

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 16 March 2018

Collaboration for Innovation: New platform unites researchers and practitioners to turn innovation in disability services into reality

The Forum of the “European research platform for inclusive community planning and service development for people with disabilities (EURECO)” was held in Brussels on 13th March 2018. The event demonstrated the commitment of researchers and practitioners in disability services, to come together, for more innovative research on inclusive community development.

A joint initiative of EASPD and the [Centre for Planning and Evaluation of Social Services](#) (ZPE) at the University of Siegen, EURECO is a first step towards creating concrete research collaborations among researchers and practitioners. This week’s Forum was dedicated to discussing how innovation in disability services can be scaled up through collaboration between service providers, researchers and persons with disabilities.

The event brought together scholars and researchers from 15 different universities working in the fields of disability, community planning and inclusive services, as well as other experts and representatives of disability service providers. Together these key stakeholders explored **how they can jointly contribute to the implementation of research and innovation in inclusive service delivery and planning**, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

In his welcome speech, **Jim Crowe, President of EASPD**, stated: *“There are two clichés about research in disability services: 1) research is not adopted by service providers; 2) no research is needed to support service provision for persons with disabilities. Both of these clichés are false: **Research and innovation are fundamental for the sincere implementation of the UN CRPD**”.*

The co-host of the Forum, Prof. Dr. **Johannes Schaedler**, ZPE, set the scene by delivering a keynote speech on what constitutes innovation & implementation in disability services: *“Innovation is a mindful deviation or a creation of a new path. But transition to the new path is not straight forward. Services are often trapped in reproducing old practices even when more superior options are available. The stage of implementing the innovation is the most critical. It is*

therefore important to understand the factors that lead to the successful integration of innovative practices into standard operating procedures of services, organisations, and local policy fields.”

Speaking at the event, **Peter Baur**, of DG for Education and Culture, European Commission, encouraged innovation in the social sector through transnational and cross-sectoral cooperation within the framework of Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliances. The scientific Director of the Academic Network of European Disability Experts (ANED), **Mark Priestley**, who also spoke at the event emphasised that collaboration with networks such as EURECO is mutually beneficial for delivering new knowledge to support policies and practice.

The Forum also provided participants with the opportunity to turn ideas into practice by engaging in group discussions and developing project ideas for future research collaborations. EASPD and ZPE will take further action to expand the EURECO network and to support the developed research collaborations through a planned online platform of EURECO members and similar Research Fora in the future. To join the network please contact asel.kadyrbaeva@easpd.eu.

The 2018 EURECO Forum is the follow-up of the [previous meeting co-hosted by EASPD and ZPE in April 2017](#). One of the main outcomes of the last year’s Forum was the commitment to initiate a “European research platform for inclusive community planning and service development for people with disabilities”. This year, the newly established platform, EURECO, will build on this commitment and help to create concrete research collaborations among researchers and practitioners.

Related documents

- [Programme](#)

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 15,000 social and health services for persons with disabilities. EASPD advocates for 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:

Asel Kadyrbaeva
EASPD Research & Development Officer
T. +32 2 233 77 22
asel.kadyrbaeva@easpd.eu
www.easpd.eu



Sergi Queralt
EASPD Project Assistant
T. +32 2 233 77 20
sergi.queralt@easpd.eu
www.easpd.eu



Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)
Subscribe to [EASPD Newsflash](#)



This publication has been produced with the financial support of the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation “EaSI” (2014-2020). The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission.

Co-financed