



EASPD ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Images on front cover in clockwise order:

- 1) Keystone Moldova
- 2) 'Lockdown Growing' Paul Fitzgerald, Cope Foundation Ireland
- 3) Chance B, Austria
- 4) Support Girona, Spain

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“Myrto’s beautiful mask”

Mrs Myrto walks

In the forest.

She wears her beautiful,

floral mask on her face.

She watches lively, wonderful butterflies

Flying all over the place!

She dances.... She dances....

She can’t stop!

And Suddenly her mask flies on the plot.

“Good Bye...”

“I don’t want to wear this mask! Not anymore!”

“I want my freedom back!

“I want to see my beloved ones at last!”

“As I did in the past!

Myrto

Written by Myrto from ‘To Ergasitiri’, Greece

Message from our President

No one could have foretold what 2020 would be like. The impact of Covid-19 turned our personal lives and the societies that we live in upside down. Our members faced an unimaginable crisis. Many services were required to close by authorities as they sought to cut transmission of the virus. The managers of those services that continued to function suddenly had to become experts in protective clothing and finding scarce supplies. Members were confronted with invidious choices about what to do with their staff – whether it was to cut salaries, cut the numbers employed or do both.

The situation for people with disabilities was grim. Often endangered by medical conditions that left them vulnerable to the virus, there were major concerns about whether hard pressed health services would neglect them. Even more tragically, those individuals still living in institutions were at risk of the deadly virus sweeping through all residents and staff. All too often, parents and relatives of the individuals that our members had supported prior to the pandemic were left isolated and alone.

Yet remarkably, so many of our member organisations found ways to change their service, to find new ways to help people, to embrace digital communications and technology and frequently to do it with little cash. I feel truly humble thinking of what our members achieved during 2020. At EASPD we had to completely rethink how we operated. General Assembly and other governance meetings all had to move on line as did all seminars, member fora and conferences in Paris and Cork. New ways had to be found to share good practice and to pursue our policy goals.

You will learn more about what we did in this report, but I am truly proud of the pioneering work our Secretariat did during 2020. They were key to us successfully implementing our new statutes, governance rules and the election of a new Board at our virtual Cork conference through digital voting. Our French and Irish partners for the conferences were of tremendous assistance. The webinars took place frequently, sometimes weekly, on a huge range of topics. They had presentations from top quality experts, all designed to assist our members and supporters to respond to the crisis. Your participation, in large numbers, for every webinar demonstrated how much you valued them.

Much of what we report on in this Annual Report was borne through adversity. I nonetheless believe you will find much here to make you turn the pages. For me, this report amply demonstrates the solidarity that crosses national boundaries and lives strongly within EASPD.

James Crowe



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WHO WE ARE

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 an equal basis with others.

MISSION



Our mission is to deliver the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by supporting our members in the design, development and set up of individualised models of support, responsive to specific needs and wishes.

EASPD's vision is for any type of support to be individualised and available, accessible and responsive to the needs and wishes of persons with disabilities. Human rights-based support services play an important role in granting access, participation and inclusion in society. We want society to fully understand that these support services are human rights enablers.

VISION



THREE PILLARS

IMPACT

Have an impact on European policy in our areas of interest.

INNOVATION

Foster innovation at all levels.

INFORMATION

Stay informed and update our members and partners regarding latest developments.

In 2020, we moved into the final year of implementing our Multi-annual Strategy 'Commit!' 2018-2021, which reaffirms our commitment to human rights-based support services and our key role in creating a more Social Europe.

'Commit!' is driven by three objectives:

Representation

Innovation and Know-how

Member-Led Approach





OUR TEAM

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As a member-led organisation, EASPD's General Assembly holds the highest competence within the organisation, it is with their authority that EASPD's Executive Committee, Board and Secretariat support the implementation of the organisation's activities.

In October 2020, the 4-year mandate of the previous EASPD Executive Committee and Board came to an end. At the General Assembly on 16 October, 18 members were newly elected.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BOARD

James Crowe

President
Crowe Consultancy Ltd,
UK



Karin Astegger

Vice-President
Lebenshilfe Salzburg
Austria



Javier Güemes

Vice-President
Fundación ONCE
Spain



Valerija Bužan

Vice-President
Center Val
Slovenia



Peter Saxenhofer

Treasurer
INSOS
Switzerland



Luk Zelderloo EASPD Secretary General (Ex officio of Board)



EASPD Board Members meeting

BOARD

James Churchill

Social Care Training
UK



Mirela Juka

Down Syndrome Albania
Albania



Miguel Valles

CECD Mira Sintra
Portugal



Kathrin Völker

BAG WfbM
Germany



Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf

AIAS Bologna onlus
Italy



Lieve Dekempeneer

Hubbie
Belgium



Jose Maria Solé I Chavero

SUPPORT Girona
Spain



Vasilka Dimoska

PORAKA
North Macedonia



Eoin Nash

COPE Foundation
Ireland



Petra Rantamäki

KVPS
Finland



Ákos Pordán

Hand in Hand Foundation
Hungary



Stef de Cock

Equal Employment Europe
Belgium



Fabrizio Fea

Associazione Scuola Viva onlus
Italy



SECRETARIAT

Based in Brussels and led by EASPD Secretary General, Luk Zelderloo, EASPD's Secretariat support the implementation of EASPD's key activities. In 2020, we said some teary goodbyes to colleagues, welcomed new faces and even created a new team to better support the needs of the sector and our members.

Luk Zelderloo

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Secretary General



Project Development Team

Timothy Ghilain

Project Manager



Domenico Manente

Project Officer



Magdalena Verseckas

Project Officer



Claire Cambier

Project Officer



Knowledge and Innovation Team

Asel Kadyrbaeva

Knowledge and Innovation
Manager



Zoé Lardou

Learning and Development
Officer



Renaud Scheuer

Research and Development
Officer



Sasha Leone

E-Learning
Officer



Policy Team

Thomas Bignal

Policy Manager



Irene Bertrana

Policy Officer



Konstantina Leventi

Policy Officer



Fabrizio de Angelis

Policy Officer



Operations Team

Rachel Vaughan

Operations Manager



Sonia Staskowiak

Senior Finance Officer



Adriana Elena Popa

Membership Officer



Sydney Von Ihering

Communication and Project
Officer



Dimitri Papakoch

Events and Operations
Officer



Ilaria Cassani

Communications
Officer



Volunteers

Dionyssis Antanasiotis

Operations Assistant



Naiara Alarcón

Project Assistant



Toju Popu

Project Assistant



Marina Antanasiotis

Communications and Operations
Assistant



Giulia Bergamasco

Project Assistant



Maxime Sepelie

Research Assistant



REPRESENTATION

In one of the most challenging years to hit our sector and the world, EASPD has used all its efforts to present and draw urgent attention to the reality of support service providers during the pandemic. Our work this year has centred around ensuring the full recognition of the role of the sector and vital role in society in Europe, during COVID-19 and always. Crucially EASPD has worked to connect European and international policies with national and local priorities to make sure our sector is not left behind during the EU's recovery from the crisis.

PARTNERSHIPS

European expert group on transition from Institutional to community-based care

EASPD was an active member of the European Expert Group on transition from institutional to community-based care (EEG) in 2020. EASPD participated in the 10 years anniversary of the EEG celebrated during an international [event](#) organised on the 16th January. Moreover, EASPD took part in the EEG open meetings debating with the European Commission particularly on the resilience and threats faced by support services during the COVID-19 pandemic.



EASPD Board Member Kirsi Konola, presented the experience of deinstitutionalisation in Finland.

"All our members must also analyse what they are doing to improve inclusion in their community "

EASPD Board Member Pep Solé



European Commission High Level Group on Disability

EASPD contributed to the group and its meetings and raised important issues such as:

- 1 the **relevance** of the role of support services to support the implementation of the UN CRPD and the next European Disability Strategy,
- 2 the need to **better invest** into support services, particularly acknowledging the difficulties faced during the pandemic which put the viability of the support services sector at threat,
- 3 highlighting the need to ensure workforce of disability services are properly trained and benefiting from adequate working conditions which are a prerequisite to **ensure recruitment and retention**.

European Day of Persons with Disabilities

At the European Day of Persons with Disabilities, EASPD re-affirmed the importance of the EU Budget in funding innovative projects in the field of services for persons with disabilities and how it has been a key facilitator of the UN CRPD across the European Union. Highlighting the importance of the European Social Fund +, the European Regional Development Fund and REACT-EU, as well as the new Recovery and Resilience Facility, Thomas Bignal added that Managing Authorities should use these instruments to support progress (as they don't have to) and recommended the disability movement to lobby for this to happen.

EU Alliance for Investing in Children

EASPD together with our partners in the EU Alliance for Investing in Children, advocated for the protection of children and their families during and after the COVID-19 crisis. Together, we contributed to the European Commission Public Consultation on the Child Guarantee expected to be released in early 2021, and called for more European commitment to tackling child poverty and that it be prioritised in the EU Recovery Package and the 2021-2027 EU Multi Financial Framework.

Following its work started in 2019, EASPD participated in the quality of expert on inclusion in the European Commission's working group on ECEC. This group is formed of representatives from each EU&EEA national governments together with 8 expert organisation, with the aim of facilitating the exchange of ideas and promising practices, and support national reform processes. 2020 saw the end of this group's mandate, and the publication of reports to inform policy makers. "[ECEC - How to recruit, train and motivate well-qualified staff](#)" focused on the professionalisation and attractiveness of ECEC services, while the "[Toolkit for inclusive early childhood education and care](#)" provides promising pathways to make ECEC services more inclusive. EASPD has been delighted to support the development of these documents, which offer useful tools to make European early education services more inclusive and in line with the UNCRPD.



POLICY MILESTONES

1

COVID-19

COVID-19 was the focus of our attention in 2020. In particular, ensuring that the EU's policy response supports the sector's management of the crisis and its recovery. We brought together the 12 major European networks of social services through the Coordinated Action on Social Services and COVID-19 and launched the campaign #SocialServicesAreEssentialServices to serve as a platform for support service providers to showcase the vital work they provide, and underline their needs in responding to COVID-19.

The Coordinated Action hosted numerous formal and informal exchanges with the EU institutions and even at the highest level with several meetings with Vice President of the European Commission Dubravka Suica and the Vice President of the European Parliament. This boosted the recognition of the issues impacting social services in several key European Commission and Parliament initiatives: from additional [EU funds](#), to its medium term economic strategy ([European Semester](#), etc) to its policies in areas such as [Public Procurement](#) or [State Aid](#).

We worked to ensure that part of the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII) is dedicated to covering the additional costs and lowered income of support service providers across the continent. The European Commission responded with a Helpdesk Webinar, attended by 600 participants. Following the [Helpdesk on Access to EU funds for Social Services](#) and the [Social Summit on Social Services & COVID19](#), the Coordinated Action is now regularly meeting relevant EU officials and policy makers through its dedicated "Taskforce on Social Services & COVID19". We expect this to lead to long-lasting developments in the social field at European level.

More on the #SocialServicesAreEssentialServices Campaign..

The Coordinated Action joined together organisations representing support service providers who work with older persons, persons with disabilities, homeless persons, persons in or at risk of poverty, those with abusive partners or family members, vulnerable children and young people, refugees and asylum seekers, as well as people with addiction as part of a European wide social action! We reached out to our members and collected information from grassroots level as part of our campaign #SocialServicesAreEssentialServices. The highlight was on 25th June, when we held an online summit '[Social Services and COVID-19: what role for EU?](#)' to show EU governance how essential services are.



LAUNCH OF THE CAMPAIGN

4th

After the campaign is launched on social media, EASPD members and social services around Europe start to react with the campaign hashtags and their own photos. Here are some of our members!

TIMELINE

June 2020

KEYSTONE MOLDOVA



APPACDM COIMBRA



CHANCE B AUSTRIA



ASOCIATIA MOTIVATIE DIN MOLDOVA



SOCIAL SUMMIT

25th

The entire social services sector came together at European level to call the EU to strengthen recognition, urgency and resilience in social services during the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery.

2,000+

Viewed the summit online



Social Services & COVID-19: what role for EU?

Online Summit | 25 June 2020 | 10:00-12:00 CEST



KVPS, FINLAND



VTC MARGARITA, GREECE



SUPPORT GIRONA, SPAIN



VTC MARGARITA, GREECE

The European Commission has planned an ambitious social policy agenda for 2021; which meant that 2020 was a key year in terms of preparations for the different files.

The next European Disability Strategy (EDS) was very high up on our agenda. EASPD was at the forefront of both formal and informal discussions with the European Commission and the European Parliament, including with Commissioner Nicholas Schmit in charge of jobs and social rights. To facilitate these discussions, EASPD prepared and launched a position paper on the [next EDS](#), as well as a [response to the public consultation](#) by the European Commission.

The EU Commission has also promised to do an Action Plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights, the EU's compass for the development of our social welfare systems. Together with members, EASPD developed a [Position Paper](#) on what we would like to see in this Action Plan focusing on five key principles of the Pillar.

Children were also high up on the Commission's agenda as they are preparing to launch a proposal for a EU Child Guarantee and Strategy in early 2021. Having already highlighted that children with disabilities and access to support services will be important parts of the Child Guarantee, EASPD was very active in trying to shape the upcoming proposal both with a [position of our own](#), as well as through different partnerships (EU Alliance for Investing in Children), working groups (Working Group on ECEC) and policy fields (European Semester). The Commission also launched the European Education Area, which following pressure from EASPD, included a clear statement in favour of inclusive education and the UN CRPD.

In December 2020, EASPD presented all these reports with the co-legislators through a dedicated meeting with Members of the European Parliament: Disabilities Services are Social Rights Enablers. Now, of course, we will have to wait until the initiatives are launched in 2021. In the meanwhile, backed with these positions and the experts of our members, EASPD will continue to be active in promoting the key role of Disability Services in implementing these policies.

Social Services Eco-system (funding and workforce)

This year, the EU had to negotiate its long term budget and Recovery Plan in response to the pandemic. Throughout 2020, EASPD has been active in the decision-making process for these funds, for example helping to open up REACT-EU for social services and employment of disadvantaged groups. We informed our members about these programmes, showing them how to engage with their national authorities to further shape the use of many of these funds.

We were also active on EU legal frameworks and pushed for the appropriate use of Public Procurement for the EU recovery and for strengthening the case for state aid rules to be kept and applied throughout Europe. We organised a key event to explore alternatives to public procurement in the funding of social care services, presenting our report on the topic.

In 2020, EASPD had direct contact with:

European Commission

President

2

Vice-Presidents

4

Commissioners

European Parliament

50-55

MEPs



by Cerebral Palsy Greece/Open Door

EVENTS

Seminars became webinars in 2020. Although we missed being in the same room as our colleagues and struggled with the 'mute' button at first, we quickly adapted to the situation and took advantage of what technology had to offer. With our online events we were still able to bring people together for important discussions, and reached more people than ever before.

7th April

#FundInclusion Webinar

At this online event, we launched and presented our study 'Alternatives to Public Procurement in Social Care and Support'. The discussion between participants and speakers revolved around the extent to which public procurement, reserved markets and professional budgets can help social care and support providers to be more in line with the principles of the UN Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities.



Fund Inclusion Webinar



4th-5th May

EASPD Annual Conference 'Road to Employment for Persons with Disabilities'

Intended to be held in Paris and hosted with LADAPT, the two-day event brought together support service providers, persons with disabilities, the European Commission, the International Labour Organisation, businesses as well as other stakeholders, and analysed the barriers that are still preventing the complete inclusion of persons with disabilities in the open labour market. Speakers shared good practices and it was also an opportunity to identify the key recommendations which must be considered for the next European Disability Strategy and effective implementation of Article 27 of the UN CRPD. The winners of the 4th edition of the EASPD Employment awards were announced, an award presented to social care and support providers, businesses or employers who have designed and implemented effective and innovative systems for the employment of people with disabilities. 6 of the promising practices submitted were chosen to be published in our [Employment For All booklet](#).



5⁰⁰⁺

Participants world-
wide



Employment For All Awards Service Provider winner, Dafür Austria

25th June

Social Summit: Social Services and Covid-19: What role for the EU?

On 25 June 2020, EASPD and the entire social services sector came together at European level to call the European Union to strengthen recognition, urgency and resilience in social services during the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery. The [Online Summit](#) was an opportunity for the sector to engage with high level European policy and thought leaders: the Vice President of the European Parliament Dimitrios Papadimoulis, the Vice President of the European Commission Dubravka Šuica, Member of European Parliament Dragoș Pîslaru and University Professor Frank Vandenbroucke. A [joint position paper](#) representing the entire social services sector was presented.



"The message from the sector is crystal clear: we need the European Union to **strengthen** the recognition, take **urgent action** and **invest** in resilience in social services"

Luk Zelderloo, EASPD Secretary General at on-line summit

9th September

Early Childhood Intervention in Europe: How can the EU support children with disabilities from the very first step?

EASPD, in collaboration with the ECI Agora project, collected data on the state of play of Early Childhood Intervention in Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Greece, Poland, Slovakia, and Albania, and included recommendations for EU policy makers in the report "[Early Childhood Intervention in Europe - How can the EU support children with disabilities from the very first step?](#)". The webinar welcomed speakers from each of these countries representing both civil society and Commission desk officers responsible for developing national reports. The event was an opportunity to discuss the challenges faced by service providers across Europe and how to address them.

14th-15th December

EASPD Annual Conference 'Art of Inclusion: Disability and Diversity in Arts and Culture'

EASPD, Cope Foundation and the European Network of Cultural Centres joined forces in this event that was supposed to take place in Cork, Ireland. Even if it was moved online, we still managed to recreate the [spirit of Ireland through music and art](#). The conference addressed how we can promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream arts and culture. It showcased the work of artists and performers from across the world while calling for a clear strategy to prioritise and facilitate the engagement of disabled artists and professionals in the cultural sector as a whole, as well as promote the visibility of these artists and their work. With the participation of representatives of the European institutions and United Nations, professional artists and experts, the event illustrated the urgent need for the full implementation of Article 30 of the UN CRPD, the right of persons with disabilities to participate in cultural life. Read the event report [here](#).



Scenes from 'Flavour of Cork' videos produced by COPE Foundation Ireland for EASPD's Art Conference.



3rd December

UN Conference of States Parties to the CRPD

This year COSP did not take place in New York as usual and was moved online, but EASPD was still there with our side event '[How can we use arts and culture to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities?](#)' The event speakers presented models of inclusion of persons with disabilities in the arts and culture sector, aiming to discuss frameworks that can eliminate cultural exclusion of persons with disabilities. Moreover, recommendations on how to achieve the implementation of Article 30 were formulated to Member States and all relevant stakeholders.



Luk Zelderloo and Katarina Ivanković Knežević, Director, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion



7th-11th December

Social Services Week

EASPD's Social Services Week showcased the diversity of support service providers for persons with disabilities and the vital work they do in their communities. Across five days, participants enjoyed 7 different events covering issues as diverse as the planning of social services at local level to inclusive education, to personal and household services. One main message appeared throughout: COVID-19 has re-affirmed the need to strengthen a disability services system built on the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



"This week has demonstrated the importance of our sector in empowering persons with disabilities in all areas of their lives, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic"

James Crowe, EASPD President at social services week event

500+

Participants

Student sharing his experience at IE+ Project final conference, part of Social Service week 2020





The middle land by the artists of Group A from Scuola Viva, Rome

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Checkmate! (Raku ceramic method) by the artists of Group A from Scuola Viva, Rome



The town of Nemi by the artists of Group A from Scuola Viva, Rome

INNOVATION AND KNOW-HOW

In 2020, EASPD strived to play a leading and convening role in the development of innovative support models for persons with disabilities. To do this we facilitated further innovation in the sector, identifying and contributing to the design, development and sharing of innovative support models.

PROJECTS

Workforce Development



Advancing Personal and Household Services (Ad-PHS)

There are two main sectoral activities in Personal and Household Services (PHS): social care and household support, yet with a possible growing overlap between the two. Current societal developments such as changes to family structures and the general ageing of our society increases the need for PHS. The overarching objective of the Ad-PHS project is to lead to the creation of a platform of relevant PHS stakeholders at EU level, to create a single point-of contact to support, guide and provide advice to Public Authorities in the development of their PHS policies. In December 2020, the project held its [final event](#) following 2 years of work. The speakers discussed the importance and the challenges of PHS through simultaneous round tables and a panel discussion with very interesting proposals for the future of the sector.



December 2018 - December 2020

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: EASPD

Contact: Renaud Scheuer



Enhance (European Curriculum for Family and Community Nurses)

[Enhance](#) targets the specific mismatch between the skills currently offered by nurses working in Primary Health Care (PHC) and those actually demanded by both public health care institutions and private service providers, when applying innovative healthcare models centred on PHC. Project highlight this year include the piloting of the European Curriculum in 3 European universities, and an Enhance paper selected as one of the 15 finalists at the 2020 International e-Learning Excellence Award!

January 2018 - May 2021

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: National Research Council
Institute for Educational Technology

Contact: Adriana Popa



Enhance project meeting in Dresden, Germany. Jan 2020

A4i (Alliance for Inclusive Investment in Social Care and Support)

Europe has an investment gap in social infrastructure of an estimated €150 billion a year for the next decade in health, social care and support, education and affordable housing. There is a crucial need of a new breed of decision makers who have the skills and confidence to secure financing from both public and private sources, the [a4i project](#) aims at bridging this gap. 2020 saw a great number of accomplishments for a4i, despite the challenging context of the coronavirus crisis. It launched the first version of the State-of-the-art report providing a clear European assessment on social investment in social care and support, and European Guidelines on Quality Social Investment, which aim to provide the basic guidelines on social investment from a cross-European perspective.



January 2019 - December 2021

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: EASPD

Contact: Thomas Signal

IN TOUR (Inclusive Tourism Professions. European Curricula For Accessible Tourism Manager And Frontline Staff

The [In-Tour project](#) aims to fill the gap in the training system in Europe on Accessible Tourism by equipping managers and front line staff working in the tourism sector with the appropriate knowledge, skills and competences to provide adequate services for customers with support needs.



Watch the [In-Tour video](#) to find out more about the project

January 2020 - December 2022

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: [Associazione Italiana Sclerosi Multipla Onlus Italy](#)

Contact: Domenico Manente

Education



IE+: Promoting positive attitudes and evidence-based policy for inclusive education

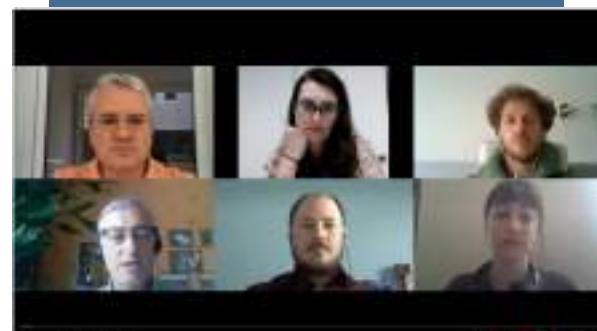
This project aims to provide decision-makers (policy-makers and education providers) with the information, training and tools that allow for evidence based policy making. Through these activities IE+ will facilitate not only adequate policy frameworks but also their real implementation, with a special focus on the transition from segregated to inclusive education settings. In 2020, the project held a [policy debate](#) to discuss the way forward for inclusive education, released [policy recommendations](#) and held their [final conference](#) in December.

January 2018 - January 2021

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: EASPD

Contact: Rachel Vaughan



IE+ Policy Debate, 8th June 2020

To Inclusive Education and BEYOND

September 2018 - August 2021

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: EASPD

Contact: Rachel Vaughan



[BEYOND](#) aims to empower special schools and service providers supporting children with special needs, to facilitate the transition towards fully inclusive education systems. The project will provide them with targeted information and tools to enable them to promote the acquisition of skills and competencies and support mainstream schools with the transition towards inclusive settings. The project is currently preparing for their conference in May 2021 which will address the key challenges and opportunities for the inclusion of all learners in mainstream schools as well as promote promising practices in the field of education.

IMAS II: Improving Assistance in Inclusive Educational Settings

The previous project IMAS I showed that the working conditions of learning support assistants are characterised by high workloads, little job security, low status in school hierarchies and low qualifications. Based on these findings, the follow-up project IMAS II wants to ensure the further development and strengthening of inclusive competences of learning and support assistants. The aim of the project is to develop [5 web-based knowledge modules](#) for different topics (e.g. ASD, ADHD, etc.) to give both practical and theoretical knowledge on how to support and strengthen the learning of children with disabilities, and develop competencies for inclusive practice. In 2020, the project has been busy preparing the online modules available in English, German, Portuguese, Slovak and Bulgarian!



October 2018 - September 2020

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: University of Graz

Contact: Zoé Lardou

Hi-Ability

December 2020 - November 2022

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: Cooperativa Sociale Controvento
ONLUS

Contact: Dimitri Papakoch



The Hi-Ability project aims to open doors to new spaces of education, promoting the empowerment and social inclusion of adults with intellectual disabilities in the fields of hiking and eco-tourism. It will 1) equip persons with intellectual disabilities with the skills needed to support professional guides during outdoor activity tours 2) improve the knowledge and competencies of adult educators on how nature/outdoor experiences can improve the social skills and well-being of people with disabilities. The project has recently begun so check out their [new website](#) for updates!



Person Centred Technology



DDSKILLS (Cutting-Edge Digital Skills for professional care givers of Persons with Disabilities and Mental Health Problems)

[DDSkills](#) aims to develop training courses for digital skills of professional caregivers so they can make better use of new technologies, and support persons with disabilities to use them. The project has been busy preparing their curriculum by completing a study on existing courses offered in the Health and Social Care Sectors. The study aims to identify the availability, characteristics and demand of courses related to digital skills for these sectors.

January 2020 - December 2022

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: [TO ERGASTIRI](#)

Contact: Magdalena Verseckas



DDSkills Kick off Meeting, 27-28th January in Athens

Smart4Health

Smart4Health

[Smart4Health](#) enables citizens to manage and bridge their own health data throughout the EU and beyond, advancing own and societal health and wellbeing. The project will develop a prototype application that allows users to collect, manage, share and donate their health-related data throughout the EU. At the start of 2020, partners presented Smart4Health to MEPs and stakeholders at the European Parliament, and later on in the year created its first Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Digital Health for Beginners.

November 2019 - February 2023

Horizon 2020 Programme

Coordinator: [UNINOVA](#)

Contact: Domenico Manente



Smart4Health meeting,
22nd January 2020

ENTELIS+ (Accessibility skills for a technology enhanced learning in an inclusive society)

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[ENTELIS+](#) builds on the outcomes of the previous ENTELIS project and aims to foster digital skills and competences of digitally excluded groups through strategic public-private partnerships. The project's goal is to reduce the digital divide by strengthening organisations to collaborate in the development of strategies and policies for digital skills development of persons with disabilities of all ages. The project kicked off at the start of 2020, and launched the awareness raising campaign #RightToConnectNow on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in December. A [glossary](#) which focuses on generating a common vocabulary with definitions of key project themes has also been created.



January 2020 - January 2022

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: EASPD

Contact: Magdalena Verseckas



Co-Care: Co-created ICT solutions for Alzheimer's Informal Caregiving

The Co-Care project brings together universities, ICT professionals, the health and social care sector and most importantly users to improve teaching and learning approaches and foster entrepreneurship in the ICT and health and social sector. The objective is that this approach be used in the design of ICT solutions to facilitate the daily life of informal caregivers of people with Alzheimer's. To improve the quality of the care they provide, give them a chance to network and help them to stay healthy.



January 2020- December 2022

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: [Universitat de Vic](#) - [Universitat de Catalunya](#)

Contact: Renaud Scheuer

Co-Care Kick off meeting in Vic Spain, February 2020

INTEGRAeu

INTEGRAeu will empower people with disabilities with the necessary digital tools and competences to increase their quality of life and improve their employability. It will create an online education tool adapted to be used by people with disabilities in Europe, and by organisations/trainers/ facilitators working with this target group.

October 2020- September 2022

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: [Fundación Cibervoluntarios](#)

Contact: Fabrizio De Angelis



Employment

DESC 2 : Disability, Equality, Security, Career. Back on the ground

The objective of DESC 2 is to promote the development of practices leading to the inclusion of people with disabilities in the open labour market, and to collect tangible data on the impact that such practices have on everyone involved. With these results, the project will promote the development of a legal and financial framework that promotes and encourages support for employment, at national and European level. The DESC 2 final conference in June 2020 presented the results of the project and the debated on career security within the EU.

September 2017- August 2020

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: [LADAPT](#)

Contact: Timothy Ghilain



DESC 2 Final conference, 25th June, 2020



ALL IN! INcredible Practitioners to empower adults with disABILITIES through Education, Employment & Social Entrepreneurship

[ALL IN!](#) aims to equip educators, trainers, HR managers and other experts with proper competences to support high-quality education for adults with disabilities. It will do so by developing practical resources to help these practitioners create innovative adult education settings to support adults with disabilities in progressing towards higher qualifications and entering the labour market. This year, highlights include the development of an [online game](#) to be used by practitioners in their work with adults with disabilities to provide practical support in starting a social enterprise. The project's [closing webinar](#) in September presented the Innovative and practical resources produced by the project and promising practices in the field adult education and employment of persons with disabilities.

October 2018 - October 2020

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: [Federatia pentru Accesibilizarea Romaniei \(FAR\)](#)

Contact: Adriana Popa



ALL IN! Online game

EQUALVet (Equal Vocational Education Training)

EQUALvet aims to develop a vocational training programme for people with intellectual disabilities in three professions: cook assistant, gardener assistant and cleaner. The training program will follow all the requirements needed by the accreditation agencies, to lead to the certification of the professional skills of the participants.



January 2019 - September 2022

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: [Margarita VTC](#)

Contact: Zoé Lardou

Supported Employment E-Portfolio

The main objective of the E-portfolio project is to improve services for vulnerable job seekers, employees and their employers by creating a quality dynamic interactive E-portfolio framework for (Supported Employment) organisations and education centres.

September 2020 - August 2022

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: [PHH Academie](#)

Contact: Renaud Scheuer

Inclusive Living

CISCOS: Connecting inclusive social planning, community development and service provision for persons with disabilities

CISCOS aims to develop an innovative and multidisciplinary approach to teaching and training to both service providers and local authorities so that they can work together to provide better services, programmes and policies for persons with disabilities. At the final conference in December, the project presented the resources it had developed. In particular, the [training course](#) for staff of service providers and local governments, that addresses topics such as the concept of disability and local planning, community development and adoption of inclusive models in service provision. .

January 2018 - December 2020

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: Centre for Planning and Evaluation of Social Services (ZPE) University of Siegen

Contact: Domenico Manente



UNIC (Towards User-centred funding models for long-term care)

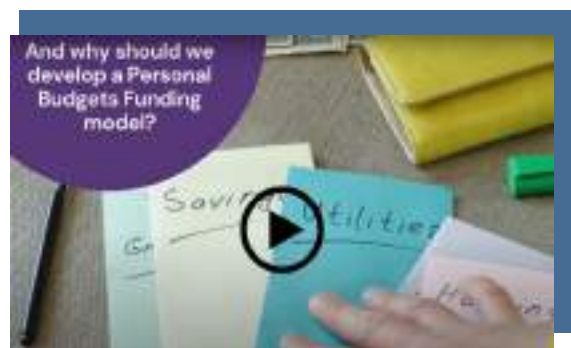
[UNIC](#) aims to support the transition to user-centred funding models (such as Personal Budgets) in long-term care (LTC). Personal budget is an amount of money which is provided to an individual by the public authorities and the individual can decide how to use it to cover their support needs. UNIC will develop tools to help service users, service providers and mainly public authorities to implement a user-centred funding model in long-term.

October 2020 - September 2023

European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI (2014-2020)

Coordinator: EASPD

Contact: Konstantina Leventi



[Click to watch the UNIC project video!](#)

Skills II: Improving the Skills and Competencies in Self-Directed Support

The [Skills II project](#) aims to develop self-directed support training that will increase opportunities for service users and their families to have greater control and freedom over their person-centered support. In May 2020, the project hosted three webinars that explored the development and progress of self directed support in Finland and Europe.

September 2019 - August 2022

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: Service Foundation for People with an Intellectual Disability (KVPS)

Contact: Renaud Scheuer



SKILLS II webinar, May 2020



TeamUp!



TeamUp! aims to promote social inclusion and equal opportunities in sport by improving access to sport for persons with intellectual disabilities in mainstream structures. The project has developed a tool for community mapping at local level to facilitate legal frameworks for inclusion, a joint training for sports professionals and a community of practice at national level to team up persons with intellectual disabilities and persons without disabilities.



[Click to watch the TeamUp! project video](#)

January 2019 - December 2020

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: EASPD

Contact: Domenico Manente

Arts and Culture



Field Aperture: Inclusion in Society By the Arts (ISA)

The ISA project aims to promote non-discrimination and inclusion of people with disabilities through arts and culture. ISA has created a toolkit for cultural operators, a guide for school teachers and a manual for creating your own inclusive artistic event. Find all these resources on www.artsinclusion.eu.

September 2017 - August 2020

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: [LADAPT](#)

Contact: Sydney von Ihering



ISA final conference online, 25th June, 2020

Rights

Just4All: promoting access to justice for persons with disabilities



The [Just4All](#) project aims to promote access to justice for persons with disabilities by raising awareness among legal practitioners on the needs of people with disabilities and developing a training for them on the topic. In 2020, the project completed and presented the Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) "[Access to justice for persons with disabilities](#)". The course aims to contribute to the training of legal practitioners by incorporating examples of good practices, glossaries and related EU legislation. It is available in English, Spanish and French.

October 2018 - April 2021

European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020)

Coordinator: [Fundación Once](#)

Contact: Sydney von Ihering



I DECIDE: Supported Decision Making using Digital Literacy & Numeracy skills

[I DECIDE](#) addresses how the development of digital, literacy and numeracy skills can support a person with disabilities wish to exercise (more) control over their lives at 'low level' supported decision making. The project focuses on the application of these skills in three important areas of someone's life 1) personal finance 2) consumer rights 3) personal health and well-being. Find the manuals created on each of these areas [here](#).



October 2017 - March 2020

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: [Foundation Girona Guardianship](#)

Contact: Timothy Ghilain



SMARTS

Supporting Me About Rights To Sexuality

SMARTS (Supporting Me About Rights to Sexuality)

The SMARTS project aims to better identify the support needs of persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with mental health conditions in the field of sexuality, as well as develop their skills and those of care providers, to make supported decisions in the field. The Kick-off meeting of SMARTS project took place on-line and the partners established a joint work plan for the coming years.



SMARTS kick off meeting, 29th -30th September, 2020

September 2020 - August 2023

Erasmus+ Programme

Coordinator: [Fundació Privada Astres](#)

Contact: Zoé Lardou

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)

ECI Agora



The ECI Agora project aims to facilitate the development of ECI services in the partner countries of Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary. The project will collect important research on the current state of play in each country and best practices in the field of ECI. To facilitate the provision of high-quality, community-based, person centered ECI services the project will develop a 'toolbox' and work with ECI services in communities and provide training sessions, to support the toolbox's implementation. A highlight of 2020 was the publication of the report "[Early Childhood Intervention in Europe - How can the EU support children with disabilities from the very first step?](#)" which compiled the state of play of early childhood intervention in a number of European countries and includes recommendations for EU policy makers.

January 2018 - October 2020

Funded by the Velux Foundation

Coordinator: EASPD

Contact: Timothy Ghilain



EASPD COVID-19 Art

Untitled.
by Roberto Sánchez Méndez
Acrylics on paper 100×110 cm
COGAMI Galicia

PUBLICATIONS

The need for new knowledge, innovative solutions and evidence based information to support policy developments has been a key priority for EASPD for many years. In 2020 we were especially fruitful in our research and data gathering activities and published several key reports including:



Disability service in non-EU countries: state-of-play of the service provision sector in Albania, Armenia, Moldova, North Macedonia and Turkey

[This report](#) analyses the trends and needs in social care services in five non-EU countries: Turkey, North Macedonia, Albania, Moldova and Armenia, which are in different relationships and stages of cooperation with the European Union.

Early Childhood Intervention in Europe - How can the EU support children with disabilities from the very first step?

[This report](#) is divided into two parts: 1) looking at the meaning of ECI through the legal lens offered by the United Nations and the European Union policy frameworks; 2) an overview of ECI implementation in 7 countries – Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Greece, Poland and Slovakia.



Employment for all Awards Booklet



Being employed is not just a right: it is also a fundamental and inherent part of a person's identity. As part of the run up to 'The Road to Employment' conference in May, an expert jury assessed numerous submissions from businesses and support providers to find the [6 most promising practices](#) that provide for sustainable and active involvement of persons with disabilities in the labour market.



EASPD 1st Snapshot Report: Impact of COVID-19 on Disability Services in Europe (April 2020)

The Covid-19 pandemic took the world by storm and put a strain on disability service providers, who faced numerous challenges to ensure continuity of services due to a lack of funding, protective equipment and staff. In [this report](#), EASPD analyses the struggles and the solutions that social service providers adopted in order to continue supporting millions of users everyday.

EASPD 2nd Snapshot Report: Impact of COVID-19 on Disability Services in Europe (October 2020)

[This report](#) follows the one published in April 2020 and aims to provide an Europe-wide overview on the state of play of the situation in October 2020. It is also available in [Dutch](#).



The opportunities and barriers of different employment models for persons with disabilities

[This report](#) examines the opportunities and barriers to different employment models for persons with disabilities across the EU. It addresses issues such as the potential of various models for fostering participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market and identifies employment models from a selected number of European countries as case studies to illustrate these opportunities and barriers.

EASPD country Factsheets about the state of Social Care and Support Services for Persons with Disabilities in Europe

EASPD has added new translations to our existing [28 Country Factsheets collection](#). New factsheets are now available to be read in Croatian, Greek, Czech, Estonian, Hungarian, Luxembourgish, Portuguese, Romanian and Swedish! EASPD commissioned the research “Country Fact Sheets on Social Care & Support Services Sector for Persons with Disabilities” as part of its commitment to expand knowledge based on the Social Care and Support Services Sector in Europe.



[CYPRUS](#)



[CROATIA](#)



[CZECH REPUBLIC](#)



[ESTONIA](#)



[LUXEMBOURG](#)



[PORTUGAL](#)



[ROMANIA](#)



[HUNGARY](#)



[SWEDEN](#)

EXCHANGE AND COLLABORATION

EASPD Lighthouse Network



Despite the stormy seas of 2020, the second annual edition of the EASPD's Lighthouse Network was successfully completed with two new training activities implemented between EASPD members. The Lighthouse Network is a space of contact among peers with certain expertise and organisations that express needs on those topics. The Network is engaged from (and for) EASPD's membership. Selected peer-experts work with other organisations to improve their knowledge and/or to increase their capacities.

In 2020, two matches were made between EASPD member organisations, who were looking to building their capacity on a key topic and four Lighthouse Network experts, who were willing to share their knowledge with others. Despite COVID-19, these training activities were successfully adapted to be delivered in an on-line format, assuring a constant flow of learning and exchanges!

Our Finnish expert, Maarit Alto, gave a 4-day training to highly motivated staff members from AMIMONI, a Greek organisation. The online course aimed to explore a way to renew the working methods and develop the understanding of person-centred notions when it comes to supporting persons with disabilities.



Person Centred Planning Lighthouse Network session, 2020

Support Decision Making Lighthouse Network session, 2020

For the second training, our Spanish experts, Pep Solé and Ferran Blanco from SUPPORT as well as Raül Olivera from Som Fundació gave a training on Supported Decision Making to three EASPD members: Eudajmonia from Poland, Help the Life Association from Albania and Disability Federation Ireland. Professionals from the three receiving organisations were very interested in learning more about supported decision making (SDM) and how they could better implement it in their respective organisations.

EURECO

On the 5th and 6th of March, EASPD and partners hosted the annual European research platform for inclusive community planning and service development for people with disabilities (EURECO) joint Research Forum 2020. 'Supporting inclusive health for ALL' was the title and theme of the gathering. The participants had the chance to discuss the implementation of Article 25 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in relation to health care provision to persons with disabilities, the research needs on such topic in the EU and policy recommendations to decision makers.



EURECO Research Forum 2020, 6th March



In November, the platform organised the online event, 'New Horizons in Mental Health Care: Strengthening mental health services by peer-expertise and digitalisation'. It was a space for participants to exchange ideas and engage with a panel of international speakers on the importance of peer expertise in mental health services design.

COVID-19 Webinar series



Watch the EASPD COVID-19 series highlights [here](#)

During the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, EASPD hosted [weekly webinars](#) to support its members and provide them with tools to face the unprecedented and unexpected situation. The webinars brought together experts and support services providers to discuss the key issues affecting the sector during the COVID-19 outbreak, and gave a platform to our members to highlight their challenging reality through the pandemic. Sessions ranged from the health needs of persons with disabilities in the pandemic to how we can maintain cultural connections during this difficult period. Each week we discussed issues that were topical. We heard from experts in Italy just as the pandemic was making its way to other areas in Europe and welcomed a Professor from the Wuhan University Institute for Human Rights Studies in China to hear how persons with disabilities had been affected on the other side of the world.

Joining Forces!

In March 2020, EASPD created a [Facebook group called 'Joining forces'](#). It serves as a support space for members and service providers. Group members are encouraged to raise their concerns, ask for advice from their peers and share info on promising practices and the measures that they are implementing to ensure the safety of staff and users.

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Members





Photos in black and white of Platform-K Professional Dance company, by Silver de Kwaasteniet

EASPD COVID-19 Art



p. 48

Photos in colour of Platform-K Professional Dance company, by Tom Callemin



MEMBER-LED APPROACH

p. 49

This year, EASPD pursued key objectives to strengthen its governance processes and its relevance in the social sector field. On the 4th March, EASPD president James Crowe signed and formally registered EASPD's new and updated statutes, and governance elections in October introduced important changes to the structure of the organisation. In 2020, these processes helped EASPD to become a better, even more member-led organisation!

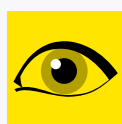
This year we worked harder than ever to listen, understand and speak out on the concerns and struggles of our members. And to adapt our workplan and activities to reflect their needs. We also welcomed new organisations into the EASPD family.



James Crowe signs new statutes in Brussels, 4th March 2020

NEW MEMBERS

Crowe Consultancy, LTD



Hilfsgemeinschaft
der Blinden und Sehschwachen Österreichs

Austrian Association in support of the blind and visually impaired (Hilfsgemeinschaft der Blinden und Sehschwachen Österreichs)



COOPERATIVA
PARA A INCLUSÃO

**CECD - Cooperative for
Inclusion, Portugal**



Autism Foundation Finland



CARE
FOR THE
MENTALLY
DISABLED
OF PIERIA

**Merimna Paidiou Katerinis,
Greece**



ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΓΙΑ ΤΟ ΠΑΙΔΙ

**"PAMMAKARISTOS" Children's
Foundation, Greece**



—
De meerwaarde
van sociaal
ondernemen
—

**SOM, federation of social
enterprises, Belgium**



**Deaconess
Foundation**

Helsinki Deaconess Institute
Foundation, Finland



AO SOS AUTISM,
Republic of Moldova



Fundació Privada Àuria,
Spain



Fundación INTRAS,
Spain



Society Biliki, Georgia



Amica, Spain



The Association for the Care of
People with Mental Disability of
the Rodopi Prefecture
"AGIOI THEODOROI", Greece



Tohum Autism Foundation,
Turkey



Gentis Foundation, Spain



Lebenshilfe Ennstal, Austria



FEDRA Association,
Republic of Moldova



Eudajmonia Foundation, Poland

NEW OBSERVERS



PeoplePlus,
Australia



Beit Ekstein,
Danel Group, Israel



British Columbia Aboriginal Network
on Disability Society (BCANDS)

B.C. Aboriginal Network on
Disability Society (BCANDS), Canada



Center for the Development of
Social and Educational Projects
"AURA", Russia



HUMANITAS - Federação Portuguesa
para a Deficiência Mental, Portugal



Ἰδρυμα Θεοτόκος

Theotokos Foundation,
Cyprus



Child and Adolescent's Center,
Greece



il PomoDoro Association of Social
Promotion, Italy



KEA/AMEA, Greece

EASPD MEMBER FORA

EASPD Member Fora (MF) represent the interest of EASPD in their own field through active research, policy development, advice and networking. The MFs are coordinated by two co-chairs: one co-chair with a board member position elected by the General Assembly and an internally elected co-chair by the membership of each MF. In 2020, two new co-chairs were elected to each group. These are their achievements this year!

Workforce Development and Human Resources

aims to promote high standards of knowledge, skill, competence and understanding within the social care workforce of the EU in general and amongst those of EASPD members in particular as a means of delivering quality services.

The Members Forum has contributed to various activities carried out by EASPD this year. In terms of research, it has provided key inputs for the elaboration of a call for tender for a study on the short-term impact of COVID-19 on disability support services, considering the impact on organisations, services, and workforce in several EU countries. The MF has also provided key inputs for the development of User Requirements as part of the Smart4Health project which aims to develop a platform for health data. Finally, in terms of policy, it has contributed to various discussions and position papers, culminating in EASPD joining the EU Pact for Skills.

Co-Chair: James Churchill

Facilitator from EASPD Secretariat: Renaud Scheuer

Co-Chair: Alexandre Rebelo

Policy Impact

measures and influences the impact of European policy and legislation on the disability sector.

The Policy Impact Group was very active in supporting EASPD's response to the COVID19 pandemic, in particular in the development of EASPD's two Snapshot reports on the impact of COVID19 on Disability Services (April and October), as well as the report on the regional COVID-19 investment needs, developed with the Coordinated Action group. This led to multiple high level meetings with Vice Presidents of the European Commission and European Parliament. Last but not least, the Policy Impact Group played a major role in the development of EASPD's positions on the next European Disability Strategy, the Action Plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Child Guarantee.

Co-Chair: Mirela Juka

Facilitator from EASPD Secretariat: Thomas Bignal

Co-Chair: Kirsi Konola

Education

focuses on education, lifelong learning and the development of inclusive schools.

In 2020 the MF on Education welcomed a number of new members and elected two new co-chairs. It supported EASPD's activities on COVID-19 with the webinar 'Ensuring access to education during COVID-19' and also contributed to EASPD's two snapshot reports on the impact of COVID-19 on Disability Services. Members of the Forum hosted a workshop on the transition from education to employment during EASPD's online conference 'The Road to Employment for Persons with Disabilities.' Throughout 2020, the MF worked with national experts in the field of education to develop Barometer reports on the state of inclusive education in 13 European Countries. These reports will be used to develop a longitudinal perspective of the development of inclusive education over the coming years.

Co-Chair: Miguel Valles

Facilitator from EASPD Secretariat: Rachel Vaughan

Co-Chair: Annemie Jennes

Employment

focuses on employment-related policies and job-related service developments.

This year the MF on Employment came face to face with the challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Several emergency meetings were held and important input was provided by the Forum on the pandemic's impact on the employment of persons with disabilities. Members also exchanged experiences and best practices in tackling the consequences of the crisis. The MF contributed to the organisation of the EASPD Conference "Road to employment for Persons with Disabilities" and to the drafting of the "Employment Manifesto" following the event. In addition, a Hearing on Employment was organised in collaboration with other stakeholders where the outcome was a Joint Statement to EU policymakers, calling to ensure that every citizen has the right to decent work in an open and inclusive labour market. The forum provided its input to EASPD positions on the Action Plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights and the upcoming European Disability Agenda. The following studies were produced: "Opportunities and barriers of different employment models for persons with disabilities" by Prof. S. Beyer and "Employment for All: Six Best practices."

Co-Chair: Fabrizio Fea

Facilitator from EASPD Secretariat: Rachel Vaughan

Inclusive Living

focuses on the main obstacles faced by organisations in the promotion of the transition from institutional to community-based care.

The Member Forum met twice over 2020 and has been actively debating issues related to support provision during the COVID-19 pandemic. All members have been very active in their communities to ensure continuation of support to the extent possible and have been seeking alternative ways to deliver support through online or remote systems. The challenges brought up by the pandemic highlighted the need for reinforcing advocacy actions at international and local level to better support individuals and their right to inclusive living. The coming months will therefore be dedicated to reinforce the dialogue with stakeholders and share experiences to build more resilient support systems.

Co-Chair: Jose Maria Solé I Chavero

Facilitator from EASPD Secretariat: Rachel Vaughan

Co-Chair: Ludmila Malcoci

Person-centred Technology

focuses on ICT and Assistive Technology and assesses the benefits that new technologies can bring to disabled people in areas such as communication, employment, commerce, learning, independence, safety and free time.

In 2020, the Person Centred Technology Member Forum concentrated mainly on development of the group in order to support EASPD's members in the process of moving online, a process forced by the pandemic. The Forum has grown from 4 to 48 members (25 full members and 23 observers) from 17 countries. This year members received 13 newsletters containing information about relevant events, publications, education and funding opportunities related to person-centred technology in the social sector such as assistive technologies, digital skills, e-health etc. The Forum organised two webinars during the first wave of the pandemic: "Service providers moving to on-line support during the COVID-19" pandemic (265 participants and over 1,400 viewers on Facebook) and "Face-to-face services moving to on-line mode" (64 participants and 325 viewers on Facebook).

Co-Chair: Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf

Facilitator from EASPD Secretariat: Magdalena Verseckas

Co-Chair: May Agius

Arts and Culture

provides a platform for the exchange of information, good practices and the promotion of inclusive practices in the field of supporting access to arts and culture.

2020 has been one of the most important years for EASPD's member forum on Arts and Culture since its creation. The group collected important data on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on artistic activities in disability services and on artists with disabilities and shared these results in a dedicated session as part of EASPD's Covid-19 webinar series. For the first time ever, EASPD hosted one of its annual conferences around the topic of cultural participation of persons with disabilities and called for better implementation of Article 30 of the UNCRPD. Despite COVID-19 restrictions and the online setting, members of the forum were still able to bring creativity to the Zoom platform and planned an inspiring, entertaining and thought provoking event that addressed key issues around inclusion and the artistic world. In December, members of the MF planned and spoke at EASPD's side event at the UN COSP 'How can we use arts and culture to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities?' organised with the European Commission.

Co-Chair: Eoin Nash

Co-Chair: Eva Dermitzaki

Facilitator from EASPD Secretariat: Sydney von Ihering

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)

promotes the building of an effective inclusive society by including persons with disabilities in every step of their lives and from the very early stages of life.

This year the Member Forum on ECI focused its work on supporting its members to face the COVID pandemic, and on participating in the debate on the Child Guarantee. A first webinar was organised where ECI services identified issues they were facing to support children in Europe, and exchanged ideas on solutions they had been able to implement, in particular in Bulgaria, Greece, and Spain. A second webinar was organised to look into how the European Semester, and European funding in general, can help support the development of children services, with examples from Albania, Croatia, Greece, Finland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Poland. The Forum also co-organised a Policy Café on the Commission's consultation on a Council Recommendation on a Child Guarantee, to ensure the concerns and wishes of our sector were represented in this very important future legislation.

Co-Chair: Vasilka Dimoska

Co-Chair: Erik Bloemkolk

Facilitator from EASPD Secretariat: Timothy Ghilain

PROVIDER FORA

The idea behind our Provider Fora and membership visits is to unify and strengthen the voice of service providers at national level and improve their ability to create partnerships for projects. In 2020 not all of the ones planned were able to go ahead due to the pandemic, but we still were able to organise two big events!

27th-29th July

Provider Forum Bulgaria National Conference “Employment for All”

EASPD together with the National Alliance for Social Responsibility (NASO) and in partnership with public authorities, organised a national event on the employment. The key challenges and opportunities of persons with disabilities in the field of employment were discussed as well as the improvement of the quality of social services in Bulgaria. The event was also the first working meeting to take place after the recently passed law on social services and several professionals spoke on its creation and implementation.



Photos of Provider Forum Bulgaria

17th September

On-line EASPD Regional Forum: Toward community-based living in Western Balkan and Eastern partnership countries - challenges & opportunities

EASPD and the Republic Center for Support of persons with Intellectual Disability – PO-RAKA (North Macedonia) organised the first EASPD Regional Provider Forum, to look at the key challenges and trends of service provision in non-EU countries from the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership region. The event took place online on 17th September, bringing together EASPD members from this area to provide an overview of the key challenges faced by service providers, discuss key recommendations for authorities and lay the foundations for future cooperation strategies.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Revenues

Membership fees

€ 261,668

Projects

€ 946,147

Others

€ 260,392

Total Income

€ 2,194,750

Expenditure

Staff Expenses

€ 1,001,044

Running costs

€ 111,208

Others

€ 985,485

Total charges

€ 2,097,737

Net Result

€ 97,014



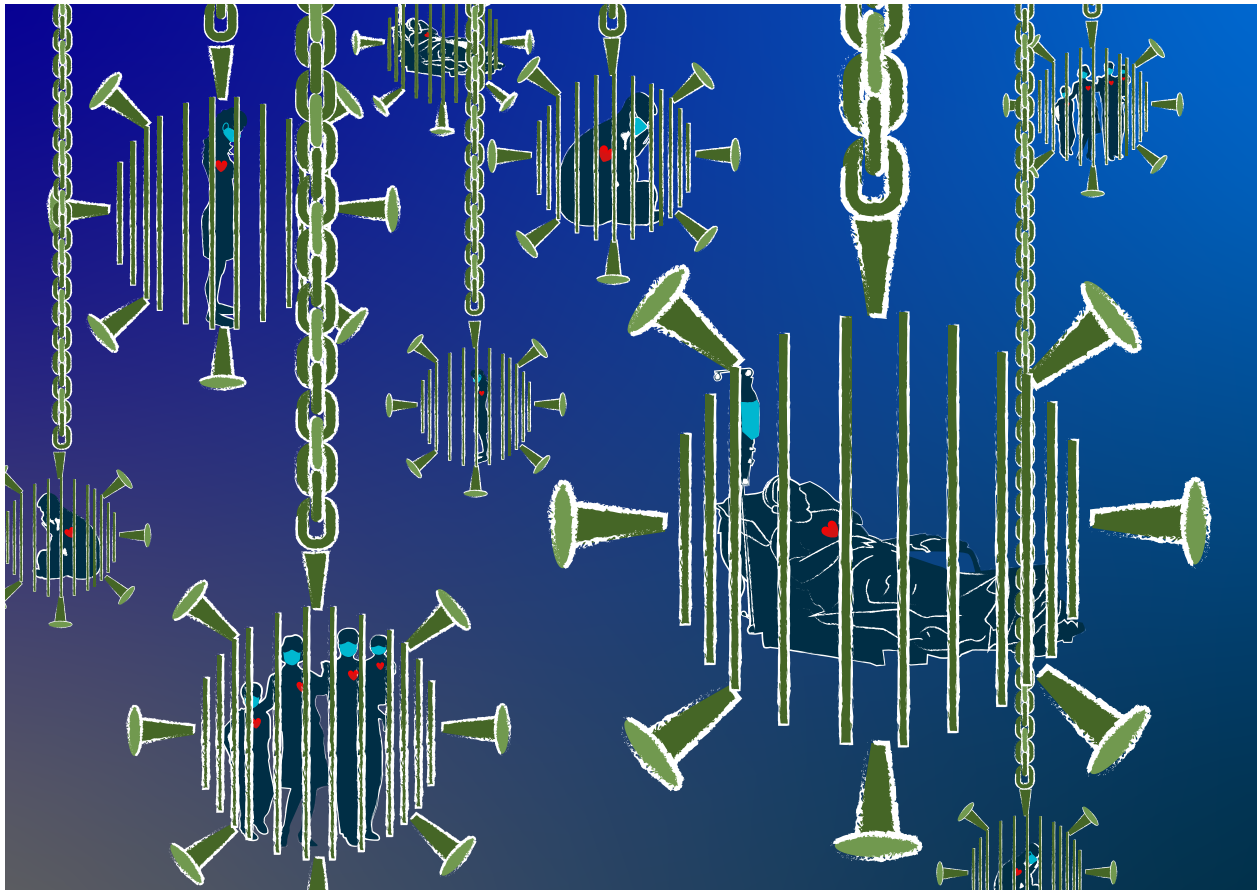
Message from our Secretary General

It is impossible to look back at 2020 without mentioning COVID-19, the invisible force that brought the world to a standstill. Weeks of being confined to the indoors and not being able to see family and friends, but even more importantly global suffering spread across media channels every day. Whilst it may have appeared that everything had stopped, the support services sector was instead in overdrive trying to maintain the essential support that so many Europeans depend on. As the voice of support service providers for persons with support needs in Europe, EASPD has worked harder than ever these 12 months to ensure that support and social care services gain full recognition for the vital role they play in society, during this pandemic and always. We worked to highlight the urgency for an appropriate EU response to the crisis. We wrote to the EU institutions and provided hard facts on the situation support services were and still are facing because of COVID-19. This led to meetings with high level EU officials and strong cooperation with organisations representing all kinds of services in the social sector, because together we are stronger.

As well as representing our members and the urgent needs of the sector at EU level we have made sure to support them in any way possible. Through social media support groups, a help desk and weekly COVID-19 related webinars we listened, connected and learned from each other. Although the pandemic made physical events no longer an option, we still found ways to meet...safely online. Our spring conference 'Road to Employment for Persons with Disabilities' was supposed to take place in the city of lights. Although we couldn't be together in Paris and enjoy a boat ride across the river, we organised a two-day online programme that explored and identified how we can work to promote the inclusive employment for persons with disabilities. Our autumn conference 'Art of Inclusion-Disability and Diversity in Arts and Culture' was a first of its kind and put an important topic centre stage. Art surrounds life and has existed as long as humans have been around. It tells stories, shapes our ideas and provides a deeper understanding of our emotions. I hope you have enjoyed the vivid artworks that have decorated the pages of this report, they represent 2020 and our members experiences in a way that cannot be captured by words.

As we navigate a new year, 2020 has taughtt us that it is impossible to predict where we will be a few months from now. But at EASPD our vision is clear. At the centre of EASPD's success is our members who are the focus of everything that we do. With our new statutes and important changes to the governance of the organisation, we feel well equipped for the future ahead. We know that our sector like the rest of the globe, is experiencing very challenging times but a glimmer of hope can be seen on the horizon. Whatever 2021 will bring, we are ready to keep on supporting our members the way we know how. We look forward to better days and to celebrations. Celebrations of 25 years of great progress in our sector, of work and friendship, of EASPD.

Luk Zelderloo



Amy Begley, Cope Foundation Ireland

EASPD COVID-19 Art

