailto:cinzia.de.letis@epr.eu) or Social Services Europe at [info@socialserviceseurope.eu](mailto:info@socialserviceseurope.eu).

## Projects

### For Quality!: European project for quality of jobs and services in personal care and household services

EPR is pleased to announce its involvement as partner on a new project led by the Brussels-based think tank Pour la Solidarité. This new project is funded by the programme PROGRESS of the European Commission and will be carrying out research on certifications and quality of work and services in personal care and household services, and support a wide stakeholder dialogue to promote the quality of both services and jobs (working conditions and qualifications) in the sector.

The project supports a stakeholder dialogue between organisations active in personal care household services through a partnership representative of the variety of workers and services employers in Personal care and household services: 3 European trade unions federations; 4 European networks representing service providers, local public social services and national federations and companies involved in the development of the services addressed; a Think Tank and a research institute. The starting date will be announced soon.

EPR is pleased to wish good start in the coming months!

### Learnabil-IT

### Mutual Learning on Skills for the ICT Labour Market for People with Disabilities

The project Learnabil-IT saw the start of the mutual learning phase with the first site visit in Dublin, Ireland on 8 and 9 September 2014. The site visit aimed at exploring in depth all aspects of the Irish innovative practices selected in the previous phase by partners: best practice 1 on “Employer-Based Training”, best practices 2 and 3, respectively “Willing Able Mentoring”, aiming at higher education access for graduates with disabilities, by AHEAD, and “Fast Track to IT” cooperation with Microsoft.

During the two days, meeting participants discussed with presenters on the best practices and reviewed the transferability of those practices into their national context. This practical exercise aimed at making the outcomes of the site visit as concrete as possible for the participants, inviting them to confront their own practices with the ones presented during the day. The identification of possible improvements of their own services, or possible developments of new services in their own organizations fostered an interesting debate among participants.

At the moment, national partners are organising upcoming site visits and video webinars to review the other best practices selected. All EPR members are invited to participate to the next site visits that will take place in

Estonia on 7 and 8 October and in France on 6 and 7 November. As for the video webinars the meetings are scheduled on 14 October, 21 October and 21 November. For more information please visit EPR website or contact Cinzia De Letis at [cinzia.de.letis@epr.eu](mailto:cinzia.de.letis@epr.eu)

Materials are available on [EPR website](#) in a collaborative open platform where practitioners are invited to re-visit the best practices reviewed in the project and share their opinions.





## PESSIS 2 Promoting employers' social services in social dialogue

### Final Conference

The final conference of the PESSIS II project took place on 23 September 2014 at the Liaison Agency Flanders-Europe, Avenue de Cortenbergh, 71, in Brussels.

The objectives of the conference were: to give an overview of the state of social dialogue in the social services sector throughout 17 European countries, to present the interest of employers in five different countries in participating in EU Social Dialogue, as well as to analyse what would be the main goals to be achieved by participating in such a process.

The added value that European Social Dialogue could bring to employers in the social sector was also presented and discussed by a panel of current partners in European Social Dialogue. There was consensus on the great value in working together with Trade Unions to create such a dialogue while recognising that it will require a great deal of work.

Presentations also dealt with road mapping towards European Social Dialogue for the social services and emphasis was placed on the need to define the issues and scope of future European Social Dialogue. In this regard, both representatives from national Trade Unions and national Employer Organisations in the social service sector shared their views of what could be achieved by the sector in European Social Dialogue.

At the end of a successful day of interesting presentations and fruitful discussions, the conference closed with the challenges and potential next steps for the sector in European Social Dialogue.



# EQUASS

### New stakeholder consultation

On 26 May, the EQUASS Awarding committee members took the initial steps towards a review of the EQUASS quality principles, supported by Guus van Beek, EQUASS Key expert, and Marie Dubost, EQUASS Coordinator. The process of reviewing - and possibly updating - the EQUASS principles, criteria and indicators is a process which is to be carried out every 5 years in order to assure that the performance of the social service providers are meeting the up-to-date quality demands and expectations of the sector.

The last consultation undertaken by EQUASS in order to update its quality standard took place in 2010, and led to the introduction of an updated standard in 2012 that was designed to apply to all social services of general interest (SSGI). The workshop of the EQUASS Awarding Committee

on 26 May 2014 in Prato (Italy) was the start of a consultation process that will last for proximately 2 years, and possibly lead to the introduction of an updated quality standard in the beginning of 2017. The following steps of the consultations will involve a great number of stakeholders, at both national and European level, and representing service providers, service users, funders and policy makers.





## News from the Secretariat

### Farewell Jan!

After fourteen years of service in the EPR Secretariat, Secretary General, Jan Spooren has moved on to pursue his political career. The whole EPR network made its farewell to Jan during the opening of the Annual Conference 2014 in Cologne, with a moving speech from the EPR President Jean-Paul Essers punctuated by anecdotes on Jan's time in the EPR.

In this occasion Jan has been awarded with the Louis van Amelsvoort Award, a piece of art sculpted by Sjra Schoffelen. The sculpture was given the title 'Power of life' and is a piece of art that invites reflection on the drive and energy of all human beings to achieve their maximum potential.

In memory of van Amelsvoort's contribution to the network, EPR decided in 2001 to establish the Louis van Amelsvoort Award (LvA) for 'outstanding performance for International Corporation in the Rehabilitation Sector within the EU'. The Louis van Amelsvoort award is the award is given three times. The first award was given to Don Antonio Mazzi (CEO of Opera Don Callabria and founding father of EPR). The second Award was given to the EQRM (EQUASS) working group on quality. The third Award was given to

Stefan Troemel (Director of European Disability Forum (EDF)).

EPR is pleased to award Jan Spooren for his outstanding commitment in promoting cooperation among the EPR members, strengthening EPR profile in the EU scene and greatly collaborating with his staff.

The EPR Secretariat then organised a more intimate farewell dinner. Staff members of the EPR Secretariat were there to wish him good luck and plenty of success in his new career. The whole EPR wishes Jan all the best for the future!



*Jan Spooren, EPR Secretary General, received the Louis van Amelsvoort Award from Jean-Paul Essers, EPR President*

### New EPR and EQUASS Intern joins the Secretariat



We wish to welcome Skye Bain to the secretariat, who began as the new EPR and EQUASS intern at the beginning of September. She is from Scotland, where she studied her bachelor in law at The University of Glasgow. She joined our staff after living in Madrid for 3 years where she completed a masters in International Human Rights Law Protection (LLM) at the University of Alcalá. She previously worked as an intern with the Spanish Red Cross where she worked in their International Cooperation Department as a Human Rights Promoter.

Her interests lie especially with the rights of persons with disabilities; having written her master's thesis on the right to equality of persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities in relation to legal capacity. Having studied European law and policy in depth during her studies, she is eager to learn of how the social service sector works to strive to make such rights a reality on the ground and looks forward to contributing to the continuing improvement of the delivery of its invaluable services.

Skye Bain can be contacted at [sbain@epr.eu](mailto:sbain@epr.eu) and through the general EPR telephone numbers.

EPR on the web!

For regularly updated information on EPR and its activities, visit our  
website: [www.epr.eu](http://www.epr.eu)

and follow us on [LinkedIn](#)

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**The EPR newsletter is issued three times a year.**

**Editor-in-Chief: Cinzia De Letis**

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