

MAY 2011

## Registration for EASPD Conference “Old – so what? Independent Living for seniors with Disabilities” in Linz still possible

On 30<sup>th</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> July 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. Come and join us in Linz!

The full programme and registration on [www.easpd-linz.com](http://www.easpd-linz.com) or contact Charlotte Boetticher at the EASPD office

charlotte.boetticher@easpd.eu

@easpd.eu



## EASPD hosts Project Development Workshop in Linz

The project development workshop gives the opportunity to further develop and to set up international partnerships for the implementation of innovative project ideas. The afternoon will start with a plenary during which EC budget lines will be explained, followed by

lowed by a short presentation of some project ideas. Interested parties can contact the coordinator directly afterwards. After the plenary, the participants will split up and join a workshop of their choice. Registrations for the Project

Development workshop are open. You can register on the general registration form of the conference [www.easpd-linz.com](http://www.easpd-linz.com) or contact Sonia Staskowiak at the EASPD office

sonia.staskowiak@easpd.eu

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## Modernisation of EU public procurement rules

EASPD contributed to the consultation on the modernization of EU public procurement rules recently organized by the European Commission.

In replying to the consultation, EASPD underlined the fact that there are two areas of concern for social service providers for persons with disabilities: the first one is about social considerations to build in any public procurement process, which should be a tool for social inclusion thanks to practices such as employment of people with disabilities or sound working conditions for staff; the second one is about the public procurement of social services themselves, which should respect the specificities of the sector.

EASPD further reminded that, even though social services of general interest are considered as economic actors by EU legislation, their objec-

tive is to provide support to vulnerable people and consequently to contribute to social and territorial cohesion and social inclusion. This is why in our answer to the consultation we stressed the importance of having rules that allow services to achieve this objective.

Our main recommendations to the Commission were:

- To recognise the special characteristics of social services and the need to subject them to a discreet set of rules recognising the need not to treat vulnerable people as “commodities” whose support can be tendered on the open market, so that current rules can be amended in such a way as to allow services to operate in their best capacity, for the benefit of the people they serve and of the local communities into which they are

embedded;

- To support proposals asking for reserved markets for nonprofit organisations, the abolition of the lowest price criterion for the attribution of social service contracts and the consideration of criteria such as quality, continuity of service, capacity to deliver services and working conditions for staff in the award of service contracts;

To promote alternatives to public procurement in the social sector, starting from the historical experience in each Member State.

For more information please contact Miriana Giraldi

([miriana.giraldi@easpd.eu](mailto:miriana.giraldi@easpd.eu)) at the EASPD office.



EUROPEAN  
COMMISSION

### **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities receives 100th ratification**

On 10 May 2011, Colombia became the 100th country to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In doing so, it joins the ranks of those countries that now support greater access, backed by their legal systems, for citizens with disabilities to fully participate in the lives of their communities, including the political process and health and education services. The Convention marks a shift away from the old "medical" view of disability towards a more "social" view that

"disability" is a result of the interaction between a person and his or her environment, and not something that resides in the individual as the result of impairment.

EASPD very much welcomes the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Colombia and hopes that many other countries will follow the good example as ten Member States still haven't ratified the Convention.

Nevertheless, EASPD reminds the European Union to ratify the Op-

tional Protocol to the CRPD, which would enable victims of alleged EU non-compliance to take their complaint to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The European Union ratified the UN Convention on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2010 but has not yet ratified the Optional protocol.



### **British newspaper The Guardian hosts a journalistic competition on "The challenges faced by disabled girls"**

"80% of disabled people in developing countries live below the poverty line." is one of the striking arguments introducing the newest subject for the annual International journalism competition hosted by British newspaper The Guardian. The competition sets out to find the best amateur and professional article elabo-

rating on one of the 16 subjects sponsored by a group of UK-based international non-governmental organisation.

Submission of articles of 600 to 1000 words can be admitted until 13 June 2011. The 16 best writers (eight amateur, eight professional) will be published on the guardian website and

receive the possibility to fly to a developing country to research a new assignment. The winners of the competition will be announced on the 16th November. Find more info on topic and competition [here](#)



### EASPD and the IGOS-partnership organise seminar on intra-job mobility

On 5<sup>th</sup> May 2011 EASPD organized a closed seminar in cooperation with the IGOS – Quality Work Settings for All partnership on the topic of intra-job mobility.

Intra-job mobility is one of the issues that the European Commission has committed to address with the European Disability Strategy in the course of 2010 -2020.

The starting point for the discussion was a document - Challenges & threats of intra-job mobility for persons with disability - that summa-

rizes the state of play of employment opportunities and mobility for persons with disabilities and challenges and threats of social security systems in each partner country.

Guest speakers were Mr Daniel Schmidt (European Commission, DG Justice) and Mr. Egbert Holthuis (European Commission, DG EMPL.). During the seminar the concept on intra-job mobility, barriers and models of good practice were identified and discussed with the European Commission representatives.

The discussion around mobility (e.g. mobility within the open labour market, within sheltered workshops and the transition from sheltered workshops to the open labour market and vice versa) highlighted important issues that will be further explored and researched in the upcoming months. For more information contact Sabrina Ferraina at [sabrina.ferraina@easpd.eu](mailto:sabrina.ferraina@easpd.eu).



### ImPaCT in Europe stakeholder seminars

Our latest seminar organized in the framework of the ImPaCT in Europe project focused on the topic of staff training. It offered us the opportunity to share the preliminary results of the Training Needs Analysis and to discuss important questions such as the benefits of training, the inclusion of modules on Person Centred Technology in training curricula for care staff, and the benefits of exchanging best practice between organisations across Europe. A [full report](#) is available on

the project web site, and we'd love to hear your views on the topic on our [User Forum](#).

Our next seminar, "Technology Works!" will take place in Cardiff Bay, Wales, UK on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2010, and will address the topic of employment. Having a job is important to people on many levels; it increases income, independence and self-worth. However many disabled people are denied these opportuni-

ties by the barriers that can prevent them entering and maintaining employment. The person-centred use of technology can ensure disabled people reach their full potential in work and greatly increase employment possibilities for disabled people and employers. More information and a registration form are also available [on our ImPaCt in Europe website](#).



### UN CRPD under discussion at the European Academy of Law (ERA)

On 23rd-24th May 2011 the European Academy of Law based in Trier, Germany, organized a thematic seminar on EU Disability law and the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. The training, sponsored by the EU's Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (PROGRESS 2007-2013), provided some background information on the meaning of the UNCRPD and its implications when it comes to enforcing its principles.

Entered into force for the European Union on 22 January 2011, the UNCRPD is taken as a guiding policy instrument for the European Disability Strategy of 2010-2020 and is setting the scene for any current and future development in the field of the rights of persons with disabilities.

The importance of the UNCRPD is key in elaborating and clarifying

(existing) obligations and providing a legal set of standards on disability rights stemming from a threefold approach: the introduction of the social-model of disability, the notion of diversity to reaffirm the individuality of people with disabilities instead of the impairment view linked to their condition and the concept of "rights" to be considered and argued on rather than that of "needs".

The speakers stressed the underlying principles of this human rights instrument and elaborated on the usability of the UNCRPD at international as well as at national level, on its practical implications for people with disability in the first place and for society as a whole in the full sense and on the necessity to mainstream disability issues in order to allow inclusion and participation to be realized at the

broadest level.

Acceptance of the UNCRPD and of its implication is the upcoming step after its ratification; the role of civil society, civil servants and authorities is therefore to promote the shift in paradigm promoted by the Convention and support society in further developing the understanding and the correct implementation of this tool.

