

MARCH 2010

MEP's urge for Disability to be part of EU 2010

The European Commission presented its new economic and social strategy Europe 2020 in March. It aims to end the economic crisis and to prepare the European economy for the challenges of the next decade. The strategy contains three key elements and seven initiatives that are to be realised in the member states of the European Union:

- Intelligent growth (advancement of innovation, education and the digital society);
- Lasting growth (the development of more efficient production processes, while increasing the competitiveness) and
- Integrative growth (an increase of employment and qualification as well as fighting poverty).

The Disability Intergroup and the European Disability Forum (EDF) demand,

that the strategy also contains a Disability Pact. The Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament is an informal group of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from all nationalities and most political groups. Its members are interested in promoting the disability policy in their work at the European Parliament as well as in the national contexts. The European Disability Forum (EDF) is an independent European non-governmental organization (ENGO) that represents the interests of 65 million disabled people in the European Union. The new strategy was part of the agenda of the European Council meeting on 25th and 26th March 2010. Two days before this meeting, the Disability Intergroup and the European Disability Forum organized an event in the European

Parliament in Brussels. Among the guests was László Andor, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, as well as representatives of the current Spanish and the future Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. They were asked to integrate the Disability Pact into the new developed economic and social strategy for Europe. The Disability Pact wants to make sure that disability issues are integrated within all relevant European Union's policies. The whole document can be found at www.disabilitypact.eu

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Council of Europe calls for deinstitutionalisation of children with disabilities



The Committee of Ministers has just adopted a text recommending that member states no longer place children with disabilities in institutional care and instead give preference to community living.

There are many concerns about the compatibility of institutional care with the exercise of children's rights. Barring exceptional circumstances, no children should be placed in institutional care. Moreover, institutional provision should be replaced with

community-based services within a reasonable time-frame as part of a comprehensive approach.

The Committee of Ministers acknowledges that member states are at very different stages in this area and that deinstitutionalisation is an ongoing, long-term process. The text therefore underlines the importance of safeguarding the rights of children with disabilities and vulnerable young adults in institutional care throughout the transition

process. Mechanisms should be established to involve children with disabilities and their families in the process of service development, as they are vital stakeholders. The Council of Europe has been active for several years now in defending children's rights and helping to eradicate violence against all children, including children with disabilities.

It has adopted a ten-year plan for 2006 to 2015 aimed at bringing about a

Wasted time - wasted money – wasted opportunity?

On 24 March 2010, the European Coalition for Community Living (ECCL) published a new report highlighting that European Union funding is being used in some EU Member States of Central and Eastern Europe to renovate, or build new, residential institutions for people with disabilities. This means that disabled people continue to be segregated from society and puts them at risk of serious human rights abuses.

ECCL's report points out that such use of EU funding (known as the Structural Funds) continues despite EU and Member States'

policies that emphasise the need to protect the rights of disabled people and promote their social inclusion. Numerous reports over the last decade have brought to light the horrific reality of institutional care for many disabled adults and children in Central and Eastern Europe. They have shown the appalling living conditions; use of physical restraints, physical and sexual abuse of some residents by other residents and sometimes staff; inadequate clothing; involuntary placements subject to no independent review; the

lack of privacy and the absence of rehabilitative or therapeutic activities. The report, 'Wasted Time, Wasted Money, Wasted Lives Wasted Opportunity?' (<http://www.choiceforum.org/docs/ecclst.pdf>) argues that the practice of using Structural Funds to maintain the system of institutional care is contrary to EU policy objectives, EU law and European and international human rights standards.



Fireworks close Vancouver Paralympics games

A heart-warming and spectacular Closing Ceremony this evening officially ended the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games. Taking place at the Medals Plaza in Whistler, thousands came to watch the show that was a celebration for athletes, officials and volunteers. Countries with the highest number of winning medals were celebrated, with athletes from Russia giving their country first place with a total of 38 medals.

To honour the country, the national anthem was sung by a choir, with the sounds echoing in and around the Whistler Village. With a total of 24 winning medals, Germany came in second place behind Russia, and was followed by both Canada and Ukraine who tied with 19 medals. London is already preparing for the next Paralympic games in 2012. On 22rd March, Olympics organizer Locog has launched a website that allows members of the

public to register their interest in tickets for the London 2012 Games. Those who sign up to www.tickets.london2012.com will be among the first to find out when tickets go on sale in spring 2011 and how to apply for them.



Facing the employment crisis in Europe

Sotiria Theodoropoulou, EPC Policy Analyst, Wolfgang Müller, Head of the Brussels Office, German Federal Employment Bureau, Karl Pichelmann, Research Adviser, Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs and Conny Reuter, Secretary General of SOLIDAR discussed the impact of

the economic crisis in the framework of a seminar organised by the European Policy Centre. The themes of flexicurity, the skills of unemployed people, temporary measures adopted to face the crisis and a focus on social values linked to the theme of 2010 – the European Year Against

Poverty – were dealt with emphasizing the need for economic policies to avoid short term measures such as early retirement and flexicurity, if not matched to the lifelong learning focus, more fairness and a stronger accent on putting the person first.



3rd IASSID-Europe Conference, Rome, 20-23 October 2010

On behalf of IASSID and the conference organizing committee, EASPD would like to invite you to the 3rd IASSID-Europe Conference, which will be held in Rome from the 20th to the 23rd of October, 2010. The IASSID-EUROPE Conference is dedicated

to children and adults with intellectual disabilities and their families. Their lives are the concrete reality that our research attempts to illuminate. The aim is to provide the right support and environmental "contexts" that promote the development of the

individual and his or her family from infancy to childhood, to adolescence, to young adulthood, to maturity and to old age. EASPD members pay the reduced conference fee, so when registering, please mention that you are an EASPD member.





European Parliament in Brussels

Traineeships for persons with disabilities in the European Parliament: Launch of the new call for applications

On 15 March 2010, the European Parliament launched the call for applications for the 8th traineeship period, starting on 1 October 2010 (traineeship period: 1 October 2010 - 28 February 2011). The call for applications will be open on the

EUROPARL website until 15 May 2010. Seven to nine traineeships will be offered.

Further detailed information on these traineeships can be found on the website of the European Parliament:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/public/staticDisplay.do?id=147&pageRank=4&language=EN>

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the EASPD fan page and become a fan.



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The EASPD team wishes you
Happy Easter