

Târgu-Mures Declaration, Romania Call for Action

Târgu-Mures, Romania, October 7th, 2005

EASPD

The European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) represents more than 7,000 organisations across Europe and across disability (including the accession countries Romania and Bulgaria) and is the voice of the service provision sector in Europe. EASPD strives for equal opportunities for people with disabilities through high quality services and believes in interdependence and partnership of user's organisations, providers and authorities at all levels to tackle the challenges ahead.

EASPD ... gets involved!

In just over 30 years, the EU has grown from a six-member entity with a population of 185 million into a 15-member entity with 375 million people before becoming a 25-member entity with 455 million citizens in 2004. The EU's next scheduled enlargements would bring Romania, Bulgaria and in a later stage Croatia and Turkey into the fold. EASPD believes that the enlargement process should not only be seen in terms of economic profitability (i.e. by widening the European single market). The new member states and accession countries also bring along a whole range of different cultures, social policies and political structures too. EASPD is convinced that social NGO's should play an important role in helping to implement human rights through high qualitative service systems and ensuring that both the new member states and the accession countries are assisted to meet the social criteria for becoming fully integrated in the EU. Service providers are important stakeholders in building up social cohesion in Europe. For those reasons, EASPD has established a Standing Committee on Enlargement and adapted its statutes to open up membership for organizations from all countries of the Council of Europe.

The care sector in the new member states and in the accession countries is generally spoken less structured and developed. EASPD is committed to share its network(s) and experiences with service providers and their umbrella associations in all new member states and accession countries. EASPD does so to support the development of local provider activities and to enhance the quality of services to people with disabilities. In particular, EASPD launched a very practical grass-root initiative: *the twinning initiative*. Using its international networks of providers and umbrella bodies, EASPD has invited local service providers in accession countries to link up with their counterparts from the EU or the other way around.

In 2005, EASPD has taken significant steps to strengthen the ties with providers in all Eastern and South East European countries and participated in three important events. In Belgrade on between 8-10th of September, (Serbia-Montenegro, organised by **Handicap International South-East Europe**), the focus was on service development and stakeholder involvement. In Budapest between 15-17th of September (Hungary, 'Common Voice'), we tried to identify

common strengths, weaknesses and needs of the sector in Central and Eastern Europe. During our conference in Târgu-Mures on 7th of October (Romania), local authorities, experts, service providers, researchers and other relevant stakeholders from both the “new” and the “old” Europe were invited to contribute to a seminar on community based settings and person centred services. Poster sessions were organized to exchange models of good practice on service development and to promote transnational cooperation amongst the service providers present.

As a follow up of these enlargement events, EASPD wishes to launch its “Târgu-Mures Call for Action” with observations, findings, recommendations and specific proposals for the future. The “Târgu-Mures Call for Action” was adopted by all EASPD members on October 8th 2005, during the Board meeting in Târgu-Mures, Romania.

An analysis of the existing situation in Eastern, Central and South-East European countries in the three above events has made clear that all participant countries experience a series of similar problems. EASPD with its collective expertise in service provision has decided to focus its proposal solely on service and support related issues.

In order to tackle all these problems, **more action at national and European level is needed:**

1. Legislation

Recommendation

A coherent and efficient legal framework to support:

- *The development of a service provision sector in all EEC/SEEC countries;*
- *The development of NGOs & their activities as service providers*

should be adopted by national authorities. Governments should ensure that this legal framework is enforced and in concordance with existing *EU legislation, the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan and the forthcoming UN legally binding instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.*

Special attention should be paid as well to the development of a legal framework for the protection of/and equal opportunities for children with disabilities, people with severe and profound disabilities, Roma people with disabilities and ageing people.

Call for action

EU level: 1) The EU should review the effectiveness of its current legislation and requirements in so far as they impact upon the provision of support for social services within member states and in doing so should focus in particular on how EU requirements impact upon support for people with disabilities;

National level: 1) National authorities should adopt legislation aiming at delivering high quality services for persons with disabilities;
2) National authorities should adopt legislation facilitating the development of service provision across a diverse range of providers offering genuine choice and user involvement;
3) National authorities should ensure the setting-up of a monitoring system on the implementation and the effectiveness of their proposals.

2. Quality Assurance

Recommendation

The CoE, EU, national authorities and providers should **ensure that all services provided meet acceptable quality levels by adopting a set of outcome-based quality principles** for service development including user involvement. Instruments for monitoring systems should be developed and implemented at the same time.

Call for action

EU level: 1) *DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities* should organise an interactive platform where stakeholders could meet to discuss how effective QA systems can be implemented;

National level: 1) National authorities should integrate into their legislation systems of quality assurance and quality control, supported by an effective accreditation system and licensing;

Service providers & NGOs: 1) Should implement these quality principles in their own services and actions, taking into account the requirements and conditions of each region.

3. Social inclusion and the availability of services

Recommendation

Policy development in the EU cannot take place without a clear understanding of the level and nature of social need in each member state, as **needs assessment is crucial for policy development**.

EASPD suggests that a minimum data set of social needs is to be collected in each member state, built on a common approach and agreed on a European level.

Call for action

EU level: 1) *DG Research* should facilitate the collection of comparable data in relation to the availability of services in order to get to a common European approach;
2) Comparable data in relation to the availability of services for people with severe and multiple disabilities are a priority;

National & Regional level: 1) National authorities should incorporate in the National Action Plans (NAPs) a “needs assessment instrument”: National Minimum Social Need Data Set in a format to be agreed between all stakeholders;
2) National authorities should implement this National Minimum Social Need Data Set;
3) Local authorities should include in the Local Action Plans (LAPs) a priority list on service development agreed between stakeholders – so that services become more available to persons with disabilities;

- 4) NAPs and LAPs should focus on the situation of people with severe and multiple disabilities and children with disabilities.

4. Employment

Recommendation

In the field of employment, national authorities should **develop a set of binding support measures to help people with disabilities to both find and keep a job** (Accessibility and Availability of jobs).

Employment is the lever for social inclusion in Europe (cfr. the Lisbon process), but nevertheless, statistics prove that persons with disabilities have consistently achieved a significantly lower employment rate than the rest of the population.

Call for Action

EU level:

- 1) *DG Competition* should recognize the needs and concerns of sheltered workplaces and supported employment agencies in Europe, when drafting a new State Aid Regulation;
- 2) In its employment guidelines, the European Commission should include a demand for national authorities to acknowledge the existence of the financial obstacles to employment of people with disabilities (often called the benefit trap) and to search for solutions;

National level:

- 1) National authorities should launch outcome based research work on the benefit trap;
- 2) National authorities should develop supported employment strategies;
- 3) Member states and candidate countries should ensure a correct implementation of the current and new State Aid Regulation.

5. Education and Training

Recommendation

Training programmes should be developed and/or made available both by EU and national authorities for both senior management and front line workers on **the management and delivery of good quality social services and qualitative management**. In relation to education, national authorities and EU should **implement the Salamanca Declaration on special needs education and the right to education for all**.

Call for action

EU level:

1) *DG Education and Culture:*

- * Should as a first step facilitate work towards a Europe wide accepted and agreed Care Licence as a qualification covering all staff new to the care sector, supporting a common set of values, attitudes, knowledge and skills;
- * Should follow up the above proposal with further developments to support transferability of staff and skills across the sector with additional EC wide qualifications in care at higher levels;

- * Should facilitate value based transnational cooperation and exchange of know-how;
- 4) Established programmes could support training exchange for first line staff and top managers from the service provision sector;
- 5) We call upon *the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education* to pay in-depth attention to the right for education for people with multiple disabilities and complex dependency needs in the new member states and candidate countries;
- 6) The EC should monitor the implementation of the Salamanca Declaration;

National level:

- 1) National authorities should incorporate the above-mentioned European Care Licence & integrate its principles in their care and training systems;
- 2) National authorities should adopt National Action Plans for the implementation of the principles of the Salamanca Declaration;
- 3) National authorities should ensure that children with severe disabilities are able to attend appropriate education systems. A monitoring system at national level should be put in place;

Service providers:

- 1) Should recruit well-trained staff and organise value based training, in line with the above mentioned European Care Licence and quality principles.

6. Networking and stakeholder approach

Recommendation

The CoE, EU and national authorities should contribute to the **creation of networks of service providers** and **facilitate networking as tool for capacity building** in Europe.

Call for action

CoE level:

- 1) All stakeholders should be present in all working groups and structures of the CoE and especially in the Committee on the Rehabilitation and Integration of People with Disabilities (CD-P-RR);

EU level:

- 2) The Meetings of the DG Enlargement, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and the High Level Group on Disability should be open for all relevant stakeholders and thematic meetings on EEC should be organised at least twice a year;

National

& regional level:

- 3) National & regional/local authorities should contribute to the instalment of national disability fora in which providers should be involved;

Service providers:

- 4) Should organise themselves in federations and organizations at national/regional level.

7. Governance principles

Recommendation

The adoption in practice of the governance principles – **openness, participation, coherence, accountability, effectiveness** – **introduced in the White Paper on European Governance ‘COM (201) 428 final’** by governmental bodies and structures and non governmental organisations (NGOs) in day to day working methods, is needed for good quality in service delivery and policy implementation.

Call for action

EU level: 1) EU should implement the White Paper on governance in all aspects and identify key networks of all stakeholders in order to consult them on relevant topics;

National level: 1) Independent bodies should monitor the implementation of governance principles in order to fight corruption and lack of competence in all fields and in all European countries.

8. Person centred services and community based settings

Recommendation

The CoE, EU and national authorities should adopt a **European wide framework for establishing community-based settings and person centred services** using a step-by-step methodology and a stakeholder approach.

Call for action

CoE level: 1) Should focus on the development of clear proposals for change agreed between stakeholders;

EU level: 1) EU should focus on research on the mechanisms that might assist in the progressive dismantling of large scale institutional services in exchange for small, locally based services, which empower users and their families;
2) Funding should be made available for supporting the ‘step by step’ de-institutionalisation process;

National level: 1) National authorities should set-up National Action Plans on the development of community-based settings & person centred services;
2) Research should be undertaken on the causes of bottlenecks in setting-up person centred services & community based settings and on the pressures and policies that tend to produce large-scale segregated services in isolated settings;

Service providers: 1) Should commit themselves to making the shift towards person centred services and community based settings, which could be facilitated by the EASPD framework on community-based services and person centred services.

9. Organ and human trafficking

Recommendation

Very often, persons with disabilities are mistreated in the fight for donor organs. **A comprehensive strategy on organ- and human trafficking is needed in Europe.** Blood, and products derived from it, are essential to modern medicine. People with disabilities (as do all other EC citizens) have the absolute right to control the use of their own blood and organs and should never be compelled or tricked into ‘donating’ them to others. Fighting human trafficking is “a moral necessity” and more action at this level is also needed.

Call for Action

EU level:

- 1) The EC should take into account the needs and rights of persons with a disability in the two new directives concerning the quality and safety of blood and blood derivatives;
- 2) The follow-up of the *Commission’s new communication “Fighting trafficking in human beings – an integrated approach and proposals for an action plan”* should focus and take into account the situation of persons with disabilities;
- 3) DG Health should compare the ways in which member states have tackled this issue and seek to spread best practice across all member states.

National level:

- 1) Provider agencies and umbrellas and user groups should report any such trafficking to their national authorities and monitor what happens next. Where effective corrective action does not occur, they should bring the matter to the attention of the EC and EASPD.

10. Equal access to health services for people with disabilities

Recommendation

There is clear evidence that people with disabilities often receive a poorer level of health care support than the general population. EC wide action is needed to alert member states and their citizens on this and effective action needs to be taken to outlaw such behaviour.

Call for Action

EU level:

- 1) **DG Health:** research should be undertaken to discover the extent of this problem and to what extent any member state has been able to take effective action against this tendency;
- 2) The EC should consider the most effective method of banning such actions throughout the EC;

National level:

- 1) Member states should incorporate effective strategies for ensuring that such discrimination does not happen into their health care systems and to monitor the effectiveness of their proposals;

- Provider levels:
- 1) Providers at local and national levels should work with users, their families and support organisations to monitor local practice and to highlight such discrimination whenever it occurs;
 - 2) National authorities should install monitoring systems to make sure people with disabilities have the same rights as anyone else to health services and in particular to donated blood and organs.

11. Funding opportunities

Recommendation

CoE, EC and national governments should coordinate their actions & efforts in order to provide structural funding for service development and implementation of quality principles.

- CoE level:
- 1) Should raise awareness on the need for structural funding (of service providers) and integrate it in the Action Plan on Disability;

- EU level:
- 1) EC to provide more appropriate funds for capacity building for service provision in the disability field through the already existing programmes such as PHARE, CARDS, IPA, Structural Funds and the new programme PROGRESS;

- National level:
- 1) National authorities to provide coherent and sustainable funding covering all costs of the basic services provided, in concordance with the priority list mentioned under *Recommendation 3*.

Adopted by the participants in the 'EASPD goes East' event – Târgu-Mures, 7 October 2005 and by the EASPD Board on 8 October 2005.

EASPD, Târgu-Mures
Romania