



**EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF
SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Press release

New York, 12th June 2019

EASPD opened the debate on the ageing disability agenda in New York

On the 11th of June 2019 EASPD gathered experts on disability policies at a roundtable discussion taking place in New York at the United Nations. “Disability and ageing: shaping the agenda of tomorrow” was the title of the side event and EASPD discussed the important and evolving role of support services to cater for the needs of ageing persons developing a disability and for persons with disabilities becoming older.

Since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), EASPD has been at the forefront, promoting its implementation and fostering dialogue with various stakeholders, policy makers and notably with the United Nations. Every year EASPD takes part in the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD to exchange with disability experts and ensure there is a good understanding on the role that support services can play in the enjoyment of rights by persons with disabilities. This year, EASPD organised a roundtable to discuss the disability ageing agenda.

The event was co-organised with the Disability and Social Inclusion Unit of the European Commission and saw the participation of representatives from the World Health Organisation, the European Disability Forum and from the Maltese and Swedish governments.

As older persons with disabilities form an increasingly large cohort of the population, the barriers to enjoying the right to independent living remain and the risk of institutionalisation is very high. Serious efforts are required to offer support services in the community in accordance with the UNCRPD and to prepare society to embrace the changes needed.

The current support services spectrum for older persons still lacks a person-centred approach due to lack of resources, hindering legal frameworks and a workforce that is not well trained.

Representing EASPD at the United Nations, the EASPD President Jim Crowe, reported that *“It is clear that a more comprehensive and better funded framework must be developed to ensure that people with a disability are supported effectively and readily as they age. A better understanding of the links between disability and ageing, of existing and required services is required to ensure an adequate response to the needs of ageing*

persons with disabilities is made. Many challenges are ahead of us. We need to move from policy silos for disability and older people, to integrated policies and a shared value base, the adoption of person-centred planning with individuals at the centre, the improvement of data collection and dedicated research and adequate staff (re)training that ensures an integrated knowledge and skill base”.

As the European Union is committed to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights, many of its principles have a direct impact on the development of the support service sector for the ageing population. Long-term care is a matter of priority and EASPD wants to contribute to the debate with its know-how and hands-on expertise coming from the thousands of services belonging to its network.

After organising a first debate on the topic in March 2019 with EU stakeholders, followed by the exchange at the United Nations, EASPD will continue to raise the topic on the agenda of policy makers and will engage in a dialogue with key stakeholders representing the ageing population, as well as users and mainstream services.

Note to editors

The European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities is a non-profit European umbrella organization, established in 1996, and currently representing over 17,000 social and health support services for persons with disabilities. EASPD advocates effective and high-quality disability-related services in the field of education, employment and individualised support, in line with the UN CRPD principles, which could bring benefits not only to persons with disabilities, but to society as a whole.

For more information, please contact:

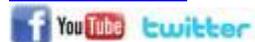
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