



EASPD NEWSFLASH

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EU AND YOU



Fruitful dialogue with Vice President Reding continues!



Following the event EASPD organised at the European Parliament on 19th September, Commission Vice-President Viviane Reding expressed her congratulations and interest for EASPD's publication entitled "The service providers' role as human enablers in times of crisis".

EASPD is proud of this valuable collaboration and we would like to officially thank the Vice-President for her interest in our work.

To find out more about the booklet presented at the European Parliament please click on this link and enjoy the reading!

["The service providers' role as human enablers in time of crisis".](#)

Delivering positive change – How social services contribute to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

Social Services Europe, an organisation of which EASPD is co-founder and which brings together 9 European networks of social services, held its first public event at the European Parliament on 9th October. The high level seminar gave an opportunity to Social Services Europe to discuss with MEPs and representatives of the European Commission and other institutions the important contribution that social services can make towards the achievement of the goals of the EU2020 strategy, especially in the light of the current economic downturn.

Steven Hughes MEP (S&D), who hosted the event, mentioned that the impact of the crisis has so far been underestimated and hinted at the fact that the austerity measures put in place across the EU are actually counterproductive; he then called for a “radical re-think in the way the crisis is being handled”, and highlighted the “need to take care of the most vulnerable” exactly what, he reminded us, social services are doing.

During the seminar, it emerged that the current political, financial and economic context is very difficult for social services, as EU discussions, dominated by financial concern, lead to euroscepticism and social disintegration in several countries in the Union. Despite this climate, Social Services Europe reaffirmed our availability and intention to work with the institutions as real partners in relation to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

« Smart » in the context of **smart growth** means a need for systemic change, whereby social innovation is not only a product but a real process. Whereas some SSE members show some scepticism towards the concept of social innovation as used in EU policy, there is potential and new opportunities should be taken up, especially if SSE becomes a true partner in developing the EU social innovation agenda.

In relation to **sustainable growth**, the debates focused mostly on social investment. The concept of social return on investment was considered useful as it goes beyond simply employment creation and the idea of expenditure in social services as a cost, but rather takes into account the return on this investment – both social and economic. SSE could build a stronger economic case for its services, coming with figures and data to show the importance of investing in social services. SSE should be considered real partners in the upcoming EU Social Investment framework

through social dialogue, with a focus on creating employment but also defending good working conditions.

The current conditions for achieving **inclusive growth** are challenging, but there are some opportunities for progress, and some has been made by providing a degree of legal certainty for social services. The European Commission was invited to re-activate the tools at its disposal such as the European Platform against Poverty and the EU voluntary quality framework, and to improve the links between departments focussing on aspects of inclusive growth (such as the Social Business Initiative to create synergies between social economy and social services). SSE is ready to contribute to the implementation of inclusive EU policies, namely by mobilising National Governments to take the EU2020 goals more seriously.

Safe, accessible and enjoyable communities are best achieved together

THE SECOND COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS FOR SOCIAL COHESION



On 11th – 12th October 2012, Ministers from Council of Europe Member States responsible for Social Cohesion met in Istanbul to discuss how to enforce social cohesion in Europe and among Europeans. The starting point was the definition of Social Cohesion given by the Council of Europe New Strategy 2010 as the capacity of society to ensure the well-being of all its members.

The purpose of the Conference was to define a rights-based approach to social cohesion and to push for policy measures to ensure everyone has the possibility to access their rights without any discrimination, first and foremost for those citizens who are among the most vulnerable in society part of the most vulnerable groups of the society.

Participants emphasised the fact that, particularly in times of crisis, vulnerable persons are at an increased risk of poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion, and that access to social rights and protection and improving their employability are key policy challenges in Europe. At the same time, it was noted that immediate and sustained action at all levels is needed to restore people's confidence in a secure future for all taking into account key objectives such as democracy, peace, security, social justice and inclusive and sustainable social protection system. All these

actions must be foreseen in light of the proclamation by the European Union of 2012 as the European Year for active ageing and solidarity between generations.

The Ministerial Declaration following the Istanbul Conference underlined the importance of participation and cooperation among different stakeholders and civil society organisations in building a social vision for a secure future for all.

The document expresses the strong commitment of the Council in the field of social cohesion. Relevant Council of Europe instruments such as the European Social Charter, the collective complaints procedure as well as the European Convention on Social Security are now used in the struggle to achieve a more inclusive and fair society. All these tools are indispensable to promote and facilitate social justice and to offer perspectives and equal opportunities for everyone, in particular in the implementation of further Action Plans such as the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006- 2015, in order to increase the participation and improve the quality of life of people with disabilities, including their access to the labour market.

PROJECT UPDATES

Guide Dogs in Brussels

FINAL CONFERENCE OF THE PROJECT “EUROPEAN GUIDE DOG MOBILITY STANDARDS” (EGDMS)



The EGDMS final project conference, organised by EASPD took place in Brussels on 20th September 2012.

The conference was a successful outcome of this Leonardo da Vinci funded project and was attended by approximately 60 key stakeholders from 16 European countries.

A good foundation regarding pan-European training for guide dog instructors was laid out and the general spirit at the conference was to act upon that momentum to continue the work, but this time with a broader partnership and spanning more countries.



The most important achievements of this project include building relationships among guide dog schools in Europe, creating networking opportunities, raising awareness on how the issue is dealt with in other countries, exchanging information and training methods and finally the CEN Workshop Agreement, providing a standard for guide dog instructors.

Developing standardised approaches and embedding them in legislative tools and/or qualifications will enable experts in the field to demonstrate more clearly their

professionalism and to create transparency in the field of guide dog training providers.

For more information, please contact Katrijn Dekoninck, Conference organiser and EASPD Project and Liaison Officer at Katrijn.Dekoninck@easpd.eu or visit the website: egdms.com.

Life is for Living: Let's Live it!

SENSAGE FIRST NETWORK CONFERENCE



The first of three Annual Conferences of the Grundtvig Network Project **Lifelong Learning Needs for Ageing People with Sensory Disabilities (SensAge)** ([Sensage](#)) took place in Zagreb, Croatia, on 30th September and was organised in association with the [University of Zagreb](#). The conference focused on the current state of knowledge in this field, and presentations gave the audience a broad review of developments in Europe and Quebec for Ageing People with Sensory Disabilities.

The Managing Partner of **SensAge** set the tone of the meeting by emphasising that the ageing population should not be regarded as a burden and a cost but should be cherished as transmitters of knowledge and experience and the quality of their lives should be increased.

The topics dealt with during the event ranged from dual sensory loss in older people to the European context to creating an international network for Intergenerational Learning.

Participants found great potential in the transfer of know-how and sharing of knowledge at a European level. At the moment, too little information on the learning needs of ageing people with sensory disabilities is available, and the Project aims to be a cornerstone and reference point within the European Union for developments in lifelong learning and enablement for ageing people with sensory disabilities in order to maintain their independence and to improve their quality of life

You can find more information following the link to SensAge website: [Sensage](#)

If you would like to keep in contact with **SensAge** and become part of our growing network of correspondents, please contact our Coordinator: John Harris, Vision Europe Limited, at johngharris@btopenworld.com.

Project idea: the municipality of Arvika seeks project partners!

The Municipality of Arvika is looking for European partners interested in participating in a project proposal within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci – Partnership programme, aiming to explore methods used by staff in different European organisations to manage the sexual needs of elderly and disabled people, focussing on values, routines and society's view of the issue.

The development of services for disabled people has a long tradition in Sweden and people's right to home care and services for the disabled is guaranteed by Swedish law. Today, the Municipality of Arvika experiences the need to further develop these services. Arvika is interested in looking at innovative methods employed in the home care and in services for disabled people, and in particular, in exploring how other organisations work to manage the sexual needs of disabled and older people, a topic which more often than not is neither discussed nor highlighted.

Love and sexuality are a lifelong need for most people. This also applies to people who are disabled or in hospital as well as to older people in care settings. Sexuality of users in healthcare is a taboo. However, it is a topic that social care staff faces daily and in all age groups. To handle patients expressing sexual needs can be difficult, whether the patient is young or old. Personal values, society's views, guilt and shame have led to a lack of guidelines in this field. How should staff respond, what should they do and not do, what is legal, legitimate and what guidelines and routines should be followed?

Arvika is looking for European partners interested in a mutual exchange concerning ethical issues surrounding the sexuality of old and disabled patients and service users. We would like to start with an exchange of information through care staff visiting other municipalities in Europe and by hosting staff from other care organisations in Europe. An exchange of information and experiences would take place between different care providers, with the objective of creating a common ethical and practical handbook with guidelines for tackling these types of situations. The long term aim of this project is guaranteeing a better quality of life for sick and older people and better working conditions for the employees.

For further information and contact:

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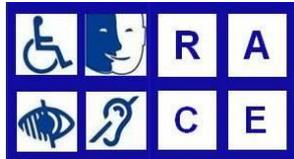
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RACE – Announcement/Newsletter



The **RACE Project** (Raising Awareness & Corporate Employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Turkey) has reached its halfway mark and the path towards the realisation of its objectives will soon be visible with the first **Supported Employment Pilot Trainings** to be organised in Italy and Turkey in February and March 2013. With the **adaptation of the material** - modular training programme curriculum and methodological approach, presentations, tutor materials, exercises, supportive documents - from previous projects (Pass It On, Conversion, Atlas) and their **translation** in Turkish, English and Italian, **RACE** is definitely on the right tracks. All training material is available on the [project website](#)

Furthermore, thanks to the recent **policy roundtables** held in Brussels and Ankara, a great variety of stakeholders has been successfully involved. These meetings represented the perfect occasion to present the project's objectives and engage into an active debate on the subject of employment of people with disabilities with Turkish and European stakeholders. These included trainers in Vocational Education and Training, counsellors for career planning/recruitment, service providers, line managers in companies and public authorities employing or seeking to employ people with disabilities.

A first concrete result of the **RACE Project** is the creation of the “**Good Practice Catalogue**” which can be downloaded from the project website. The catalogue presents a list of policy approaches and instruments on disability that will be taken into account in all of the stages of project implementation. It also provides recommendations on how to transfer disability sector knowledge to companies, how to raise corporate and public awareness on the benefits of integrating people with disabilities into the workforce, how to support both the Turkish policy makers and the targeted stakeholders through provision of key materials, insights and expertise.

Last but not least, the RACE project has set a date for its final conference! Scheduled for the end of September 2013 in Istanbul, it will take place in the broader context of the ILO Conference on disability and employment; could anybody imagine a better framework for RACE promotion?

More information can be found in the project E-Newsletter 2 which was disseminated a few days ago. If you would like to receive the RACE newsletters, please contact Adriana Popa at Adriana.popa@easpd.eu.

WORDS FROM MEMBERS

Great experiences for all through participation of people with learning disabilities in international visits and exchange programmes

Lebenshilfe Salzburg is engaged in two Learning Partnerships, one funded by Leonardo the Vinci and one by Grundtvig. In which at least as many people with disabilities as staff members are involved. Staff and service users as well as the management of our organisations have learnt a lot already.

The Leonardo project “Learning without Barriers” explores job opportunities and barriers for people with learning disabilities in Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Southern Tyrol (German speaking part of Italy). The common language makes equal involvement of people with learning disabilities easy. Staff and service users visit each participating partner/ region and get to know local job opportunities, the landscape of occupational services, inclusive adult education, and people first groups. The visits are characterised by intensive discussions and learning opportunities for visitors and hosts. After the visits participants reflect on their experiences and spread their knowledge within the organisation through reports and publications. As one of our German visitors put it “first you think there is little difference between Germany and Austria, but then you realise that differences are in fact immense regarding positive and negative aspects”.



This picture can be seen at the entrance of Hotel Masatsch - its title is: “Ulrike wants to become CEO”. Ulrike is an employee with disabilities.

Following the study visits staff, service users and the management team will analyse in two international workshops what has been learnt and what has to be done to move towards a better future regarding inclusive education and inclusive jobs for

people with learning disabilities. Action plans will be drawn up for all stakeholders. A final conference in Salzburg will involve the wider public, especially politicians and authorities.



We also learnt what to keep in mind to make full participation of people with learning disabilities possible in an international context:

- Ensure safe and comfortable travelling and accommodation arrangements particularly for those who have extra mobility needs;
- Ensure that people with intellectual disabilities are fully included as active participants and learners in all activities. This can be done by:
 - Planning meetings well in advance
 - Forwarding presentations to partners for translation
 - Using easy language
 - Planning time to translate documents
 - Planning interactive workshops with games
- Ensure the comfort of all participants e.g. through flexibility in the schedule, good breaks, venues in or very close to the hotel enabling individual rest if needed;
- Ask for a reduction of mobilities (when applying for 24) to ensure sufficient assistance by staff when people with learning disabilities do not feel well, want to leave the general programme (for some time) or suffer from health problems.

We find the experiences in these international exchanges with people with learning disabilities very rewarding for all participants and cannot recommend them highly enough.

For more information please contact Mrs Karin Astegger:
karin.astegger@lebenshilfe-salzburg.at

EVENTS NOTIFICATION

EASPD Policy Seminar 2012

“YOU CARED FOR ME, I CARE FOR YOU: SOLIDARITY BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND ABILITIES”

The annual appointment with the EASPD Policy Seminar will take place in the morning of 5th December – right after the conference organised by the European Commission to mark the International Day of People with Disabilities. This year’s event will focus on care for seniors with disabilities and look at the conditions that allow family members of different generations to care for each other — thus making intergenerational solidarity possible.

The seminar aspires to identify the main challenges preventing intergenerational solidarity from happening and the policy conditions that need to be in place to facilitate families’ care responsibilities. The seminar will naturally look at the role played by specialised social services in supporting people with disabilities and their families – thus enabling people to care for their family members, safe in the knowledge that support from the public sector is in place.

We’ll engage in discussion with representatives of all relevant stakeholder groups, and exchange views with European policy makers to phrase proposals on how to improve on the current situation and realise a society that allows people to care for each other, knowing that the right safety nets are in place.

The full programme will be published in the next few weeks – keep an eye on the [EASPD website](#) for more information.

To register, please e-mail Francesco at the EASPD office: francesco.larocca@easpd.eu

EASPD members elect new Executive Committee and Board!

BUDAPEST 13-14TH SEPTEMBER 2012

On 13th and 14th September 2012 EASPD held its second conference of the year in Budapest. After the event, organised to mark the conclusion of the Pathways to Inclusion (P2i) project and to share its results, the General Assembly elected the new EASPD President, Executive Committee and Board.

The purpose of the conference was to reflect on the current situation of inclusive education in terms of policies and practices and to identify the possible answers to today's challenges. While the focus of attention on the first conference day was on the results of the P2i network, the scope on the second day was broader, introducing the concept of inclusive education for all forms of lifelong learning, from pre-school to adulthood.

After the Conference, the members of EASPD General Assembly elected our new governing bodies.

Franz Wolfmayr from Austria was confirmed as President. He will be supported in his tasks by Vice-Presidents Fabrizio Fea from Italy, Kirsi Konola from Finland and Phil Madden from UK as well as by the Treasurer Bernadette Grosyeux from France.

The elected board members are Karin Astegger and Johannes Ungar from Austria, James Crowe from the UK, John Dolan and Brian O' Donnell from Ireland, Carmen Duarte from Portugal, Ralf Hagemeyer from Germany, Ákós Pordan from Hungary and Trude Stenhammer from The Netherlands.

We wish them all the best in their new roles!