

Working and Meeting Remotely Taskforce

Draft Meeting Report

7 April 2020, online

On April 7th, EPR held an online taskforce meeting discussing the challenges surrounding meeting and working online, with the aim to gather or develop resources to support members and their staff. The taskforce was chaired by Laura Jones, EPR Secretary General, and its participants included: Ana Juvino (Fundación ONCE), Charo Blasco (Fundación Rey Ardid), Irene Glez (Fundación INTRAS), Jean-Claude Schrepfer (Centre de Réadaptation de Mulhouse), Lucía Rincón (Fundación Rey Ardid), Nektaria Sifaki (Theotokos Foundation).

The meeting began with each participant asked about the two main challenges their respective organisations face over teleworking. The challenges of supporting students and staff remotely was a major theme shared by all participants. The challenges of not having the time to adjust well to the changes brought by the impact of Covid-19 and attaining a healthy work-life balance were also identified. Laura summarized the themes to conclude this segment of the taskforce:

- How can staff respect working time and manage other responsibilities and ensure work life balance? How to assess if staff are able to work well remotely, and act responsibly by organising their time? Motivation, dealing with distractions.
- Challenges of coordinating and managing online meetings; convincing staff that online meetings are needed. Upskilling staff to use the technology - and that this will be a transferable skill
- Dealing with the sudden change - was no time for the staff to support the service users to face the change
- Changing a culture so that people can work more online over time
- How to deal with mental health problems, particularly if people are isolated.
- Accessibility of learning methods for people with different disabilities
- Staff learning online
- Occupational safety course was done online - development of more online training for staff

The taskforce then looked at how organisations can continue operating efficiently remotely and what kind of activities coordinated by EPR could be beneficial. Jean-Claude mentioned that the pedagogical approach of teachers/trainers to clients has to change; training online is very different. The lack of personal contact is a challenge.

Lucia spoke about how her colleague Charo, who is responsible for general management at her organization, sends a video to all staff members at the beginning of each week to motivate them. Nektaria found that while it was important to support her colleagues, it was also important that she herself received support. Irene stated that no one should have a sense of guilt for not having an answer to difficult questions and that it is important to listen and have questions. This was especially relevant for persons with disabilities who may prefer to listen more and have more individual connections rather than get involved in large group discussions. She identified activities involving groups of students supporting each other throughout their academic lives. It's also important to find points in common so we feel more secure.

The group agreed that good practices, tips and tricks and other helpful resources would be gathered for EPR members to be able to draw from. In terms of how to gather or store online resources, various participants said they cannot use Dropbox or Google Drive. Laura concluded that the EPR forums would be the best place for people to share resources, info etc. that would feed into a final resource or toolkit. The link had already been sent, the forum can be accessed [here](#). People need to register for the forums before being able to post there.

Depending on what kind of information is gathered and what resource will be developed, the Knowledge Hub could be the best place to publish the final output/s. The taskforce agreed to host a new meeting on the 21st of April at 14:30 (CET) with an aim to gather resources over the two weeks preceding it, and at the meeting to assess what format the resources could be shared, and plan other actions.