

December 2009

## Policy news

### Hungarian MEP Ádám Kósa is the new President of the Disability Intergroup at the European Parliament



On Wednesday, 16 December 2009 Hungarian MEP Ádám Kósa has been elected new President of the Disability Intergroup at the European Parliament.

MEPs Liz Lynne, Liberal Democrats and Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, EVP have been re-elected as Vice President of the Disability Intergroup.

The Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament is an informal grouping of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from all nationalities and most

political groups who are interested in promoting the disability policy in their work at the European Parliament as well as in the national contexts.

The Disability Intergroup is one of the oldest Intergroups of the European Parliament; it was established in 1980. Following the European Parliament elections in June 2009, it had to be reformed, according to the European Parliament rules governing the intergroups.

## Seminar on “From Equal Rights to Equal opportunities for Persons with Disabilities”



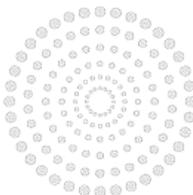
On December 9, 2009 a seminar on “From Equal Rights to Equal opportunities for Persons with Disabilities” took place at the European Parliament. The Seminar explored the three interrelated themes of the legal and policy framework in place to guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities in the workplace; the principle of reasonable accommodation and its implementation and policies aimed at putting Ability first. The event was organised in the framework of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities and of the Action Plan for the promotion of gender equality and diversity in the EP Secretariat (2009-2013). On this occasion a representative of the Secretariat of the European Parliament presented the five-months paid traineeships for people with disabilities.

The main objectives of this programme are to offer a number of persons with disabilities a significant work experience and an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the activities of the European Parliament. Additionally, the European Parliament’s equal opportunities principles will further be put into practice and the general awareness of disability among Parliament staff will be raised, advocating the integration of people with disabilities.

Further information on the seminar and on the online application can be found on the webpage of the European parliament <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/> and by contacting Charlotte Boetticher on [charlotte.boetticher@easpd.eu](mailto:charlotte.boetticher@easpd.eu)

## EASPD news

O2 ability awards



### The O2 Ability Awards – An Irish Initiative to Promote Diversity at Work

The O2 Ability Awards have been re-launched this year in Ireland, with organizers reporting an unprecedented level of interest in the competition this time round. The Ability Awards, originally an

initiative of the Kanchi organisation in Ireland, were launched in 2004 to promote Best Practice in the field of inclusion of persons with disabilities in employment and as customers. The awards recognise

businesses that are promoting a positive image of disability, and reward innovative practice and progressive attitudes towards disability in the workplace. This year Irish organisations from across 25 different sectors of industry have entered themselves in a bid to claim one of the prizes, with non-private, private and small companies all eligible to apply. Separate winners are selected from each of these sectors, and category winners in specific fields – for example leadership, accessibility and well being – are also singled out. The philosophy of the Ability Awards is to reward businesses for the positive steps that they have taken, rather than focusing on what they have yet to do. Companies can often be surprised at how advanced they really are in terms of embracing diversity the organisers say, and even those who currently have no staff members with disabilities are encouraged to apply. The judging panels examine all aspects of employment and customer service of the organisations in order to select the winners, and these subsequently feature in the national press and television, and receive a logo of endorsement for use on their marketing and corporate goods. But simply entering the competition is a positive step from a business point of view the organisers claim, and they have outlined the reasons

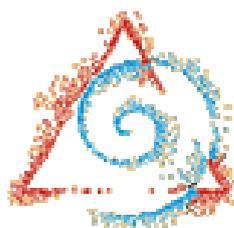
for this in a comprehensive 'Business Case for Disability'. This points out that embracing disability gives companies a strong competitive advantage, granting them access to untapped markets, talent and higher staff retention figures, and making them more aware of the value of gathering persons with disabilities (one person in every four) as customers. Inclusion initiatives also have an extremely positive effect on business reputation, generating trust and loyalty amongst customers and staff alike.

The 02 Ability Awards are the first of their kind to reward Best Practice in the field of business and disability awareness. They are supported by high-level business and disability leaders who act as judges and sponsors, and are to be launched internationally next year in Spain. At the moment the assessment procedure for the 2010 Irish 02 Ability Awards is underway, and the winners will be announced in April or May of next year.

A representative of EASPD met with Caroline Casey, Chief Executive of the Kanchi organisation and founder of the awards, at the European Parliament earlier this month. EASPD very much supports the Ability Awards' cause.

For more information please see:

<http://theabilityawards.com/>  
<http://www.kanchi.org/home/>



### **Symbiosis Foundation is looking for 2-3 volunteers**

Symbiosis Foundation, located in the Northern Hungarian Region is looking for 2-3 EVS volunteers starting in June 2010. Symbiosis Foundation is an EASPD member and they are working with youngsters with mental disability.

#### **DURATION OF THE EVS ACTIVITY**

We prefer long term service (6-12 months) regarding that the main activities related to our young people live with different

disabilities and they need more time to accept and to accommodate to a new person than other people.

#### **THE ENVIROMENT WHERE THE EVS WILL TAKE PLACE**

The activities will take place in Hungary, Miskolc that is the third largest city of the country with 170000 inhabitants. Miskolc has an active cultural life and many other possibilities on how to spend free time,

from movies to theatre, galleries and festivals. In Miskolc there is also a university and a lot of students are staying here during the year. EVS volunteers will have several possibilities to get in touch with students from all over the world and to spend their free time with new friends. The city located in the Bükk mountains so it gives a lot of opportunities for outdoor activities.

Miskolc has a good infrastructure of local transport with buses and tram.

#### ACCOMMODATION

For our volunteers we hire a three-room flat in the centre of the city that is equipped with all the necessary furniture, machines and kitchen utensils, and we also provide a computer with internet access and a company mobile phone.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The volunteers have organised lessons of Hungarian language. The communication language is English. During the EVS activity there will be more mentors responsible for the volunteers. We want to encourage youngsters to participate actively in the society, to give them

opportunity that they feel accepted and important. We also want to evoke and strengthen the awareness of the European citizenship and citizenship in general through the EVS projects.

#### SELECTION PROCESS:

We are looking for open-minded volunteers who can accommodate easily and open to the new challenges and who are socially sensitive and helpful. The volunteers should feel sympathy with the disabled people and have a skill to cooperate and work with them. Our main aim is to develop our young people, to give useful experience to the volunteers, make intercultural connection between Hungarian youngsters and youngsters coming from a different European country.

#### CONTACT

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### **3-4 June 2010 Conference on “What about me –Including the most excluded- Improving the quality of life of people with high dependency needs”**

The UN Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities promotes, protects and ensures the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and promotes respect for their inherent dignity. People with disabilities are persons with rights, and they should be capable of claiming these and making decisions for their lives. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society is recognized in the Convention. We are committed to the values of self-determination, empowerment, active inclusion, equal opportunities, lifelong learning and freedom of choice. The UN Convention and all these values should be

real also for persons with high support needs. The conference speakers from across Europe and beyond will explore ways to promote these principle values and to make UN Convention real in the lives of persons with high support needs.

In the conference we are approaching this through three main themes:

- Communication and interaction
- Active support
- Citizenship and inclusion

The goals of the conference are:

- to find out ways to promote the core values of UN Convention

- implementation of UN Convention for persons with high support needs
- to discuss, share and learn from each other about best practices
- establishing a network
- Declaration and Action Plan

Organizers: EASPD, NVC, Service Foundation for Persons with Intellectual Disability, FAIDD, Finnish Network on Intellectual Disability

Conference venue: Scandic Continental, Helsinki, Finland

Hotel: information will be available on [www.easpd.eu](http://www.easpd.eu) in due time

Registration: information will be available on [www.easpd.eu](http://www.easpd.eu) in due time

EASPD activities: Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2010

Conference languages: English-French-Finnish

## Project news



### Less burnout amongst people working in the mental health and intellectual disability sector

ROSE is a Leonardo da Vinci funded project aimed at reducing stress and burnout amongst people working in the mental health and intellectual disability occupational support sector. The project is being carried out by 9 different partner organisations across 6 EU member states.

The literature indicates that working with this group of people in support and training centres can be particularly challenging for staff in terms of occupational stress, emotional exhaustion and 'burnout'. This is a significant reason for experienced staff leaving their jobs. This in turn reduces the ability of services to provide effective support to people with mental health problems and intellectual disabilities.

Whilst a number of stress management programmes have been developed for

staff working in clinical environments, no such programmes have been developed to support staff working in rehabilitation, employment support or social care environments.

The ROSE project is particularly significant at this time as levels of stress in the workplace and society at large are likely to increase as a consequence of the current economic downturn.

This project started on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008. Now, 1 year later, a combined person and work directed stress management programme has been created in order to improve the long-term retention within services of staff in this area. The pilot testing will start soon.

More information on [www.roseproject.eu](http://www.roseproject.eu)



## Pathways to inclusion – a EU funded project to support inclusive education

Both on European and national levels, authorities worked on the realisation of legal frameworks facilitating inclusive education for all.

Nevertheless, we have a long way to go before reaching a society where equal opportunities are guaranteed for all. Research shows the importance of inclusive and high quality education as a key means to achieve this. In reality, however, still a lot of arguments, based on a lack of know-how, are brought up to protect the special schools and their teachers. There is still much uncertainty with regard to inclusive education in both special and mainstream education. Therefore, change in the current situation is urgently needed.

A new Comenius project, called 'Pathways to Inclusion', will bridge the gap between the research done and the reality in the schools. It started on the 1<sup>st</sup> October and will last for 3 years.

As up to now no knowledge-centre on Inclusion exists in Europe, the aims in this project are to develop:

- A sustainable network of all those committed to inclusive education;
- A regularly updated web based knowledge centre on 'Inclusive education for all', including:
  - information on the existing situation in the field of policy, teacher training and school;
  - a database of important contacts of professionals and stakeholders;

- an overview of models of good practice and their critical success factors;
- a tool for self-evaluation, which schools can use to measure how far they are in realising education for all and to which extent they meet the needs of people with special educational needs;
- A network activity in the so called 'new' Member States in order to involve them actively in the evolution towards equal opportunities to inclusive and high-quality education.

The network will help policy makers, stakeholders and professionals in the field of education to improve their work with pupils with special educational needs. Such sharing of information and models of good practice will make a significant difference to truly realising the changes already approved at a policy and political level. The result will be a better participation of people with special educational needs in all forms of education and a better inclusion in society.

The kick-off meeting of this project took place in Dublin, on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November 2009. During that meeting, amongst others, the internal management plan was approved, the research methodology was discussed and an agreement was made on the project logo and the project website.