

SEPTEMBER 2010

## Global Partnership for Disability and Development (GPDD) and EASPD meet EU officials and discuss further collaboration

In the week from 14 September to 17 September the Global Partnership for Disability and Development (GPDD) visited Brussels to explore possibilities for future collaboration with the EU institutions and the major NGO representatives based in Brussels. The GPDD is a multi-stakeholder platform which includes national governments, NGOs and GOs aiming at promoting “a disability lens” in society, particularly focusing on developing countries. It ultimately accelerates the inclusion of persons with disabilities and their families into development poli-

cies and practices. EASPD, as member of the GPDD platform, was highly active in providing a link with the main institutional actors based in Brussels and contributed to the set up of the scene for further developments in the disability sector through a joint collaboration between the institutions and civil society. Meetings were held with the Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament, the European Commission (DG Dev, DG AidCo, DG Empl), the World Bank and the UN Brussels representatives, as well as with NGOs. A fruitful collaboration has

started under the premise of fostering the enjoyment of the rights of persons with disability and the need to combine efforts as well as knowledge and expertise in order to gain a voice and have disability become a world priority.



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## EASPD welcomes the launch of the new “Youth on the Move” initiative by the European Commission



More information  
on:

[http://europa.eu/  
youthonthemove/  
eu-](http://europa.eu/youthonthemove/eu-)

On 15<sup>th</sup> September 2010, the European Commission launched “Youth on the Move”, a new flagship initiative aimed at helping young people to gain the knowledge, skills and experience they need to make their first job a reality. Part of the EU’s new Europe 2020 strategy, Youth on the Move proposes 28 key actions aimed at making education and training more relevant to young people’s needs and encouraging more of them to take advantage of EU grants to study or train in another country. This should increase young people’s employability and access to the labour market.

A growing number of young people are being moved onto

(permanent) disability benefits. While some may not be able to work fully, even with suitably adapted workplaces, others could find a way back to the labour market through well designed activation policies.

According to the European Commission, Member States should in the framework of Europe 2020 and the European Employment Strategy, focus on:

- Ensuring that all young people are in a job, further education or activation measures within four months of leaving school and providing this as a “Youth Guarantee”. To this end, Member States are asked to identify and overcome the legal and ad-

ministrative obstacles that might block access to these measures for young people who are inactive other than for reasons of education.

- Offering a good balance between rights to benefits and targeted activation measures based upon mutual obligation, in order to avoid young people, especially the most vulnerable, falling outside any social protection system.

EASPD welcomes and supports this initiative, especially needed in times of the financial crisis.

### Conference of State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

All countries who have signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities meet regularly in order to discuss its implementation. The last of these meetings took place at the beginning of September at UN Headquarters in New York. The session which was convened under the theme of “Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities through the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” was opened by Mr. Sha Zukang, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. Mr. Zukang highlighted the following four central challenges that need to be faced and addressed:

1. Fewer than half of all Member States have ratified the Convention and its Optional Protocol.

2. A big challenge at the implementation level is the lack of expertise in how to plan and execute government strategies that address disability needs. Inputs from ex-

perts, who have specialized training and experience, are needed for example in the design of accessible buildings and services.

3. Expertise is further needed for mainstreaming persons with disabilities into the educational systems. It cannot be accepted that millions of children are not taught to read and write because of their physical or mental disabilities. In order to change this, collaboration with experts at all levels of the educational system is needed.

4. Another challenge is how to address disability needs during times of natural disaster and armed conflict. Thus, the international community needs to ensure that disabled people receive prioritized access to aid in humanitarian operations.

The delegates also renewed and expanded the membership of the Committee on the Rights of Per-

sons with Disabilities, - charged with reviewing periodic reports from State Parties, raising concerns and making recommendations. Ms Navanethem Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said that the expanded Committee would now have more expert capacity and would be able to engage in substantive activities, such as communications, petitions and inquiry visits. The international community, she said, has the responsibility to ensure that commensurable resources are given in order to turn the Convention into reality for persons with disabilities worldwide. It is consequently needed to encourage more Member States to ratify the Convention.

In the EU, twelve countries have not yet ratified the Convention but most of them have signed it and are now in a process of review of their national legislation in order to identify the best way to implement it, prior to a full ratification.



### Rethink Public Services in Europe in the Agenda 2020



On the 16<sup>th</sup> of September, the European Parliament Intergroup on Public Services held a meeting on the theme of Public Services in Europe in the Agenda 2020. The meeting consisted of three round table discussions which tackled the topics of public services and the impact of liberalization, the quality of public services and how to develop better offer and accessibility.

Speakers highlighted the importance of public services and their role in guaranteeing social cohesion. European citizens are seriously worried about the effects of the Single Market on these services, and it is thus urgent to ensure their protection. These aspects have not been taken into

account in the EU2020 Agenda, and it is demanded that Commissioner Barnier takes action by including them into the Single Market Act – a strategy with the aims of boosting job creation and stimulating growth.

Ms. Onkelinx, Vice-Prime Minister of Belgium, concluded the meeting clearly stating that solidarity and social services of general interest are put high on the agenda of the Belgian Presidency. Ms. Onkelinx further underlined the importance of understanding the specific nature of social services of general interest

and that these are fundamental not only for economic development but also, and most importantly, for social and territorial cohesion. She reminded the commitment of the Belgian Presidency to improve the legal framework and the current situation in this area.

For more information, please contact Miriana Giraldi on [mirana.giraldi@easpd.eu](mailto:mirana.giraldi@easpd.eu)

### Helmut Heinen re-elected as President of the European Co-ordination Forum for the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015 (CAHPAH)



On 27<sup>st</sup> September 2010, the Belgian Helmut Heinen was re-elected as President European Co-ordination Forum for the Council of Europe

Disability Action Plan 2006 - 2015 (CAHPAH) until September 2011. Starting in September 2011, the Austrian

Robert Bechina will take over the Presidency of the CAHPAH for one year.

### **Become a partner of the European Care Certificate and deliver certificates in social care**

The European Care Certificate (ECC) is the first small step towards ensuring the consistently high quality of social care services across the EU. A partnership of 14 member states (with more joining over time) has created an agreed definition of what staff entering social care services for the first time need to know as a minimum to work in the social care sector in any member country of the EU.

The vision of the ECC partnership for the future is that anyone who is working in social care services in any EU state will be able to study for and pass the ECC exam, sharing the same values and knowledge base in their work, creating a common foundation in care services across the entire EU. Workers can use their ECC in any country as a demonstration of their knowledge of the basics in social care and employers will then be confident that the worker shares the same value base. This will improve employability and worker mobility across the EU in a sector where the majority of workers have no training or recognised qualification in care at all at entry level.

There are all sorts of ways in which you might be interested in the ECC, whether you are a worker, an employer, a trainer, educational institution or a regulator.

#### **How can you join the ECC?**

**If you are an individual worker...** you might be interested in the ECC as a way of showing what you already know about work in the care sector, or you might want to find out how to study and get the Certificate in order to help you find work at home or in another country.

**If you are an employer...** you might be looking for workers who already have the ECC as a way of finding out who knows what they are talking about, or you could use the ECC exam to test for knowledge and attitudes in the selection process, or you could offer to train workers to get the ECC if they will come and work for you.

**If you are a trainer or an educational institution...** you might want to offer the ECC because workers will find it a useful thing to have. You could include it in your current courses (at no cost) and offer your learners an extra award as well as demonstrating that your courses do cover the essential knowledge all worker will need. You might want to get your training course(s) approved as being 'ECC Compliant' to help your marketing efforts.

**If you are a regulator...** you are always looking at ways of checking on the quality of a service and this always means finding out how well trained the staff are. Having the ECC will be another sign that the individual staff member has the basic knowledge needed to work safely in the sector. You could suggest that an unqualified staff group sit the ECC exam (it's free at present!) as a way of demonstrating their knowledge.

Should you require more information about the European Care project, please contact the project promoter James Churchill [James.churchill@arcuk.org.uk](mailto:James.churchill@arcuk.org.uk) or Charlotte Boetticher at the EASPD office on [charlotte.boetticher@easpd.eu](mailto:charlotte.boetticher@easpd.eu)

### **Isabella Nykvist joins EASPD as new Policy trainee**

Isabella Nykvist will be EASPD's new Policy trainee for the next 6 months. She graduated from Uppsala University Law-school in June and with a specialization in human rights and public international law. During the past ten years, she worked within several NGOs in Sweden such as the Swedish Red Cross and ECPAT. During her year as an exchange student in Seoul, South Korea, she also worked as a sports leader for disabled children. Since she has disabled family members, she has a personal interest in human rights for this group and knows how important it is to promote inclusion, equalization and accessibility. During the coming six months, she hopes to contribute to the important work of EASPD and is looking forward to turn her theoretical knowledge into practice and learn more about the EU-process here in Brussels.