

APRIL 2010

Herman Van Rompuy meets with Leaders of European Disability Forum

On 16th April, Herman Von Rompuy, President of the European Council, met with Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the European Disability Forum (EDF) and Pierre Gyselinck, President of the Belgian Disability Forum. The aim of the European disability Forum is to include the Disability Pact into the Europe 2020 Strategy. According to EDF, Herman Van Rompuy took the stance that there is a “necessity for a new approach to disability policies in the EU”. The Europe 2020 Strategy, which aims at economic and social growth, will be adopted by the European Council on 16th June 2010.

EDF states that Herman Van Rompuy “endorsed the State of the Union on Disability” which is a biennial meeting between the European Disability Forum, the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the President

of the European Parliament to evaluate previously taken measures and report to the European Council.

The Disability Pact for 2010 to 2020 is a policy framework at European and national level which aims at a cooperation between Member States and the European Union. At the moment, there is no long-term EU agenda on disability that involves a clear joint commitment from the Institutions and its Member States. The 27 Member States are developing 27 different national disability action plans. Coordination between the European and national actions, and clear and measurable objectives linked to the EU strategy for growth and jobs is the road to a barrier-free Europe.

EASPD supports EDF in the campaign for a Disability Pact. Such a pact will set the scene for the important discussions on how to

implement the UN Convention in Europe and on how to build stronger legal frameworks underpinning and facilitating the enjoyment of human rights by all citizens. This pact should provide the guiding principles for a long term EU disability strategy. Being a network of support services for persons with disabilities, EASPD stresses the need for a chapter on service provision addressing our concerns with regard to sustainable funding, correct legal frameworks allowing innovation, quality, staffing, training and retraining of carers and user involvement in both the new disability strategy and the Disability Pact. It is self evident that service providers should be involved when drafting this chapter.

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New study on working poor in Europe



The European Foundation for the improvement of Working and Living Conditions has just published a new study about the working poor in Europe compiled on the basis of individual national reports.

Being in work greatly reduces the risk of poverty, nevertheless, in 2007 8% of the employed population in

the European Union was at risk of poverty.

The proportion of the so-called "Working poor" varies markedly across countries and social groups and in most of them the issue of working poor is not a policy priority although it can be included in general policies to combat poverty and

social exclusion.

EASPD demands for actions addressing the situation of the "working poor" and the need for more decent jobs, especially in the social sector that would be easily ensured if there was adequate funding.

Even more in need and more needed: A report from Eurodiaconia on the social impact of the crisis

The social crisis is worsening and a stronger impact of the economic and financial crisis is to come in 2010 say the Members of Eurodiaconia.

Eurodiaconia has published a new report "The social cost of the crisis: even more in need and more needed" as a follow up of a report issued in 2009 which took a first look at the impact of the financial and economic crisis on their members' ability to provide services.

Overall their members are very concerned about the future as there is a feeling that the social crisis is worsening and a stronger impact of the economic and financial crisis is to come in 2010. They have been experiencing an increase in the demand for services, especially for debt counseling, emergency financial support and employment advice, and are expecting these demands to increase, as well as demands for other ser-

vices, especially food programmes; 11 out of 20 respondents are also expecting the demand for homeless services to increase. Most of them think they will be called to play a new role in 2010, maybe to counterbalance a decrease in the provision of publicly run services.

Issues of social care sector highlighted at meeting with EU-Commissioner Andor

On 14th April the European People's Party (EPP) organized a hearing in the European Parliament on the EU 2020 strategy. The new DG EMPL Commissioner Mr. Andor presented the strategy and several MEPs made remarks or asked for clarification.

On behalf of EASPD, Mr. Zelderloo highlighted some pressing issues in the social care sector: in the middle of the economic crisis social services (in some countries) can't find

qualified staff and after the crisis a shortage of staff is to be expected. Therefore, the EU 2020 Strategy should include actions to promote careers in the social care sector and to make it more attractive; moreover, as the shift of paradigm in the sector from a medical based approach towards a community based approach is occurring, retraining of professionals might be needed as well. To conclude, Mr Zelderloo remarked on the need for

a "Social Sector Social Dialogue Committee" representing employees and service providers of GOs and NGOs as sustainability of services and staff working conditions are interlinked. Mr. Andor reported that white jobs and items linked to these jobs and employers will be included in the new strategy; before the summer the Social Council will discuss the strategy to be launched under the Belgian Presidency.



**EU-Commissioner
László Andor**

EASPD points out direct link between human rights and high quality social and health services

On 14th April, EASPD participated in a meeting set up by the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. During the meeting the Regional Representative Mr. Jan Jarab and the Deputy High Commissioner Ms. Kyung-Wha Kang offered NGOs the opportunity to express their concern and explore ways for more

intensive cooperation with the UN office in Brussels. On behalf of EASPD, Mr. Luk Zelderloo pointed out the direct link there is between human rights and availability of affordable high quality social and health services. In close cooperation with the UN Regional office in Brussels EASPD will continue working on the

further development of community based inclusive services as alternatives to institutionalization. Access to quality services by Roma and persons with disabilities with a not dominant cultural background was discussed as well.



Agreement on cooperation with the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

On 26th March, a meeting took place between EASPD and Ms. Amanda Watkins from the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education.

Both organisations are working on similar topics and projects with similar objectives. Next to a gen-

eral introduction of the work of the European Agency and EASPD, a strategy for cooperation was discussed.

Furthermore, EASPD introduced the project "Pathways to Inclusion", whereas the European Agency presented the projects 'Teacher Education for

Inclusion' and 'Indicators for Inclusive Education'.

At the end of the meeting, both sides agreed to provide each other with information and feedback where needed. The European Agency will also be invited to the most important events organised within the P2i project.

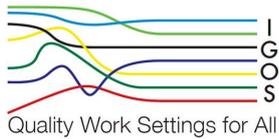
More info on:

www.pathwaystoinclusion.eu

and

www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/indicators-for-inclusive-education

Project “IGOS” compares rehabilitation models



The LdV project „IGOS“ was born as a result of the fruitful cooperation of the partnership of the EASPD interest group on occupational services.

The aim of the project is it to compare existing rehabilitation models for persons with disabilities in seven EU

member states and to empower people with disabilities through vocational rehabilitation and work opportunities.

The mid-term report of this project is to be published in June 2010. BAG:WfbM took over the responsibility as

project coordinator. All quality related issues of the project are supervised by the Irish partner Cope Foundation.

“Pass It On” - results disseminated throughout EU

The project „Pass It On“, funded by the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme (Key Activity 4 – Dissemination & Exploitation of results), aims at raising employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in the open labor market.

During the first year of the project, a core document was developed (“summary compilation”), which brings together useful information about the employment of persons with disabilities. It also provides training materials gathered from 3 finished projects.

2 Seminars were already organized in Romania and Czech Republic, 3 other will follow this year in Bulgaria (25-26/06/2010), Hungary (30/09-1/10/2010) and Malta (18-19/11/2010): they are an excellent occasion to deal with the specificity of the national situations and the main challenges in the sector of service provision, with regards to the employment of Persons with Disabilities. It provides participants with the opportunity to analyse the training materials from three finished projects (Conversion, Atlas and I

AM 2003) through parallel working groups/workshops. Discussions will cover the issue of how to apply the materials and the experience from the different projects according to the profile and the needs of the sector at national level.

The seminar gives the opportunity for service providers, users and authorities to join and share information as well as to set up networks for further collaboration.

The Pass It On project is being disseminated all over Europe.

More information on:

www.employmentforall.eu/PASSITON/tabid/5178/Default.aspx



Upcoming events

2-5 June 2010: The EASPD Conference on “What about me? Including the most excluded, improving the quality of life of persons with profound disabilities” will take place in Helsinki, Finland. The conference speakers from across Europe and beyond will explore ways of making the UN Convention a reality in the lives of persons with high support needs. More information about the conference and registration on <http://papunet.net/what-about-me>

10-11 June 2010: The European Conference “Building Bridges. New Ways of Integrating People with Disabilities. General Labour Market and Changes in Sheltered Workshops” will take place in Marburg, Germany. The conference will cover all aspects of the daily life of persons with disabilities during their lifetime. More information on www.bruecken-bauen-marburg.de

7-8 October 2010: The EASPD Conference “Towards Community living: current realities, future challenges” will take place in Skopje, Macedonia . The general goal of the conference will be to facilitate the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in society, in the light of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

3-5 November 2010: Gentle Teaching International organizes an international conference in Haarlem (NL). The conference “Relationships, the core of care giving” will contribute to the development of gentle teaching worldwide. More information on: www.gentleteaching.nl



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