



EASPD NEWSFLASH

CONTENTS

EU News	2
Editorial -The consequences of austerity on service delivery	2
Personal and household services: a problematic definition	3
EASPD joins the Fundamental Rights Platform (FRP)	5
Project Updates.....	6
Project “BITSE”	6
‘INVESTT’	7
My Rights – My Voice	8
Transfer Employment Support Tools for People with Disabilities	9
W2ID Project	9
Events Notification.....	11
Call for Papers for the AAATE conference 2013	11
Upcoming EASPD Conference	11
10 th International Autism-Europe Congress!.....	12
News in Brief	13
Invitation to join the Research Network on Supported Employment	13
Power Slam Tool	13
European Expert Group stimulates transformation of care services in Europe	14

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EU NEWS



Editorial -The consequences of austerity on service delivery

The financial, economic and social crisis has preoccupied EASPD and its members since its inception in 2008. For years now, we have monitored its impact on our sector and put forward proposals to ensure that social services for persons with disabilities in Europe and the people they support wouldn't be disproportionately hit, not only by the 'crisis', but also but the measures put in place by European Governments to defeat it. Unfortunately, disabled people and their services are paying a high price as revealed by our annual surveys on the impact of the crisis (the last one was published in September 2012 and is available [on our web site](#)). Our members from across Europe have reported a series of worrying trends, such as direct cuts in budgets devoted to services, staff reductions and worsening pay and working conditions, reduced long-term sustainability, increasing levels of poverty and overreliance on informal and family carers.

While we wish we could say that things are now improving, we are still devoting efforts at making the situation known at EU level and discussing with policy-makers to find a way to reverse these trends. Recently, we were invited to contribute an article on the impact of the crisis and austerity measures on services and on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The article will be published in the March edition of the [Public Service Review](#). We used this opportunity to advocate for greater investment in accessibility of social services for all, and pointed out that this would make not only social sense – our primary concern - but also economic sense as social services have been one of the fastest growing economic sectors in Europe, and have a great, still unexplored, job creation potential.

Our Secretary General was invited to speak at a public hearing organised by the Employment Committee at the European Parliament on the "The impact of the crisis on access to care for vulnerable groups", in the context of an own initiative report that is being prepared by Jean Lambert MEP. In his intervention, Mr. Zelderloo highlighted the critical situation for persons with disabilities in Europe in terms of access to social care and put forward recommendations on the role that the EU institutions could play to ensure we won't have to face a public health crisis, too.

Newsflash January/February 2013

Suggestions included taking a clear position for “smart cuts” in the social and health sector and protecting spending in social policy and social services e.g. through the upcoming Social Investment Package; ensuring funding for innovative, community-based services through the ESF, promoting recruitment in the social sector through the Employment package and promoting sectoral social dialogue at European level.

At the end of last year we sent an open letter to European leaders to highlight all of these issues and to ask them to reconsider the political and financing choices that have been made so far and promote investment in social inclusion and cohesion to ensure that the EU2020 targets for poverty reduction, employment and education can be met. Mr. Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament, replied to us confirming that the Parliament will continue to work to ensure that European policies remain aligned with the objectives of the EU2020 Strategy and that a sufficient level of EU funds be devoted to their achievement. He continued to say that “essential social services are now in a situation of legal uncertainty that should be resolved urgently”. He concluded his letter stating that the European parliament as a full-co legislator, for the first time, in the procedures that will design the future legal framework for the 2014-2020 programming period will take into the highest consideration our concern throughout the legislative process.

We very much hope that going forward, we’ll be able to continue engaging in a constructive dialogue with authorities at all levels to preserve our social infrastructure. In the meantime, we’ll keep gathering information and researching the situation further.

Before concluding this editorial we’d like to mention the recent publication of the third “Quality of Life Survey” carried out by Eurofound, which highlights the impact of the crisis on the well-being of Europeans. It points out that people with low incomes report more problems with access to services and that the family continues to be the main source of support in meeting daily or urgent needs – with involvement in unpaid work, notably caring responsibilities, remaining at a high level. The full report is available on [Eurofound’s web site](#).

We hope you enjoy reading our newsflash!

Personal and household services: a problematic definition

In the framework of the Employment package, published by the European Commission (EC) in April 2012, personal and household services (PHS) are identified as a key sector in terms of job creation potential. The staff working document defines PHS as “services which substitutes paid work formerly unwaged within the household”, regrouping housework activities such as gardening, cleaning,

home repairs next to care services for children, persons with disabilities and elderly people.

In July 2012, EASPD, together with Social Services Europe, responded to the consultation launched by the EC on the topic expressing concern about this new category that “mixes up” services of a different nature. In 2006 the Commission, together with civil society, developed the concept of Social Services of General Interest (SSGI) that partially overlaps with PHS and has clear characteristics, such as the human right and social inclusion dimensions and a user base which is often composed of vulnerable people.

On 30th and 31st January 2013, the EC organised a conference by the title “Exploiting the job creation potential of personal and household services” to continue the debate on the issue. This title clearly reflects the Commission’s approach to frame PHS mainly as a sector in which a number of jobs can be created, due to demographic trends, to changes in family patterns and to the high amount of undeclared workers. However, the focus on employment and on the economic dimension can be problematic as it risks focusing more on economic outputs than on people’s needs and their quality of life.

Coming back to the definition of PHS, the study “Developing personal and household services in the EU. A focus on housework activities” commissioned by DG Employment and presented during the conference, excluded care services from the sample, confirming the difficulty of fitting social services into PHS. This discomfort has been underlined by Freek Spinnewijn, Secretary General of FEANTSA and member of Social Services Europe who spoke at the event. He pointed out that the division of services on the basis of the place of delivery is artificial, as SSGI are delivered in the community in an integrated way, based on the needs of service users. What risks being lost in PHS is the long-term, holistic dimension of SSGI. The same remarks came from Michel Mercadié, of the Social Platform, who stated that the EC initiative could have positive outcomes in terms of fighting exclusion and increasing the enjoyment of human rights if distinguishing household services from social household services.

The difference in political objectives between these two categories has been underlined also by Luk Zelderloo, EASPD Secretary General, who intervened in the panel on the Role of the State in subsidising personal and household services on behalf of Social Services Europe. “The increasing attention in social services delivered at home is in line with the de-institutionalisation process and the consequent shift from bringing people to the services to bringing services to the people”, he pointed out. “Personal and Household Services are part of a more positive approach towards social services based on social investment, rather than cuts. If organised in a correct way, PHS can contribute to the creation of a more inclusive society, but clear standards have to be respected in terms of quality of services and quality of work. Quality in working conditions and in quality of services

are interconnected and can be ensured through social dialogue mechanisms, LLL opportunities for workers, development of quality standards and users' involvement in needs assessment and complaint procedures.”

Jean-François Lebrun, from DG Employment, concluded the conference stressing the complexity of needs and of possible responses but also their complementarity. “It is important to bring the players together to set a common comprehensive strategy with the expertise of service providers and users.”

He called on all European civil society actors representing users and providers to develop exchanges and work together on needs in the household, promising EC support in the framework of the Progress Programme.

Further information on the Consultation is available [here](#) and the contribution of Social Services Europe [here](#).

EASPD joins the Fundamental Rights Platform (FRP)



We are pleased to announce that EASPD is now part of the Fundamental Rights Platform created by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).

The FRA formalised our participation to the Platform with a letter confirming our engagement in this group. The Fundamental Rights Agency recognised the important role that EASPD plays across the EU working for the empowerment and participation of disabled people through high quality services. By joining the Platform, EASPD can give its contribution to the Agency's activities and contribute to fundamental rights policies at EU level.

We are really happy to start this new collaboration and look forward to building a successful partnership!

PROJECT UPDATES

Project “BITSE”

BARRIERS WHICH INHIBIT THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO EMPLOYMENT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.



The project aims to study and examine what kind of barrier continues to prevent the full transition from school to employment for persons with disabilities. The problem of the transition is clearly underlined in both the UN Convention for persons with disabilities and the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

BITSE is a lifelong learning partnership project, in which 14 organisations from 10 different European countries are involved. The project is coordinated by the Cope Foundation from Ireland, and the consortium is composed of teachers, trainers, trainees and VET professionals, (as well as other partners and institutions). The purpose is to identify the barriers that prevent and inhibit the transition of disabled people from educational to employment settings in order to develop a best practice toolkit to be disseminated in the partner countries.

For more information on the project please contact barretm@cope-foundation.ie or Sonia.Staskowiak@easpd.eu. The brochure will be ready soon and available on [EASPD website](#).



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‘INVESTT’

INCLUSIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ALL!



Last January, EASPD and its European partners successfully launched INVESTT, a three years project co-funded by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme. INVESTT aims at providing innovative tools for the mainstream vocational education system in Europe. Four schools from four countries will be hosting new teaching programmes. Practitioners from Austria, Belgium, Norway and Slovenia will get a practical tool to guide students - including students with disabilities towards the open labour market.

The EU 2020 Strategy includes the Flagship Initiative “An Agenda for new Skills and Jobs”. In order to reach the goals of this strategy, attention should be paid to the inclusion of persons with disabilities on the labour market. They can represent a significant addition to the labour force and contribute to economic production. Therefore a qualitative and inclusive VET system is crucial.

Based on two key principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Universal Design and Reasonable Accommodation - INVESTT will provide vocational schools with specific tips in order to work with all students and assist teachers in creating a universal design in their learning environment. The implemented strategy and teaching programme will help students with disabilities to achieve the same qualification as other students and will improve their transition from school to the labour market. The programmes will be therefore intensively cross-referenced with the expectations of the employers.

More information is available [following this link](#)

My Rights – My Voice

STAFF TRAINING BY PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ON THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



We are proud to inform you that the first training in the frame of the 3 year project MR-MV has been successfully implemented in Sofia, Bulgaria. During this intensive 1 week course, 2 Austrian professional trainers with disabilities, Julian Kirchner and Stefan Ager - with support by co-trainer Christiane Zimmer- delivered high quality training to 12 Bulgarian trainees with a learning disability and their 3 co-trainers. These trainees were trained to become coaches of professionals working in the field of service provision, with the content of the sessions being based on the UNCRPD. The next courses will take place in the forthcoming months in Hungary, Germany and Wales.

After the course, a debriefing with the 2 young Austrian trainers, their co-trainer and the project partners took place. All three trainers were pleasantly surprised by the enthusiasm and the active participation of the trainees during that whole week. According to the trainers, the 12 participants were stretching the importance of the UN Convention and claimed that because of the training the importance of their rights became clearer to them. As a consequence, in depth discussions took place, a lot of ideas were born and many questions were asked. All 12 participants received a well-earned certificate during the closing session of the training week. The trainers expressed their hope that the newly graduates will continue to receive high quality support after the lifetime of the project so they can work as a professional trainers on the UN Convention.

If you want to learn more about this project you can contact the project coordinator Johannes Ungar ([johannes.ungar\(at\)innovia.at](mailto:johannes.ungar@innovia.at)), or Sonia Staskowiak ([sonia.staskowiak\(at\)easpd.eu](mailto:sonia.staskowiak@easpd.eu)). You can also visit the [project website](#). The project newsletter and the easy to read leaflet can be downloaded from the website as well.

Transfer Employment Support Tools for People with Disabilities



T-EST is a two year project which started in November 2012. The projects' goal is to promote the concept of "Supported Employment", a well elaborated and successful strategy to provide full access for persons with disabilities to the labour market as well as to vocational training.

The project is based on the implementation of a tested "Toolkit for Supported Employment" realized within a former Leonardo da Vinci partnership and which will be distributed and used in three countries: Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania. The toolkit will be adapted and implemented according to the existing national systems of education and the local labour market situation.

The kick off meeting took place in Graz, Austria in December 2012, when the tasks and the toolkit were discussed. The partnership also worked on the creation of questionnaires for the analysis of the adaptation potential for the three countries involved.

If you want more information about the T-EST project please visit [our website](#).



Lifelong Learning Programme This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein

W2ID Project

SELF-ADVOCACY AND INCLUSION FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS THROUGH USE OF MULTIMEDIA



Building Knowledge Together In the last two years, six organisations from across Europe, amongst which EASPD, worked together on the topic of self-advocacy for persons with intellectual disabilities in the project W2ID – Web 2.0 for People with Intellectual Disabilities. The project aimed to make it easier for people of all abilities to participate

European Association of Service Providers for persons with Disabilities (EASPD) **Newsflash January/February 2013**

in Web 2.0 activity, creating content and using tools like blogs, social networks and wiki websites to enrich their lives.

W2ID began with a research phase that compared existing Web 2.0 tools and applications and analysed end-user needs. Combining the project partners' expertise and the input of people with intellectual disabilities, W2ID created a new easy-build European Web 2.0 system along with an accompanying pedagogic approach, learning materials and a European Support Hub website, which together constitute the Klikin package.

Klikin was piloted and evaluated by over 380 learners with intellectual disabilities from: Austria, Finland, Portugal, Latvia and the UK. The workshops were themed on employability, inclusion and active citizenship. Through photographs, video, audio, graphics and simple text, the participants communicated and shared their knowledge, ideas, interests and wishes. The users built more than 123 websites and created over 4000 pages of multimedia! You can visit the published websites on the International [Klikin Portal](#).

The evaluation of the pilot showed that in addition to bringing a new dimension to care planning and self-advocacy Klikin also succeeds in:

- Supporting personal development and building confidence and knowledge for community participation
- Encouraging the development of skills in communication and the safe and responsible use of social media
- Making it possible to publish and share knowledge and information with new social and support networks
- Being used to raise the visibility of organisations and their activities
- Provide an innovative platform for peer learning and support

If you wish to learn more about the W2ID project, the project outcomes and Klikin visit:

[The Klikin website](#) [The Klikin European Support Hub](#) [International Klikin Portal](#)

For more information contact Stefana Cankova on stefana.cankova@easpd.eu



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EVENTS NOTIFICATION

Call for Papers for the AAATE conference 2013

The Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe (AAATE) invites interested parties to submit a paper to the 12th edition of the AAATE biennial conference that will be held in Vilamoura, Algarve, Portugal, from 19th to 22nd September 2013 (www.aaate2013.eu). Throughout the years, the AAATE conference has established itself as a privileged forum for researchers in the transdisciplinary area of Assistive Technology. One of the main objectives of the AAATE2013 Conference is to bring together researchers, professionals, manufacturers, end users and their families, and combine their knowledge, expertise, needs and expectations, contributing in a multidisciplinary way to the success of this meeting.

Key dates:

- Extended Abstracts Submission: 12th March, 2013
- Notification: 15th May, 2013
- Early Registration and Camera-Ready: 14th June, 2013

Upcoming EASPD Conference

EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES - RAISING AWARENESS & EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, 26-27 SEPTEMBER 2013, ISTANBUL

Co-organised by the Ministry of Family and Social Policy of Turkey and EASPD; in close co-operation with ISKUR, the RACE consortium and the Dolunay Association.

With the support of the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the International Labour Organization.

The conference will tackle the main challenges preventing people with disabilities from enjoying fully their right to work: legislative frameworks, discriminative attitudes and lack of adequate support schemes.

We will look at the current situation and discuss future steps needed to facilitate access to the labour market for persons with disabilities. We will focus on the perspective of employees, looking at different approaches promoting employability, and on that of employers, by examining how they can be supported to successfully employ disabled people.

The topics will be discussed by multi-stakeholders panels composed of persons with disabilities, policy makers, representatives of employees and employers, authorities and support providers.

During the conference the best employment agencies and employers will receive an **official award**.

Overall conference goals

The conference aims to remove barriers and to boost the employment for persons with disabilities by sharing challenges and best practices. We will:

- highlight the impact of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and *the right to Work and Employment* (Art. 27)
- promote the *exchange between employers and employees*
- show *models of good practice* that have evidence based results
- identify the necessary steps to create a positive *synergy between employers and employees*
- launch the new ***EASPD's Declaration on Employment***

For further information please contact Ms Sabrina Ferraina:
sabrina.ferraina@easpd.eu

10th International Autism-Europe Congress!



Held every three years, Autism-Europe's international congresses are dedicated to sharing advances in scientific and practical knowledge about autism among as wide an audience as possible, including professionals, parents and self-advocates. The congress also provides an opportunity to network and attend related social events.

For more information you can visit the [website](#)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Invitation to join the Research Network on Supported Employment

The Global Applied Disability Research and Information Network on Employment and Training (GLADNET) and the World Association for Supported Employment (WASE) collaborate in promoting opportunities for paid work on the open labour market for persons with disabilities through information dissemination and exchange of experiences. GLADNET brings together research centres, universities, enterprises, government departments, trade unions, and organizations of and for persons with disabilities.

Based on input from members of GLADNET and other researchers in the field of Supported Employment, a Supported Employment Researchers Network has been developed as part of GLADNET.

The Supported Employment Researchers Network is still in a developmental phase. Interested researchers are very welcome to join the Research Network as part of GLADNET under the GLADNET conditions. Researchers can participate as individual members or as part of a group. More details are available on the [GLADNET website](#).

For questions please contact: mkamp@ziggo.nl.

Power Slam Tool



The organisations MFC De Hagewinde (Belgium Lokeren), Muisriosa (Ireland, Kildare) and RSSPID (Bulgaria, Vidin) developed a card game as a tool for anyone working with people with disabilities to reflect on the empowering aspect of their guidance style. Power Slam – A Training in the Right(s) manner is designed in an attractive and stimulating way. The game comes in a box

that delivers more than 30 exercises and methods ready to be picked up by trainers, coaches, educators and supervisors. This box can help both professionals and persons with disabilities to develop a real empowering way of inclusion.

Interested? Contact powerslam@hagwinde.be.

European Expert Group stimulates transformation of care services in Europe

BRUSSELS, DECEMBER 2012

On 6th December 2012, the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, Ms. Pillay had a meeting with the European Expert Group (EEG) on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care, which advocates for changes in use of national and European funds in care of children and persons with disabilities. Following the meeting, she expressed her support to the work of the group and sent letters to all EU Member States urging such a transition.

“The support of the High Commissioner is of critical importance for us,” said Luk Zelderloo of EASPD, who shares the rotating chairmanship of the group with Eurochild and the OHCHR. “We need to bring the way in which national and European funds are spent in line with the States’ and EU’s obligations stemming from the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities – particularly its article 19, which lays down the right to independent living.”

Created in 2009, the EEG is a broad coalition of non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations representing people with care or support needs including children, people with disabilities, people experiencing mental health problems, families, as well as service providers, public authorities and intergovernmental organisations. It includes Eurochild, European Disability Forum, Inclusion Europe (persons with intellectual disabilities), Mental Health Europe, European Network for Independent Living, Lumos (children), COFACE (families) and FEANTSA (homeless people) as well as EASPD, the European Social Network, Open Society Institute, OHCHR and UNICEF.