

FEBRUARY 2011

EU calls for comments on PROGRESS programme

The European Commission would like to invite all individuals, organisations and institutions that follow policy debate in the field of employment and social affairs, as well as those involved in national and EU policy formulation or implementation, to participate in the Annual Survey 2010 of the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (PROGRESS).

PROGRESS is an employment and social solidarity programme of the European Union (EU) which works alongside the European Social Fund. It was established to financially support the implementation of EU objectives in the fields of employment and social affairs and consequently contributes to the achievement of the Europe 2020 strategic objectives.

PROGRESS supports policy and legislation development and implementation in five

separate, yet closely interlinked policy sections:

Employment,
Social protection and social inclusion,
Working conditions,
Anti-discrimination and
Gender equality

PROGRESS is strongly committed to results-based management, which involves the continuous measurement of the programme's progress towards its objectives, as well as reporting and taking action to fine-tune the programme so as to improve its performance. This process relies on a variety of monitoring and information sources, among them a special survey of those who follow the policy debate in different Progress policy areas or who participate in policy debate at the EU or national levels. This Internet-based survey has been designed to collect data on the performance of the pro-

gramme and is executed on behalf of the Commission by an external contractor (Public Policy and Management Institute).

You are kindly invited to contribute to this performance monitoring process by filling an online questionnaire (see related links). Please note that it should take approximately 15 minutes to complete a questionnaire. Your responses to this survey are strictly confidential and will not be divulged to anyone.

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The European Disability Forum (EDF) agrees on several proposals outlining its concerns and action plans for the coming year

The financial crisis in Europe dominates all popular discourse and the EDF wants to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities will be protected and promoted during this time.

EDF President Yannis Vardakastanis stated: "We need to send a clear message to the EU institutions and the governments of Member States that we will not compromise on the accessibility of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society despite the burden of the financial crisis."

The EDF's top campaign for 2011 aims to: remove barriers to active citizenship and to facilitate the free movement of people with disabilities along with the free movement of goods and services.

Accessibility is one of the priority areas of the European Disability Strategy which was adopted at the end of 2010.

The EDF is calling on the European Commission to ensure that a proposed European Accessibility Act can become an effective tool to improve the lives of people with disabilities in Europe.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was ratified by the EU as a whole at the beginning of the New Year. It is the most important document on disability rights and a guiding document for organisations in the disability movement. Accessibility, again, is a priority issue in the UNCRPD.

The EDF is calling on the European Commission to take serious action based on the obligations that arise from the ratification of the UNCRPD.

This includes setting

up an independent body to report on what is being done to ensure compliance with the UNCRPD, and to make sure that organisations of people with disabilities participate in implementing and monitoring the convention.

EASPD fully supports EDF and welcomes their initiative.



New Lifelong Learning project W2ID kicks off in London

On 26-28 January 2011 a new project financed by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission, called W2Id, kicked off in London, United Kingdom. W2ID is a

pan-European project examining open-source and cost-free solutions to social networking and self-advocacy by people with intellectual disabilities.

Project partners are the Rix Centre at University

of East London (RIX/UEL), the Finnish Association Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (FAIDD), APIERONS, Atempo, FENACERCI and EASPD.

“Old? So what? Independent living for seniors with disabilities” Next EASPD conference in Linz, Austria 30th June -1st July 2011

Persons with disabilities in Europe today are living longer and in better health than ever before. This development brings new challenges for social and health service providers, families and policy makers at both national and European levels. The adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006 which promotes quality of life, choice and inclusion in society of people with disabilities has already been a huge step forward to launch the discussions and create awareness at a political level but a lot still needs to be done to meet the needs of older persons with disabilities and to ensure their inclusion in society.

In the framework of the research produced for the European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion,

launched in December 2010, the European Commission has identified persons with disabilities and older people as being at high risk of falling into poverty and social exclusion. This means that elderly people with disabilities are doubly disadvantaged. They are also more likely to live in residential institutions and often do not have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and with whom they would like to live, even though article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities clearly underlines the right for all persons with disabilities to “Live independently and be integrated into society”. In June 2006, EASPD brought the discussion on the special needs of older persons with disabilities on the political agenda by organizing a European conference

on “Ageing and Disability” in Graz, Austria. In March 2009 EASPD co-organized a European conference on “Bridging knowledge in long term care and support - Crossing Boundaries between Ageing and Disability” in Barcelona. Now, in June 2011, EASPD, in close cooperation with Caritas für Menschen mit Behinderungen Linz, will bring together important stakeholders and experts from all over Europe to discuss independent living and individualized support in mainstream services for older persons with disabilities. We are very much looking forward to welcoming you to participate in the debates and to exchange models of good practice from across the continent.



For more information and registration please visit: www.easpd-linz.com