

NEWSLETTER

December 2017



EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR REHABILITATION

The network of service providers to people with disabilities committed to excellence and innovation through mutual learning

SPECIAL FOCUS

- Annual Conference 2018
- Innovation Prize 2017
- CPRG back to EPR
- Projects

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Dear readers,

It has been a busy but fruitful autumn for the EPR network. We started with a successful Workshop for Directors, hosted by Fondazione Don Carlo Gnocchi in Milan, where members developed the outline of our new strategy and key actions to reach our objectives. Milan was also the place where EPR welcomed Portuguese members CRPG back into the network as a full member; you can read more about them in this newsletter.



Some highlights from the past few months include our awareness-raising event in Slovenia co-organised with URI, attracting over 90 people interested to examine workplace adjustments and reasonable accommodation practices. Building on our previous work on co-production, members gathered in Oslo at NHO Work and Inclusion to learn about and compare person-centred planning practices. Over 30 people took part in the interactive mutual learning workshop on developing partnerships with employers hosted by BFW Köln.

Just before Christmas we were happy to receive an early present, an agreement from the Commission to work with EPR for the coming four years in a Framework Partnership Agreement. This will support the development of our policy work and the deepening of our mutual learning activities.

Excited about the new year to come for EPR, we look forward to our cooperation in 2018, and hope to welcome you to our 25th Anniversary Annual Conference and celebrations in Utrecht.

Wishing you a great start to the new year,

Laura Jones

FULL MEMBERS



ASSOCIATE MEMBERS



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE - EPR ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2018



Photocredits: Picture taken from University of Utrecht website.



EPR Governance Meetings
19th September 2018
EPR Annual Conference 2018
20th-21st September 2018
UTRECHT
The Netherlands

Celebrate with us our 25th Anniversary!
More information will be coming up soon

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Astangu (EE) news

Song and Dance Festival

This summer, a Song and Dance Festival for people with special needs took place in Viljandi, Estonia. More than 50 dance and song groups from all over Estonia took part on the event where 800 singers and dancers were present, including Astangu students. For the first time in the Estonian's song festival history, a celebration of this kind was translated into sign language.

The Festival had an open area where handicrafts made only by people with special needs were sold. More information about the festival can be found on this link: <http://tv.delfi.ee/live/uudised/vaata-jarele-erivajadusega-inimeste-laulu-ja-tantsupidu?id=79313268>

Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre participated in **Sports+4All**, an international sport's project for people with disabilities were seven different countries (Italy, Germany, Lithuania, Estonia, Spain, Portugal and Ireland) are partners. The aim was to create tools that will support a more diverse and of higher quality sport offer for people with disabilities. One of the goals was to promote inclusive sport activities for people with disabilities where inclusive means for sport activities to be held in public facilities such as gyms, stadiums, parks,...

“Astangu Power“ was created in 2015 as part on the big Sports+4All project. It is an extracurricular



free time sports activity named by participants themselves. In fact, a name competition was held. The winner of the

name competition had the opportunity to get a one-time dietitian consultation from a well-known personal trainer. The aim of Astangu Power is to

change our clients' lifestyles healthier through physical activity and raising awareness about healthy eating.

The activities took place within Astangu's center and in some public training facilities. Sessions were held once a week led by physiotherapists or different professional trainers who volunteered (yoga, zumba, gym, etc.) Participants of Astangu Power had the chance to lead a session by themselves, since one of the key objectives was to give them more responsibility by taking the lead and eventually start training on their own.

A facebook page named “Sport for all“ was created where we share information about events, sport related activities, interesting and educating facts about sport, healthy eating and active lifestyle: www.facebook.com/Sport-

We aim to improve Astangu Powers' activities and programme from what we've learnt from the project



at the same time taking into account the needs and wants of our clients. We will also continue cooperation with different trainers to improve accessibility of sport for people with disabilities.

Astangu has a new EPR and International Project's Coordinator.

Starting from August 2017, Ms Marit Okas is the new coordinator for EPR and international projects at Astangu VRC. Marit has been working previously at Astangu VRC as rehabilitation service coordinator. She is looking forward to your cooperation proposals, reach her at marit.okas@astangu.ee

ONCE Foundation (ES)

Supported entrepreneurship. ONCE's Foundation new programme. www.fundaciononce.es



Last July, ONCE Foundation launched in Madrid the programme EmcA (Spanish Acronym for Supported Entrepreneurship). The initiative, financially supported by the European Social Fund and CITI, aims at promoting entrepreneurship among persons with disabilities with higher support needs – intellectual and learning disabilities, hearing impairment, cerebral palsy, mental health problems or severe physical disabilities –, who regardless their capacities and entrepreneurship potential, have been historically excluded from this work option.

EmcA will provide participants (both persons with disabilities and support staff appointed by relevant disability organisations) with adapted specific training, and will support the piloting of five entrepreneurship projects. The entrepreneurs in the pilot projects will be supported throughout the whole process. They will be provided with all necessary tools in each phase of the start-up, so that they can design their business model, define the service they will offer, establish their management model, pre-define their financial plan, search for funds and raise resources,

design operative plans, and produce a strategic plan.

The final outcomes of the Programme will facilitate the systematization and replicability of this type of initiatives and will improve their sustainability and survival rates. These outcomes will be:

a Catalogue of business models with a higher potential for entrepreneurship initiatives by the target group;

a Supported Entrepreneurship Methodology, tested by the participants in the Programme, which will describe the profile of the candidates, their specific needs, adapted training, tested materials, the functions of job coaches and the role of the families;

and five start-ups.

The final goal of the Programme is to become a model and a reference for future entrepreneurship actions within the target group, serving as a guide for the start-up of supported entrepreneurship projects, in order to open new avenues and opportunities for persons with disabilities with higher support needs..

Heliomare (NL)

Third International Functional Capacity Evaluation Research Conference - Wijk aan Zee – Netherlands.

Heliomare has appeared in an international publication on the Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation on the International Functional Capacity Evaluation Research Conference held on September 29, 2017. The 3rd International FCE Research Conference served as an international forum for research and knowledge implementation related to work assessment and functional capacity evaluations, across all causes of work incapacity. Participants include leading international experts in the field – scientists, clinicians and other users of FCE information. The International FCE Research Conferences are informal, non-profit research symposia. They provide an opportunity to gather with a small group of researchers, clinicians and other stakeholders with a special interest in work assessment and functional capacity evaluation to discover and discuss new research findings, novel assessment techniques and strategies and other policy and related issues facing the field. This International FCE Research Conference was organised on behalf of the rehabilitation centres Heliomare and UMCG – Beatrixoord.



New School Building

A special and historic moment for Heliomare. A long-cherished wish comes true: one building in which children and young people receive all the necessary support in the fields of education, child and youth rehabilitation and movement and sport. In the next weeks, Heliomare, will be working hard to set up the building and make it ready for the start of the new school year. In

September, a new building in Heemskerk was open. It is a multifunctional center tailored to the needs of children and young people with a limitation. The official opening will take place on 2 November. More info: <https://myalbum.com/album/eRN5I9Ffp6NY>

Jan Welmers,
new member
of Heliomare's
board of
directors



HandBikeBattle

On June, the 5th edition of the HandbikeBattle took place in the Kaunertal (Tyrol, Austria). Over 100 athletes with a physical disability fought for a 20 km journey with a height difference of almost 1000 meters. Over a period of five years this competition has become an impressive event. Participants not only deliver fantastic personal performance but also collect interesting research data. With this, the scientists concerned hope to further improve the rehabilitation.

The participants are athletes with a physical disability such as a transverse lesion or a leg disorder. They go in a fixed-frame handbike - and thus completely on armor - the mountain. There is a team game in which 12 Dutch rehabilitation centers compete. The teams usually consist of people who are still rehabilitating, or have recently completed their rehabilitation. Recently, their lives changed dramatically due to an accident or illness. They were faced with permanent physical injury and were facing the challenge of re-establishing

Heliomare (NL) news



life. Now they are jointly facing another major challenge; The Battle on the Kaunertalergletscher.

A number of enthusiastic care professionals took the initiative to put this event down. They share the vision of taking on challenges and the importance of physical activity; Also for people with a disability. To their point of view, athletes with an extreme challenge like the Battle are not only physically advancing, but they also get a mental boost. They will experience that they can do much more than they think and motivate to meet other challenges and dreams. In 2012, the first HandbikeBattle took place and this year the fifth. A large number of participants stay together in an Austrian hotel and there is another important aspect of the Battle place. There are people who have recently suffered a physical disability for a week or so ago.

They share experiences and give and learn lessons from each other. Those who have recently seen a restriction see what others have achieved; That they have a job, a family and a social network. That gives them the confidence that they can.

The HandbikeBattle has linked a scientific research to study the effects on the physical and mental area. The participants are tested three times; At the start

of the training and just before the Battle, physical tests are taken to map health and fitness. Then a set of questionnaires is also taken to measure well-being and psychological functioning. These questionnaires are further reduced after the Battle. With the results of the research, researchers hope to further improve the rehabilitation treatment.

The Praeger International Handbook of Special Education

Heliomare colleague Hans Schuman was invited by Michael Wehmeyer, an international authority in the field of disability study and mental disability, to write a new book on the relationship between regular and special education in countries worldwide the chapter on the Netherlands. The book, in three volumes, with a total of 1156 pages, has now appeared. It describes the current situation in more than 70 countries using the framework of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (see also the Addendum). Each contribution had to be written according to a predetermined format.

INTRAS Foundation (ES)

Support PERMIND: New Initiative to promote training and job opportunities to adults with psychic discomfort

Fundación INTRAS is leading an ERASMUS+ project starting in the beginning of September 2017 and lasting until August 2019. "PERMIND: Permaculture applied to the recovery process of people with mental illness", aims to provoke a mind change in the European society regarding mental health, environment and sustainability. But, what is permaculture? It is a type of agricultural movement and social design principles focused on simulating or directly using the patterns and features observed in natural ecosystems. That is to say, learn from our wise nature and try to imitate it to grow our food.

Permaculture is a very innovative kind of ecological agriculture much unknown in most of the countries. Fortunately, we are working with an experienced association that will teach us everything we need to establish a permaculture garden. The course will be

hosted in an eLearning platform and it will be supported by a didactic app fed by the students: photos, teaching videos, tips, etc. These students will be adults living with mental health issues in Spain, Slovenia, Greece and Sweden. They will follow the training course during a whole year, as we need to know how the nature behaves during spring, summer, autumn and winter.

Moreover, PERMIND will promote the entrepreneurship spirit of its trainees by promoting the creation of ecological social cooperatives. The vegetables grown will be sold by these students to their neighbors, thus giving a positive picture of mental issues and fighting against their stigma.

We will keep you updated about this beautiful initiative in further issues of the EPR newsletter.

BE RIGHT: Human Rights & Mental Health

The European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR) and Fundación INTRAS (Valladolid, Spain), together with EKP&PSY (Athens, Greece), Pro Mente (Linz, Austria), VRC (Vilnius, Lithuania) and EASP (Granada, Spain) kicked off in November an exciting project on human rights of persons with mental health issues

When it comes to vulnerable groups such as people with mental health problems and their human rights, national legislation cannot always assure a human rights-based approach is put into practice in the deliver of care services. Well informed, trained and sensitised professionals who work with a human rights-based approach in their everyday practice can improve that.

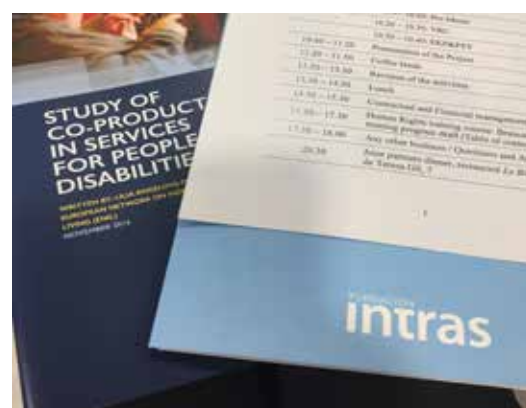
BE RIGHT proposes as main outcome to provide a quality training on Human Rights for professionals and organisations working with persons with mental health problems. To make this possible, over the next two years the project's partners will jointly work on the development of a custom made, sector specific vocational training tool on the human rights of persons with mental

health issue.

Once finalised, the training course will be available in an e-learning mode. An educational board game focused

on the topic of Human Rights of people with mental health issues will be developed. This BE RIGHT board game will be an informal learning tool for professional use aimed at making possible for persons with mental health issues to learn about their Human Rights in accessible, easy and fun way.

For more information about the BE RIGHT project, please contact Ms. Daria Smolyanska at dsm@intras.es.



REA COLLEGE (NL)

The VET Learning Community. Kicking off Strategic partnerships at National Level

On the 3rd, 4th and 5th of September, ten VET organisations met, together with EPR, in Portugal for an international meeting on the project The VET Learning Community. The purpose of this project is to improve the quality of education in general and to improve

from Estonia and Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre from Lithuania. Through this unique combination, schools at national and international level learn from each other by benchmarking and benchlearning.

The first stage of the project focused on assessing partners needs to reach the goals. In the second stage, three quality professionals trained them how to make and implement their improvement plans. In the coming months, the partners will work on their plans for improving quality and quality culture in their own schools and for promoting inclusive education on local and regional level.

In 2018, once these plans are put into practice and evaluated, the focus will be on benchmarking and benchlearning. At the end of the project, the project's results will be shared through national meetings with special and mainstream education actors.

National project partners are available if schools, or other stakeholders, want more information about the project, the tools developed and deployed or the improvement plans. National project partners or the project manager (bgrimbergen@pluryn.nl) can provide more information.



the quality culture in the partner organisations, for strategic partnerships to improve inclusive education

In order to achieve these goals, the project focuses on tools for measuring, mapping and comparing the quality of education. There are ten schools in the project coming from five different countries. Within these, there is one school of special education per country. In total, three EPR members are involved: Rea College Pluryn from the Netherlands, Astangu

SIVA (LV)

Support for the Long-term Unemployed

The Social Integration State Agency has launched a new project in cooperation with the State Employment Agency. On this project, they are working with a new target group: long-term unemployed people with disabilities.

The cooperation started in May 2017, when the Social Integration State Agency together with the State Employment Agency launched the project that, under European Structural Funds, Support for the long-term unemployed. The project, running till December 2021, aims to integrate long-term unemployed people with disabilities or health problems in the labour market and promote their social inclusion

Till September 2017, more than 100 unemployed people will be involved in the project. The

Social Integration State Agency specialists evaluate these long term unemployed participants on in individual consultations, theoretical and practical lessons and workshops and make them recommendations for suitable jobs. Associated active employment measures in accordance to their health and key activities for better integration in labour market are proposed.



MEMBER FOCUS

Centro de Reabilitação Profissional de Gaia (PT)

CRPG re-joins EPR

Full member between 1999 and 2011, CRPG, Centro de Reabilitação Profissional de Gaia, has rejoined EPR. The re-affiliation of this Portuguese institution took place in Milan, Italy, last September, during the EPR General Assembly.

CRPG is a public-state-owned organisation based in Portugal, established in 1992 through a cooperation agreement between the State and two private organisations. It promotes rehabilitation and reintegration of persons with acquired disabilities following accidents and diseases, active inclusion, citizenship and quality of life of persons with disabilities. To do so, CRPG cooperates with employment and training centers of IEFP (the governmental agency in charge of employment and vocational training), healthcare structures, employers, disability organisations and other institutional stakeholders in the community.

As a specialised services platform, CRPG serves the Northern and Central regions of the country and may attend clients from other regions as well. The Centre's intervention revolves around three axes: 1) Rehabilitation and reintegration into active life of persons with acquired disabilities, following accidents or diseases which compromise the normal development of one's professional and life project.

2) Active inclusion of disabled persons through support to professional qualification, as well as access, maintenance and return to work.

3) Lifelong learning for adults. In 2016, CRPG has provided services to more than 2.500 persons and entities.

CRPG already had an active participation in EPR being a member for several years. Between

2009 and 2011, CRPG assumed EPR's presidency.

Through its participation in EPR, CRPG resumes its involvement in dynamics that ensure the continuous identification of international policy developments, as well as the benchmarking of international reference practices, important contributions for



the ongoing updating and development of the organisational development strategy and services.

Service areas

- **Assessment of disability impacts after accidents and diseases, rehabilitation needs and reintegration plans**
- **Psychosocial rehabilitation**
- **Functional rehabilitation (after medical rehabilitation)**
- **Assistive products/technologies**
- **Guidance and career counselling**
- **Vocational education and training**
- **Job access and maintenance and return to work**

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES



EU Funding Training, 15-16 November 2017, Brussels

European Funding is an important topic for EPR and its members. Having access to European funds allow ideas and projects to improve the life of people with disability to be put in place. As we inform of published Call for Proposals, application processes and requirements to successfully apply is not always simple and clear. Thanks to the expert Nikolaos Floratos, this autumn EPR delivered a training on EU funding to its members who during two-half days learned the key recipe for a successful application. How to plan the proposal's writing, how to partner up with the right stakeholder and what steps to follow

were some of the tips Nikolaos shared with us. Relevant information will be shared with EPR



National Awareness Raising, 30 November 2017, Ljubljana

Over 90 people came together in Ljubljana at the Chamber of Commerce to hear about and discuss different practices to ensure all people have a work environment that enables them to be comfortable and work to the best of their abilities. Laura Jones kicked off the meeting with a presentation about the meaning, history and international initiatives related to reasonable accommodation. Business disability expert Graeme Whippy talked about his experience at Lloyds Bank where they implemented a simple system to request adjustments and offered them without people needing to fulfil any criteria, on simple request. Productivity throughout the company improved and participants at the event were particularly interested in the “passport” that kept record of a persons’ needs and solutions to meet them, facilitating intra-company moves between positions.

Speakers explained the key role of occupational

health professions in this field, in terms of prevention of accidents and reintegration of people into the labour market. The importance of interdisciplinary teams was stressed, to ensure all needs of employees are met. There was a focus on examples where companies found creative solutions for people with physical disabilities to carry out different tasks, but speakers also spoke about the importance of psychological support for staff and the need to remember that mental health issues is often an invisible disability.

Small adjustments can have a big impact, and are often easier than expected. Adjustments should be developed in partnership with the employee, re-evaluated regularly, and be seen as part of the normal way for a company to operate, in support of all staff.

Presentations from all speakers will be available on the new EPR website.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

EPR Stakeholder Committee, 27-28 November 2017, Köln

EPR and the German member of BerufsförderungsWerk (BFW) co-organised a one-day event to reflect and share experiences on how to promote meaningful cooperation between vocational centers and employers. A visit to the BFW Köln was organised for them to show their facilities and present information about courses provided.

The event attracted over thirty participants including EPR members from Greece, Spain, Norway, Slovenia, Estonia, Hungary, Belgium, Lithuania, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal and France and it counted as well with the presence of German employers and trainees. A speaker from the Corvinus University (Hungary) presented the finding of the proAbility project, developed with the NHO in Norway.

There was a fruitful exchange of good practices

among EPR members and thanks to the facilitator, attendees engaged in group reflections to think about how to develop fully inclusive services. Based on the expertise of the participants, feedback from employers, trainees and the proAbility project, the main outcomes of the event include: building on what people with disabilities can do, their abilities, skills and motivation; the importance of the on-the-job learning; motivational engagement of managers within companies; change the company's culture on disability; closer cooperation between companies and VR providers and increasing visibility of the benefits of hiring pwd, including economic ones and the added value of diversity in the workforce.

These outcomes provide valuable inputs to be further developed and taken into account for EPR's work in 2018, with the ultimate goal of supporting the shift towards diversity in the workforce.

PRODUCTS CATALOGUE & INNOVATION PRIZE

The Innovation Prize allows EPR members to highlight best practices related to their fields of work. It aims at stimulating the development of innovation and dissemination of the most outstanding within our network. The Innovation Prize 2017 contest was comprised between September 2016 and April 2017, open to all professionals working in the EPR member's organisations. This year's Innovation Prize was awarded to URI, University Rehabilitation Institute, Slovenia, thanks to the activities they put forward to improve the life of people with disabilities through socio cultural activities in their vocational rehabilitation program. Evalda Bizjak, an occupational therapist in Maribor,



collected the prize from the hands of EPR President. Through this program, URI proved how interaction with music, arts, poetry or musical performance have a positive impact on people.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Benchlearning Event, 12 December 2017, The Netherlands

The benchlearning event on inclusive education, co-organised with Rea College in the Netherlands, was an opportunity for EPR members to share their expertise but also to reflect and discuss on concrete proposals for the future. Participants from the Netherlands, Latvia, Ireland (online) and Estonia met in December in one of the social enterprises created by Pluryn close to Nijmegen and staffed with people with physical disability and/or mental health conditions.

During the morning session, the facilitator developed activities where all participants were able to share their expertise and good practices. EPR members presented different cases, including a European funded project (Rea College), an approach to promote learners' personal development (Heliomare), an activity where staff and students come together at the beginning of the year (Astangu), the assessment process to collect

personal info and interest from students and give recommendations on suitable courses (SIVA) and the Education Support Services to promote a universal design for learning ethos across campus (NLN).

Using the feedback from the morning sessions and building on Rea College's proposal to develop a joint project proposal, the afternoon session was designed to share ideas and inputs from participants on how to proceed forward with the project proposal. The activities were highly interactive and the main outcomes confirmed the interest for a call under the Erasmus Plus programme, giving also concrete inputs to be feed into the proposal. The idea so far is to organise an event involving students and policy makers to be held next to the 2018 EPR Annual Conference in Utrecht (19/20/21 September). Next steps and feasibility are currently being assessed and will be shared soon with EPR's members.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 8-9 June 2017, Mulhouse, France

**21st century skills and beyond.
Understanding the future today
to meet tomorrow's challenges**

Our Annual Conference this year took place in Mulhouse, France, thanks to the hosting of EPR's French member CRM, Centre de la Rehabilitation de Mulhouse. With a focus on the future, looking at skills, innovative processes and how can service providers be ready for the demand of future labour markets, EPR members took part in two days of networking opportunities, sharing best practices, listening to innovative projects and workshops.

Thanks to the great organisation provided by CRM, bringing us amenities, such as a magical entertainment show during a networking dinner on the French country side, the Annual Conference was a good occasion to meet with the whole EPR community. Previous to the conference, CRM guided participants throughout their centre's premises showing their different areas of work and the training options they provide for their users to rejoin the labour .

At EPR we are already working to organise a special event for next years' Annual Conference and EPR 25th Anniversary celebrations.



PROJECTS

PESSIS III

Final Conference and launch of the Federation of European Social Employers



On October 20th, the project PESSIS III -continuation of PESSIS II and PESSIS-, funded by the European Commission and aimed at the creation of a European network to represent employers in the social sector, reached its final step by holding a final conference at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels. EPR Secretary General, Laura Jones, facilitated one of the panels where employers from different EU member states presented their organisations and their future involvement on the recently created federation for social employers.

Employers representatives from Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany and Spain joined civil society organisations, such as the project's partners and the Social Platform, and relevant stakeholders such as the European Commission or the EESC to debate about the main outcomes of the project.

The key theme of the day was the launch of the Federation of European Social Employers and how these actors present on the day will from now look together towards a future collaboration within the scope of this new born network. FESE aims at major employers organisations in the field of social services in Europe with the objective of become a crucial partner in European social dialogue.



The Federation of European Social Employers, aims at bringing together the major employer organisations in the field of social services in Europe. It will strive to provide social services' employers with an effective voice at European level, to find common solutions to the sector's challenges with both representatives of workers and the European institutions and to lead the European Union towards more social and inclusive policies.

The Social Services sector is a major job creator in Europe, employing over 10 million staff and creating over 1.8 million new jobs in Europe since 2008. Together with health services, the social services sector represents 7% of the total economic output in the EU 28. With changing demographics and family patterns, the social services sector is expected to grow



EUROPEAN REPORT

significantly over the next few decades. The Federation of European Social Employers will aim at setting-up, together with workers' representatives, a sectoral European social dialogue committee, with participation in EU cross-sectoral social dialogue -through pre-existing structures-being an important objective.

PESSIS III final conference was the occasion to present the European report run by Jane Lethbridge, director of the Public Services International Research Unit of the University of Greenwich, focused on the state of play of social dialogue in the social services sector in Europe. The report looks at 22 EU Member States with specific input on the structures in the UK, Hungary, Romania, Portugal and Slovakia.

The research reveals, based on these national reports, that the social dialogue is under-researched with a number of European countries such as Finland, Sweden or Italy where it does not take place. This marks an inconsistency on social dialogue structure across Europe as other countries such as France place it high in the political agenda.

The study highlights how certain sectors under social services, for example long-term care, care itself, rehabilitation and child care do not always have accessible data what challenges its study. The social services sector has experienced an important growth in the past five years, being one of the few sectors where employment rate has raised in Europe.

The study shows how social services labour force is mainly composed by migrant women working part time and receiving low wages, minor to average wages. Not well valued as a working sector, the care sector, traditionally feminised as per the overrepresentation of women as workforce, experience an important shortage of professionals that needs to be addressed in face of the increased ageing of the European population and the needs in social service delivery this will represent in the near future.

The report reflects austerity has had a clear impact on the social sector with fundamental changes following important budget cuts.



PESSIS 3 Promoting employers' social services in social dialogue

Next January, EPR will take part in the continuation of PESSIS III. The project approved will be PESSIS + and the Kick-off Meeting will be held in Brussels. More information will be available on EPR's website.

For more information about the project, visit Social Services Europe website at www.socialserviceseurope.eu

NEWS ABOUT EQUASS



Sports4ALL Final Conference, Vilnius, 30th June 2017

On June 30th, the Sport+4ALL project held its final conference in Verona, to present the results of the project and partnership. As explained by Astangu's article on this newsletter, Sport+4ALL created tools that support more diverse and higher quality of sport activities on offer at the European level for persons with disabilities. EQUASS has contributed with methodological expertise to this 2-year long Erasmus+ project. The project was led by Centro Polifunzionale Don Calabria and its 7 member partnership included

3 EPR members: Astangu Rehabilitation Center, Fundación Intrás and Valakupiu Rehabilitation Center.

As a result of the two year collaboration between these rehabilitation and sport centres a handbook on "Innovative practices in sport provision for people with disabilities" was launched. The handbook is a conclusion of best practices, new knowledge and shared experiences. Find out more on their website: www.sportplus4all.eu

TVLC (The VET Learning Community) meeting in Coimbra

As mentioned under the Member's News section of this newsletter, last September excellence certified organisation Appacdm de Coimbra hosted an event dedicated to vocational education and professional qualification in Europe. This project is led by REA College, the Netherlands.

The event brought together 30 specialised technicians from eight European organisations in order to debate and exchange experiences. The day comprised various training sessions and comparisons of the teaching methods used by the many institutions.

This European initiative, sponsored by the Erasmus+ programme, focuses on the development of quality guaranty strategies and the promotion of inclusive Vocational Education and Professional Qualification programmes.

The project main goals are a better global development of the Vocational Teaching and Professional Formation, either for regular teaching schools and for specialised teaching institutions to persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in Europe, as well the creation of a sustainable learning and exchange partnership.



Erasmus+

NEWS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

A few staff members of EPR and EQUASS have changed in the past months. EPR has recently welcomed its new Financial Officer, Ronald Scholaart. Ronald has long experience working in Finance and as a Human Resources Manager in the private sector during the past 30 years.

Ronald has experience working in companies in an international environment and market with projects in several European countries.

After Cinzia de Letis left to join a new professional adventure in Italy, her home country, Alicia Gómez Campos joined EPR's Secretariat as new person in charge of Policy, Communications and Projects. Alicia has more than five years of experience working in Brussels on different non-for profit organisations, mostly on human rights and social

issues. Previously she was a TV journalist in Spain.

Sarah Vanpimsem joined our Secretariat as new EQUASS Officer. Sarah has experience in teaching, customer service and speaks four languages.

For the past months, Lisbeth Wille has been assisting EQUASS and EPR on communications, events organisations and translation. Lisbeth is a journalist with long experience working in Public Relations for the private sector.

In January after years of commitment to the EQUASS Unit, Marie Dubost, EQUASS Manager, will leave us to follow a new professional path. A new Manager will join our team end of January. We thank Marie for her excellent work and dedication.

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STAY TUNED & FOLLOW US



EPR_Network

Since our Annual Conference in June 2017 we have consistently grown our social media followers, especially on Twitter where we have more than 100 more followers in the past five months. Social Media channels allow EPR to reach out to stakeholders, keep on track of policy developments, members activities and disseminate the Secretariat's activities and EPR events to a wider audience.



www.epr.eu

EPR will launch a new website in the beginning of the next year. After months working on the redesign of its online platform, EPR is now close to launch a new version of its web that will contain a refreshed image, user-friendly and practical, to provide its members and stakeholders with a clearer and sharper vision of its activities, events and publications as well as e-learning modules and other relevant content.



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