

JUNE-JULY 2010

300 delegates demand more rights for persons with high support needs

On 3 and 4 June, more than 300 persons with disabilities, family members, professionals and policy makers came together in Helsinki, Finland on the occasion of EASPD's annual Conference. Its major concern was how to improve the quality of life of persons with profound disabilities and their integration into society.

Ádám Kósa, President of the European Parliament's Intergroup on Disability, Alexander Stubb, Finland's Minister of Foreign Affairs and many other important experts on disability related issues from all over Europe debated on the major challenges that persons with profound disabilities and high support needs face today.

The topics of assistive technology, legal capacity, personal budgeting, models of active support,

alternative ways of communication and the perspective of the staff working with persons with profound disabilities were, amongst others, at the centre of the Conference sessions and workshops.

Franz Wolfmayr, President of EASPD, stated that the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities equally applies to people with high support needs, which means people who require support 24 hours a day, each day. Thanks to medical and other advances more and more people with high support needs are, thankfully, living longer. This produces new and growing challenges to ensure that these people receive affordable and cost effective support. Living longer must be combined with a proper quality of life, and with people with high support needs being able to make

choices about how they wish to lead their lives. There is an urgent need for a fresh start, and for more creative thinking which can turn this into reality.

After the summer break EASPD will present a set of recommendations to the Belgian Presidency, the European Parliament and the European Commission.

The conference was organized in conjunction with NVC, Service Foundation for Persons with Intellectual Disability, the Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (FAIDD) and the Finnish Network on Intellectual Disability.

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The social side of the Belgian Presidencies work programme

The Belgian Presidency of the EU, which started on 1 July and runs until 31 December 2010, has published its detailed work programme. Belgium's main concern is the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty which simplifies EU decision-making procedures and which came into force last December.

The Belgian Presidency will be the first presidency to implement the European Employment Strategy within the context of the new Europe 2020 Strategy for employment and growth. With regard to the changing demographics, the Belgian Presidency would like to promote a work and ageing society pact by adopting conclusions on new career management techniques, and by identifying niches in the employment market created by an aging European population. It will seek to promote the integration and mobilization of all talents available on the employment market and to reinforce the fight against all forms of

discrimination in the workplace to ensure inclusive employment markets with a view to promoting greater social cohesion.

Within the context of the work undertaken by the Social Protection Committee, the Council will ensure that the social impact of the crisis continues to be monitored and debated by Social Affairs Ministers. Together with the European Commission, the Belgian Presidency will continue to work to improve the effectiveness of the Open Method of Coordination in the areas of health, pensions and social inclusion.

The Council will also adopt conclusions relating to the sustainability, adequacy and portability of pensions in a context of aging population.

Under the Belgian leadership, the Council will also adopt conclusions on the basis of the communication of the Commission relating to the new strategy on

equality between men and women (2011-2015). Furthermore, the work of the Spanish Presidency on the draft directive on the implementation of the principle of equality of treatment of individuals without distinction of religion, disability, age or sexual orientation will be pursued.

Belgian Presidency website:

www.eutrio.be

Belgian Presidency work programme:

www.eu2010.be/files/bveu/media/documents/Programme_EN.pdf

Belgium changes Constitution to make it compliant with UN Convention

The Belgium government has revised a part of its Constitution which led to the amendment of an article to make it compliant with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities . Belgium had signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007 and ratified it in July 2009. According to the Belgian publication “La Voix des

parents” (The Voice of Parents) of the Belgian disability organization AFRaHM, the proposal for this change was adopted in January 2010. Title II, Art. 22 now guarantees every person with a disability to benefit from measures that ensure their autonomy and their social, professional and cultural integration.

AFRaHM states that this change proves a new approach towards disability and points out that disability rights are part of human rights.

Source: Inclusion Europe



Upcoming EU-Presidencies until 2020

The Presidency of the Council plays a vital part in the organization of the work of the institution, notably as the driving force in the legislative and political decision-making process. It has to organize and chair all meetings and work out compromises capable of resolving difficulties.

The Council is presided over for a period of six months by each Member State in turn. Please find below the list of the coming EU-Presidencies:

Hungary:

January-June 2011

Poland:

July-December 2011

Denmark:

January-June 2012

Cyprus:

July-December 2012

Ireland:

January-June 2013

Lithuania:

July-December 2013

Greece:

January-June 2014

Italy:

July-December 2014

Latvia:

January-June 2015

Luxembourg:

July-December 2015

Netherlands:

January-June 2016

Slovakia:

July-December 2016

Malta:

January-June 2017

United Kingdom:

July-December 2017

Estonia:

January-June 2018

Bulgaria:

July-December 2018

Austria:

January-June 2019

Romania:

July-December 2019

Finland:

January-June 2020

Social Affairs Council adopts new disability framework

On 7 June, the EU Ministers in charge of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs adopted a resolution on a new European disability framework that calls for strengthening the social inclusion of people with disabilities and their families by giving priority to disability issues and launching initiatives in the

areas of education, employment and social affairs, as well as international development.

This year the European Commission will, according to the plan, adopt a new European Disability Strategy for 2010-2020, which would replace its Disability Action Plan 2003-2010 and, which,

according to the Council, should be based in large measure on implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The resolution is available at:

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/10/st10/st10173.en10.pdf>



Disability Intergroup discusses achievements of Spanish EU-Presidency

The Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament co-organized, with the Spanish Presidency, a conference on the achievements of the Presidency leaving office, and on the challenges ahead for the incoming Belgian Presidency.

The conference was opened by Mr. Adam Kosa, Chair of the Intergroup, and followed by Mr. Jaime Alejandro, representing the Spanish Ministry of Health and Social Policy. This was the starting point for a panel debate between the representatives of the incoming Belgian Presidency, the Euro-

pean Commission, the organizations of people with disabilities, as well as Members of the European Parliament.

Main challenges and opportunities that the Belgian presidency would take over were discussed: the progress made in the ratification and implementation of the UN Convention for Persons with Disabilities, the new European Disability Strategy now in the making to be launched by the European Commission in November this year, the follow-up of the European Council resolution on a new disability framework, ways of in-

volvement of civil society in the disability policy making and future of the anti-discrimination directive.

EASPD calls on the incoming Belgian presidency to further maintain the political will to adopt an anti-discrimination Directive.



**Disability
Intergroup**

Moldovan Parliament ratifies UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

On Friday, 9 July 2010, the Moldovan Parliament ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention had been signed on 30 March 2007 but the Moldovan Government hesitated with its implementation.

During the past years, the EASPD member "Alliance of Organizations working with Disabled People (AOPD)" intensively lobbied for the implementation of the UN Convention. In 2009, they started an initiative financed by the Moldovan SOROS Foundation and AIDS International with the goal to promote the ratification of the UN Convention. 61 Moldovan NGOs participated at the activities and col-

lected more than 6000 signatures. Round table meetings with government representatives and members of the Moldovan Parliament were organized. In July 2010, the lobby work finally proved to be successful.

More than 170,000 persons with disabilities have waited for three years for the Convention to be ratified and will now enjoy their rights on an equal basis with all others.

EASPD very much welcome this very important step towards a more inclusive society in the Republic of Moldova and congratulates the Alliance of Organizations working with Dis-

abled People for its great success.

Since the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention in December 2006, there have been 88 ratifications and 146 signatories. To see the most up-to-date number of ratifications and signatories, visit the UN Enable website www.un.org/disabilities

More information on the website of the United Nations:

www.un.org/disabilities

Or the UN in Moldova:

www.un.md





EASPD sets-up new Special Interest Group on Independent Living

At its last General Assembly meeting in Helsinki, Finland, in June 2010, EASPD officially decided to launch a new Special Interest Group on Independent Living (Art. 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

This Interest Group should help people with disabilities to find more and better information about existing residential services and housing types. Furthermore, support services should be revised and evaluated.

The Interest Group will

investigate on the following issues:

- Shift in paradigm (UN convention, HR bases, focus on inclusion and citizenship)
- Increase in needs (ageing, fragmentation of families, waiting lists...)
- Decrease of budgets (crisis, market mechanism)
- Strong emphasis on quality and user involvement
- Availability of new technologies offering innovative solutions

As a network of provid-

ers, EASPD aims at a correct implementation of the UNCRPD. We also recognize the need for innovation and modernization in the 24/7 services sector. Independent living of persons with disabilities is only possible with the needed support services and systems available.

For further questions on this working group, please contact charlotte.boetticher@easpd.eu

EASPD is looking for a new Policy Trainee starting on 1st September 2010

EASPD is currently looking for a Policy Trainee starting on 1 September 2010.

Task of the trainee will be:

- Research on policy issues (mainly European social policy)
- Drafts on articles for the organisation's newsflashes and newsletters
- Contribution to the drafting of policy papers
- Planning and organisation of policy events

- Administrative work linked to an EU funded project, coordinated by the Policy Officer (for example, reviewing finances, following up with project partners, updating the project web site, etc.).

Deadline for applications: 30th July 2010.

To apply, please send your full CV and a covering letter, explaining your motivation and how you meet the job profile, to Miriana

Giraldi (miriana.giraldi@easpd.eu)

Selection process: Selected candidates will be invited for an **interview** in our offices in Brussels. In case that isn't possible, phone interviews can be arranged. **Only pre-selected candidates will be contacted.**

More information on www.easpd.eu
Under „Job Posting“

NEXT EASPD CONFERENCE IN SKOPJE 7-8 OCTOBER 2010 REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

The Conference **“TOWARDS COMMUNITY LIVING: current realities & future challenges”** will kick-off in **Skopje** (fYR of Macedonia) on the **7-8 October 2010**.

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**.

It will be achieved by enriching the discussion with the **variety of situations from all regions of Europe**, as we believe that **mutual learning is a key for success**. Speakers and participants from all parts of the Continent will have the opportunity to **share their experience** and **build networks** at all levels. It should enable them to better understand their differences, but also to potentially pave the way for a **common vision** of how to **concretely contribute** to the **improvement of living conditions for persons with disabilities**.

The discussions will be based on:

- The specific situation of stakeholders involved in the Disability sector in the different regions of Europe and the challenges they are facing
- The wish to promote, facilitate and enhance cooperation practices among stakeholders of the Disability sector
- The international policies and texts relevant for the sector

Conference venue: Hotel Continental, Skopje, fYR of Macedonia

Registration: <http://easpdskopjeconference.openthewindows.org/Index.html>

EASPD activities: Saturday 9 October 2010

Conference languages: English-French– German - Macedonian

Organisers: EASPD, Republic centre for support of persons with intellectual disability (PORAKA), Open the Windows and the Macedonian Scientific Society for Autism.

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Once you're a fan, you can interact with the group, upload articles, share your experiences, and even give advice or discuss different issues with other EASPD fans.



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