

EASPD Members' opinion survey report

EASPD October 2012



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1. Introduction

EASPD strives to be the voice of service providers for persons with disabilities at European level therefore the active communication between the association and its members is vital for our good cooperation and successful work. For this reason in 2012 EASPD Executive Board launched an internal survey amongst the association's members asking for their opinion about the situation in the service provision sector and about the EASPD work.

The survey was completed by Umbrella and Single Agency Member Organisations from the EASPD network. The participants answered open questions from three general areas:

- The situation of service provision for persons with disabilities: concerns and vision for the future
- Evaluation of EASPD work: strengths and weaknesses of the association's structure, activities and collaboration with members
- Recommendations and proposals: suggestions for improvement and development of EASPD work and cooperation with members

Please see the full questionnaire in Annexes I- Questionnaire.

This overview report gives a short summary of the survey's outcomes. To read the detailed report of the survey participants' opinion, recommendations, and proposals please see Annex II- Responses.

The Members' opinion survey report will be used in the discussion of the EASPD strategic plan for the next planning period, during the first meeting of the new Board in Thessaloniki, May 2013.

2. State of the Service Provision for Persons with Disabilities

In their answers the respondents express their concerns and views related to several main topics:

- Education
- Deinstitutionalisation
- Employment
- Finances

The outlined issues are primarily of economic and structural character. In their replies, the survey participants stress on:

- The unsatisfactory level of adequate staff education and training
- The lack of enough services, tailored to the users' specific needs
- The insufficient quality of the care users receive
- The lack of sustainability of the initiatives and activities done in the disability sector

- The lack of sufficient developments and innovation in the sector
- The big difference in the national realities across Europe and the particular difficulties in Eastern European countries

As one reason for these problems, respondents indicate the deficiency of financing, as well as the harmful austerity measures in the sector. Another issue they point out is the lack of understanding of how should be the UNCRPD principles and priorities implemented in practice at structural, legislative and professional levels. The users themselves are still not involved enough in the decision-making for topics related to their needs.

The survey clearly shows that service providers are eager to search for and implement solutions for overcoming the challenges in the sector. They are willing to work together in close collaboration, using EASPD's network and support in order to exchange experience, good practices and achieve sustainable results improving the sector and the quality of life of the users.

3. EASPD Assessment

The surveyed members see EASPD as 'The umbrella organisations of service providers for persons with disabilities' voicing their position at European level. They define the organisation as competent, active and with a focus on lobbying and networking activities. As best characteristics of EASPD they indicate the understanding and positivity in its work and communication, as well as support and partnerships the association is providing to its members.

However the respondents also express concerns related to the efficacy of the achieved end results of EASPD initiatives. Next to its work at European level, the respondents wish the association to acquire deeper knowledge, understanding, and influence at national levels so it can be closer and more beneficial to its members. They show willingness to work actively with EASPD for achieving these objectives.

We asked members what are the main strengths and weaknesses of EASPD. As one of the strongest sides of EASPD, members point out its proximity to the European institution, organisations, experts, and policy decision-makers. Next, respondents put the lobby work and the networking activities of the organisation allowing the development of partnerships and initiatives between actors from various fields in the disability and social sectors across Europe.

When talking about the weaknesses of EASPD, respondents express their desire to have better opportunities to work more closely and actively within the network for finding innovative long-term vision solutions of the particular issues they encounter in their own

countries and work. EASPD should invest further in improvement and development of its structure and sustainability.

The members expect support and flexible solutions for tackling financial issues both in the sector and within the network itself.

4. Recommendations and Proposals

The survey reveals that the association should continue working on voicing ever wider range of stakeholders in the disability sector and through its lobbying, policy, project and events activities to contribute not only to developments at European level but also to the their correct implementation at National level. The members feel that EASPD should further involve organisations of different size and expertise in its work and give concrete ideas how this can be achieved through creating regional representations of the network and online platforms for collaboration and exchange.

5. Conclusion

The EASPD members' opinion review demonstrates that with its work EASPD has gained the trust of its members and, according to them, the respect of the disability sector community at European level. The association possesses expertise and connections that benefit its network.

An important outcome of the survey is the clearly stated desire of EASPD members to benefit at a more practical level from the work of the association and their readiness to contribute actively to its work for achieving this objective.

EASPD needs to work further on innovative and sustainable ways to help not only for meeting of the current challenges but also to improve the disability sector in long-term perspective.

6. Annexes I- Questionnaire

Question	Answer
What are your main concerns with regard to service provision for PWD for the coming years?	
How can EASPD help you achieving your aims and key objectives? What can / should EASPD do?	
What are according to you the main strengths and weaknesses of EASPD? This on 2 levels: in its structure (committees, bodies...) and in its work / activities (conferences, projects, lobbying...)	
Please provide two proposals to improve the network: 1. on the structure 2. on the work done	
How do you see EASPD? What kind of an organization are we?	
Do you see possibilities for a more active cooperation? How? On what?	
Other elements or issues you would like to discuss?	

7. Annex II- Responses

EASPD Members' opinion survey report

EASPD October 2012



1. Introduction

The questionnaire consists only of open questions. All received answers were given in a free text form. For the needs of this summary report some of the replies were additionally linguistically edited and all of them were structured in order to achieve better clarity and to avoid repetitions of statements. The amendments do not alternate the meaning of the replies. All received answers are reflected in this report.

2. State of the Service Provision for Persons with Disabilities

What are your main concerns with regard to service provision for persons with disabilities for the coming years?

Education

➤ **Staff training:**

- Poorly or not educated staff in services
- Changing contexts and education of staff for changing society, new expectations of clients
- Staff training - special training in medical care related to diseases
- Training of staff that are working in big institutions, preparing them for Community Based Services
- How can services learn to support all the important areas of life like social relations, expression, and contribution into society and not just fill basic needs?

➤ **Inclusive education:**

- The applied model of inclusive education does not correspond to the real concept of inclusion
- The situation of inclusive education
- Social intervention, concerning inclusion of persons with disabilities in the education system
- Volunteering (services delivered by volunteers aiming at social inclusion of persons with disabilities)
- Rights for education
- Implementation of general rights for education

Control

- In some countries, like Romania, the public social services system is still predominant and not effective enough
- Bad control from the national inspectorates
- Lack of attention to the clients' opinion, feelings, etc. Major problem in institutions for children
- The emphasis is on the paper work
- The national action plans will not be implemented consequently. So how to control that?

Deinstitutionalization

- Lack of deinstitutionalization of services for adults (EE region)
 - Problems with the DI processes for services for children (EE region)
 - Institutions and institutional culture still exist in Europe
 - Still very strong administrative and bureaucratic presence
 - Insufficient provision for the services provided by external suppliers
 - Lack of pro-activeness of civic organisation
 - Insufficient capacity, coverage and effectiveness of services in the community
 - There is an element of paralysis with some commissioning authorities as they can't see how to meet demands for services. Commissioners continue to fail to see that positive options of person-centred technology as being a positive element of the service mix
- **Needs:**
- Design of housing services-innovative solutions to avoid institutionalization
 - Development of CBS and CBR in the process of de-institutionalization
 - Day centres for seniors – organization, content and expertise
 - Development of good quality community based services which really enable inclusion, citizenship, and community participation. Even if the deinstitutionalization process is going in Finland the services which replace institutional services are not in many cases good enough. We need commitment to human rights perspective and citizenship in all the areas of life
 - Organization of services, how to give persons with disabilities power to influence service provision?

Employment

- How to find and keep a job for a person with intellectual disability at this stage of massive unemployment? What alternatives can we find?
- How to respond to people with intellectual disabilities and other problems such as autism spectrum, severe behaviour and his needs to find and keep a job?

- Work and “normal” living conditions (the FN convention)
- Is it correct to change the good practices regard the training models focused on inclusion in the mainstream labour market to models based on other approaches, like occupational activities and how can we ensure the quality of life for people with disabilities?
- Lack of sheltered and supported employment, especially in EE region
- Supported employment, sheltered occupational services, occupational therapy, training programs
- The German vocational rehabilitation system is challenged to change. The person-centred approach is the right way in combination with the implementation of the UNCRPD. The institution based German system has to change in the direction of community based services and to improve the rights of persons with disabilities

Finances

- Insufficient possibilities for long-term funding of services
- Underfunding of services for PWD system in Romania
- Reduction of the quality of life, accessibility, and citizenship even more
- Influence on the availability and the quality of services
- Pushing down quality of life for persons with disabilities
- Real choices for persons with disabilities are being removed as price options rule the day. Registered Care Homes are back in favour as a cost saving option
- Destruction of all types of services, the old fashioned and the modern ones
- Sustainability of organizations
- Innovative opportunities being side-lined by lack of money and bureaucracy
- Low funding standards in the Eastern European region
- Reduced responsibility of public sector (“promoter and legal incentives” but reduced responsibility; funding not guaranteed)
- Short-term financing of services-‘everything becomes a project’, leads to lack of continuity
- Creation of innovative solutions for self-financing
- Partnership with central and local government regarding the financing of the existing services
- Introduction of Procurement practices which potentially have serious consequences for quality of service provision
- Underfunding due to lack of recognition of certain types of services, such as animal meditation for instance

Trends

- Persons with disabilities are still excluded.

- Technical revolution and empowerment of clients
- Ageing families and people with disabilities - what kind of services we should create?
- Communication and activities in old age that keep people healthy and happy
- Implementation of the UN Convention
- Long lines to get service
- Reduction of available services
- Lack of real social market services
 - **Quality of services:**
 - The private service sector does a lot to develop integrated services and meet the needs of PWD, but still needs more recognitions
 - Poor image and quality of social services
 - Sustainability of the services
 - Individualization: how to manage to provide the “right service”
 - Difficulties in preserving the quality of the social services (related with the financial restrictions, lack of continuity, other)
 - How to Achieve Quality and Excellence of services through innovation in the approach to the processes of inclusion?
 - Services more strictly defined by the local authorities that ever
 - Equalization of the service quality and living conditions between countries and different parts of the country – we must help each other!
 - Increasing specialisation with increasing economic pressure on the organisations
 - Development of services based on the needs of persons with disabilities and not donor driven
 - Governmental support for institutional services-not supportive environment for private service providers
 - Managements: how to build a good system for good managements!
 - The future approach to service provision by service providers! i.e. where we want to be in 10 years’ time and how we got there? (work back from there!)
 - Set out a strategy for continuous evaluation and improvement of service provision
 - **Link between the services:**
 - Development of a network with variety of social services
 - Standardization of services
 - Tighten the social services
 - Knowledge transfer, exchange, and dissemination of development and research. How to make knowledge accessible for staff and persons with disabilities?

3. EASPD Assessment

How do you see EASPD? What kind of an organization are we?

Structure and Role

- THE umbrella organization of service providers, strong voice, professional management
- The change in service providers along the line of the UN-Convention; making service providers acting and not only reacting on the demand
- Coordinator of projects
- Competent, large and active
- Networking organisation
- Association with “traditional” member which are hard to move in terms of innovation
- EASPD is an important organization for all us members, but also for those receiving our services. It gives us a unique opportunity to share best practice and exchange knowledge across borders. EASPD influences policies regarding disability in EU, which is very important. EASPD should be a watchdog and continue the work for better legislation and services in Europe.
- We do not feel much lobby work results, I think EASPD want to be political advocacy organization but it is more like mediator for conferences
- At the moment too dependent of EU constellation, therefore needs more commitment by national members and their unions/associations
- The organization format is pretty good. The most valuable things are positivity, support, understanding, and partnership. This approach and characteristic should be promoted
- EASPD is a good facilitator of European partnerships
- Network with technical secretariat that is collecting and disseminating relevant information

What are according to you the main strengths and weaknesses of EASPD? This on 2 levels: in its structure (committees, bodies...) and in its work / activities (conferences, projects, lobbying...)

Strengths of EASPD

In this point are listed the key strengths of EASPD indicated by the participants in the survey.

Structure

- Active and robust structure
- Size and power of the organisation
- Organisation with a quality network
- Clear governance and division of tasks and responsibilities
- Intervention in the policies at European level
- Headquarters at the centre of the European political power in Brussels.
- Easy access to EASPD bodies and committees
- Good representation of service providers of persons with disabilities from across Europe
- Wide network of different service providers, increasing number of members, good governance within the association on different levels
- Largely representing in Europe multiple organisations

EASPD Staff, Governance, Working groups

- Educated, experienced, flexible and effective team
- Leadership and expertise of the President professionalism of the Vice Presidents
- Very competent Executive Committee and Board members
- Experienced and effective Secretary General
- Members are involved in the management of EASPD through the Board
- Multinational Board
- Good collaboration in the Board
- Good topics of the Standing Committee
- The working groups are positive structures

Work

- Professionalism and Quality
- Good communication
- Good partnership
- Presence in the sector in many areas of work
- Following the trends
- High quality of EASPD products
- Focus on both political and professional development
- EASPD is recognised as a key stakeholder at EU level
- EASPD has the power and legitimacy to participate and speak out in committees, commissions and working groups of the European Commission related to people with disabilities.
- Cross-cutting approach connecting disability with different sectors
- EASPD has proximity to the organs of power in order to influence policies and suggest intervention models and new legislation in the sector
- Close contact and proximity with the European Institutions
- Experience in organisation and participation of interesting international projects
- Contacts with experts
- Contacts with policy-makers
- EASPD provides excellent networking opportunities for its members
- Dissemination expertise
- Representation of service providers for persons with disabilities at key EU disability forums

Activities

- EASPD visits members
- Lobbying, especially with the European Commission
- Projects EASPD participates in are a good way to produce knowledge, inspire members and make a real change for the places that are involved
- Opportunities for collaboration through projects, initiatives and provider forums
- Workshops for staff
- Allows creation of working groups (Standing Committees) and develop interesting and important projects.
- Databank
- Work on the deinstitutionalization topic
- Excellent disseminator of good and innovative practices
- Effective dissemination of information on projects and initiatives
- Direct support in organizing different events according to the needs of the members

- Excellent papers and documents also important for the national and regional lobby work
- Useful information on funding opportunities
- Proven ability to coordinate providers and organize around key issues of common concern

EASPD Events

- High level conferences
- Accurate and focused deliverables from the international conferences
- Good Topics
- Networking opportunities for the participants
- Implementation of international standards through conferences and workshops
- Open, friendly and funny meetings and conferences with leadership that is present and forthcoming
- Learning and information opportunities about developments across Europe

Weaknesses of EASPD

In this point are listed the key weaknesses of EASPD indicated by the participants in the survey.

Structure

- Not clear enough structure
- Decrease of the development of the structure due to financial problems
- Language barriers
- Size (too small)
- Reduced possibilities for meetings due to the economic crises

EASPD Staff, Governance, Working groups

- Dominance of the Secretary General
- Too much knowledge and control being with one person-the Secretary General
- Frequent staff turnover making relationship building difficult
- Limited number of staff, changes of the staff, limited budget
- Election of a new board in September 2012-danger for the continuity if experienced members leave
- The standing committees are not open enough. It can be difficult to be productive and please all when the focus is too wide, as in education that has a lifelong perspective related to both staff training and persons with disabilities. It can be a problem that some people are given too much power to focus only on own interests.

- Some Standing Committees are not well organised

Members

- Distance between EASPD, EASPD governance and members, resulting in insufficient understanding of EASPD of the realities at national level across the membership
- Smaller members are not able to employ a specialised staff member to follow the European developments, therefore the biggest organisations dominate the development of papers
- Structures and standing of members might change
- Small NGOs are not given the chance to be actively involved in the process of DI.
- Insufficient communication between the members in particular between different committees
- It is difficult for someone to participate in more than one committee or interest group.
- The multiplicity of the members create certain barriers for political discussion since the SAMOs often don't take position

Work

- Constant pressure to "chase the cash"
- Topics are too 'Anglo-Saxon'
- "Products"
- No experience for adding value to national policy making
- Lack of results-practical output
- Dominating influence of EU bureaucracy
- Lack of member commitment
- Financially liked to projects, which can affect the lobbying work of the organisation

Conferences and meetings

- Too traditional
- Expensive for the people from the Eastern European region- travel & accommodation
- The plenaries are often too long and not efficient enough.
- The workshops are better as they give the possibility for discussion and participation
- Inconsistency in terms of committee members attending meetings and setting realistic, achievable goals
- Conferences, projects and lobbying should include mainstream stakeholders and partners

- Economic difficulties of organizations affect their participation in events mainly because EASPD organizes events in Central Europe or Eastern Europe, far away from Portugal
- It is financially difficult to take part in conferences, where the individual committees discuss. Therefore we would welcome more interactive sharing of information at a distance
- Conferences are good places for networking but maybe in terms of content we could be more critical and have our goals higher sometimes
- The structure of our conferences is very similar year after year –could there be some other ways to involve participants than workshops which are quite often quite passive? How could we make the conferences active source of information, sharing and learning? There are quite often same speakers speaking, which I understand partly but we should maybe think the objective of each event little bit more. Also, maybe there could be more different events, some conferences but also smaller events on more specialized topics, not so big audience but more sharing and discussion.
- Too many political speakers at conferences sometimes... I do not think it make any change!

Activities

- More information about the content of the lobbying activities and projects
- Projects need more structure
- Involvement of the members. There could be more ways to activate members.
- Standing Committee on employment isn't useful-to discuss topic participation in employment
- Heterogeneity of topics-too many topics are on the agenda which makes it hard to follow them and link them the own work
- Not enough partnership work with manufacturers
- Don't fully understand everything that the EASPD does and how they all link together
- Relevance of policy positions taken at the EU level to the National context (not particularly EASPD's fault but nonetheless a challenge)
- EASPD concentrate on new Europe which is commendable, but in a sense forgetting the old Europe which needs to re-invent, re-focus itself in terms of service provision
- EASPD seems to have difficulties in understanding the different realities in Europe and the differences between different countries cultures - This takes some difficulties in understanding the concepts and terminology used in totally different situations in different countries (e.g. Protected Employment, Supported Employment)

- The attractiveness for new members is still very low and there's poor reputation of the work done by EASPD and of its importance in Europe. (This involves a significant gap of awareness and knowledge on Italian persons with disabilities, of being part of a reality as rich and great as that European, therefore to be carriers of a first-person change.)

Other elements or issues you would like to discuss?

- Very important topics EASPD should continue focusing on: the Disability Strategy; the next structural funds cycle and UN convention of social services of general interest
- The language barrier is an obstacle to make EASPD more popular
- Small NGOs don't have the capacity to translate all information about EASPD work
- Need of more focus on system problems and legislations
- It is important for EASPD to allow members to exchange good practises and to develop its network and alliances with other European organisations
- Continuous EASPD workshop during conferences-discussion on topics, work, structure, opportunities for open and free discussions
- Creation of regional forum of service providers with IPA support that will be part of EASPD and organization of at least one thematic conference per year in Southeast Europe region that will bring together service providers from SEE and EU in one table to discuss challenges and achieves in the services sector during transition towards EU.
- Fee: some organisations don't have any resource for paying membership fee
- The work of EASPD with members from separate state about the partnership and interaction of EASPD members within the respective country.
- Status of the umbrella organisation members in their respective countries, their connection with EASPD and the support they could receive.
- To develop partnership cooperation between members in the future EASPD
- activities through developing facilities, both member and EASPD facilities, and a possibility of pooling resources to invest in equipment
- EASPD statements could sometimes enter EDF's 'territory' which holds a threat of slowing the cooperation between the two lobbies
- In terms of funding EASPD should be less dependent on project funding in order to be more efficient in its political lobbying

4. Recommendations and Proposals

**Do you see possibilities for a more active cooperation with EASPD?
How? On what?**

- Lobbying on EU level and support national lobby initiatives.
- Think-tank organization focusing on service provision for persons with disabilities
- Establishing deeper commitment of national members and their unions
- Platform for exchange
- Platform for lobbying
- Platform and Knowledge Centre on funding for international projects
- Develop clear communication of roles and tasks in partnerships: in Interest groups, Standing Committees; Members Agreements-written descriptions
- Efficiency of in-group communication-active and written communication
- Continuing the existing good collaboration on projects and initiatives
- Joint development of resources, trainings, initiatives between EASPD and member organisations
- Creating internet portal: staff training and information across Europe.
- Creating Pan-European care and Service standards. A way to organize and achieve this through joint training
- Intensive collaboration with countries that are in transition towards EU.
 - Taking advantage of the on-going in these countries process of legislation changes.
 - Working together on development of different types of community based services and rehabilitation.
 - Working on improving the relevant education of staff in these countries
- Intensive collaboration in projects. For many countries this is the only way to support their work and development.
- Working for practical outputs and results
- Special Central & Eastern Europe group
- Research of relevant topics-collaboration between EASPD and members
 - Access to services
 - Variety of services
 - Quality
 - Financing

How can EASPD help you in achieving your aims and key objectives?

Lobbying

- Focus on lobbying European institutions such as the EC and representatives
- Active lobbying for the new 2014-2020 funding cycle in terms of social services funding
- Increase lobby activities, with focus on human rights approaches in EEC
- Much more proactive in lobbying EU commissioners and MEPs- try to raise the question of how service providers can help EU achieve its aims.
- Provide the lead for discussion and debate on concepts for the future of service provision. Provide and facilitate EU forum to facilitate this future of service provision debate.
- EASPD should develop their OWN document involving the main demands of the service providers for persons with disabilities, to politicians in Europe.
- Continue to bid for funding for projects.
- Impact assessments of the budgetary cuts at both the National and European levels. Organise a coherent lobby of MEPs to highlight the negative impacts and to secure a degree of protection at the National and European levels.
- Support fund-raising in European level
- To give members and persons with disabilities a voice - there is so much knowledge they have to share as well as researchers. (Less of "political peak" - it's not the way to go in order to bring about changes. Changes must be made by the involvement and participation!)
- EASPD should do regular diagnostics on the concerns of its members by establishing action plans at the national level, with their associates in each country because the realities are very different from country to country. Thus EASPD can carry out its function of lobbying in the European Union with a correct vision of global reality.
- Being a vehicle for wider and effective communication in order to raise awareness and more directly to methodologies and best practices implemented by members of EASPD to several European countries that have similar or identical goals.
- Raising awareness
- Networking
- Pressure group (lobbying) at political level to defend the rights and quality of life of people with disabilities: it must still defend a culture of inclusion across Europe

Information

- EASPD can provide information of best practices in the sector and about EU policy
- Gathering of concrete data on :
 - What countries pay for persons with disabilities
 - European best practices in community based services
- Organisation of study visits
- The source of know-how from wider point of view across Europe
- Support exchange of knowledge, experience and good practices
- Regular bulletin
- EU policy which is an important area of work might be a little distant and difficult to absorb for many members. Therefore it could be an idea to prepare once every six months an almost easy to read document about what is going on in EU level and what are the main topics that EASPD headquarters is working on at the moment.
- EASPD should be the promoter of knowledge and development of this area
- Bring together members sharing similar goals
- Closing working with other European organizations is the way forward as that lends weight at EU level.
- Support networking between organisations
- Organize meetings for gathering, discussions, knowledge transfer/exchange
- Conferences, seminars with European experts
- Exchange of experiences / know how with other members, joint projects
- Sharing best practices

Projects

- The role of EASPD for meeting our targets can be seen as a project partner
- Help with applications and organizing of projects
- Direct support of the initiatives
- I think that project development is a very important area of the work. I think is important that EASPD is not only policy maker, source of information and distributor of good practices but also developer of good practices. A lot of projects and a lot of preparatory work are done. However I think this would benefit from little bit more structural way of working. There should be expertise on different topics which is growing and especially support available for application procedures. Then actually running the project could happen in somewhere else. Anyway this area could maybe be discussed and developed further as it is important.

Other

- Help with the official recognition of the ‘early intervention’ as a separate service and not as part of something different. This is the start of being engaged to support the people with disability.
- To break down the language barrier. Despite the efforts in trying to overcome these barriers, with our economic and organizational resources, we now were able to overcome them. Breaking down the barrier linguist, would be an effective treatment that could make it the leading Italian company of persons with disabilities and an opportunity to reduce the gap between the country Italy and Europe.
- Research
- Training at distance = e- learning
- Support financially some experts to visit some European services and get more experience into the field
- Encourage cooperation among members at national level

Please provide two proposals to improve the network

Structure

- More efficient and effective structure
- Improve the role of the Board in the decision making process
- Change in the election process
- Clear distribution of responsibilities for certain topics among persons (special interest groups)
- Creation of a national committee, involving the members in joint actions. The national committees may perform activities in all member countries, widening participation and enabling greater knowledge among peers
- Regional representatives of EASPD facilitating the contacts with national umbrella organisations
- More active communication between standing committees on common issues. Development of special expertise in the team should be supported.
- It is financially difficult to take part in conferences, where the individual committees discuss. Therefore we would welcome more interactive sharing of information at a distance (e.g. teleconferences)
- Create a body of experts working on different topics, such as quality of life, funding and other. The body would concretely help members organisations to solve problems or to take position
- Develop in EASPD a group of trainers, which could be involved in the training of staff working in services with persons with disabilities

EASPD staff

- Less distance between secretary general and other staff in terms of authority
- More permanent staff that has more freedom to develop and sustain EASPD, the threat is continuity and spread of skills is lacking.
- Public meeting of Board and Executive Committee
- To employ officers who are immersed in the EU machine.
- Better coordination of the work of the Standing Committees- plan for the next years
- Need someone with time and resources to make the links and effort to bring fruition

Members

- Increase of resources for activities in member countries and the members' commitment to the work of EASPD
- Find a way for members to participate in more than one Committees or Interest groups
- Creation of national groups. Nomination of a representative of organizations of each country in the organs of management.
- More 'ownership' of the members through more involvement and responsibilities. Let the members work in groups before the GA in order to elaborate on their opinions, solutions, or proposals especially in relation to "Action plan" and "Long term strategic decisions". Also politicians and scientists can be invited to participate in this "preparatory discussion groups"!
- Constriction of members
- Be more active to involve members in EASPD that have special expertise in some areas to organize projects – roundtable conferences etc. and to help others that asks EASPD for help or for speakers.
- Greater contact with member organizations. EASPD's Board should visit its members to a deeper understanding of their realities.
- More active involvement of members. The way members are discussed at the moment is quite often as source of money. There should be more discussion about the ways and possibilities for members to contribute. The strength of EASPD are the members and large network –altogether we should investigate ways how members could work in many ways in this network and all of us could give our contribution in a way suitable for each organization
- EASPD can stimulate its members for more active cooperation by trying to widen the circle of support and member services. Support through development of projects by members or groups of members, lobbying for development and funding of members, direct involvement in problem solving, as an independent external institution.

Network

- To involve new service providers in the work of EASPD, to refresh the work/structure of the committees, often communication between members of the committees using Skype
- Consideration of establishment of regional bodies and agencies in certain European regions that would serve for expanding EASPD's influence
- Consideration of establishing leading organisation, representing EASPD in each country. The leading organisation will actively work on the issues of the respective

country with relevant organisations, institutions and other EASPD members. The leading organisation will be the connection of EASPD and the respective country

- Establishment of partnerships with local and state authorities in different countries at the EU level
- Work on collaboration between the public and private sectors
- Collaboration with organisations for people with disabilities on national and European levels-creation of new informal partnership structures
- More power to persons with disabilities who can communicate their own situation, but also participate in EASPD project as experts in “own lives”.
- To involve smaller NGOs in EASPD’s work
- To improve connections with national unions of NGOs
- To establish partnerships with local and state authorities in the EASPD member countries at EU level
- To develop a functioning network in Bulgaria and to motivate more NGOs to become member of EASPD (this will/can happen only if people see real chance to be involved in changes in the social sphere)
- Keep working on enlargement of the network.
- Create special partnership with EDF

Events

- The conferences structure should be evaluated and discussed
- Continue to have conferences in different places because that can be useful to recruit more members, and, to a greater degree, of for visiting each member state to encourage more members and the establishment of small national groups to get a closer local connection with the European network. Some people are not so good in English language and maybe they feel safer to participate when they go to conferences together with other from their own country. It could be one contact in each country that had the responsibility to run a national network and spread information to recruit new members. This person could be on EASPD’s webpage so potential members could contact some from their own country to get information about EASPD.
- Conference structure’s improvement- currently it’s too traditional. It should be evaluated and discussed
- More favourable conditions for Eastern European participants for travel and accommodation during conferences
- Increase the qualities of panel meetings at conferences. Use people who are used to take care of processes in a group as chair in panel meetings – it’s important that people don't feel that they just have been on another lecture - with one way communication
- Realization of thematic or regional forums, as well as conferences

- Support for the organisations to participate in forums and conferences

Information and dissemination

- More working groups and task forces
- More information about running projects and task forces
- More information about best practices to improve the learning opportunities of each organisation
- Dissemination through multimedia about the member organizations for mutual understanding and social marketing.
- Improve channels for knowledge exchange and support for funding opportunities
- Communicate knowledge in an easy way and get the members involved – the newsletters!! - Ask and give help to more involvements and initiatives from the members to write-make films etc. building up a knowledge bank!
- Place a brief presentation in the newsletter of one or more members EASPD to know the different members to strengthen ties.
- The completion of activities in all countries and the creation of systems and channels of information, communication between member organizations, promoting mutual understanding.
- To invest in translations with the support of member organisations
- The information for the work of the SC and IG to reach all members, not only those involved in the SC and IG
- ‘Country specialised’ monthly newsletters with information about events, achievements, issues, processes, funding opportunities for the specific country

Website

- Website improvements:
 - Presentation of staff and their responsibilities
 - Main topics EASPD works on for the current year-presentation on Home page
- Better description of EASPD structure
- Online learning materials to be elaborated
- To organise a data base with materials produced by members plus contact information
- Development of a data base with EASPD members who want to popularize their know how products (manuals, training programmes, research data, policy making analyses, other) with short description of these products and contact information
 - such data base will facilitate the partnership contacts and further common projects and activities

Projects

- Organization in the area of innovations should be thought through: what kind of role and support EASPD wants to have in this area and how this could be developed. The planning of the projects is at the moment a little incoherent. There is not so much investing in this area and yet it is a very important reason for many organisations to be a member
- More initiatives for twining, joint projects, promotion of EASPD activities on national level by the members and vice versa.
- To involve members as partners in projects
- More participation in mobility projects facilitating network and contact between members

Other

- Creation of a platform on “participation in employment in an inclusive European society” in Europe on a regular meeting basis (every 2 month) with separate workshops
- Foundation of a platform for new project ideas and partners
- Building a platform with European legislation and results of projects carried out by members for sharing knowledge
- Virtual help desk, where we can talk online for external relations to exchange, for example, news about: to anticipate useful future newsletters, or invitations available to us, or potential partners for future projects, or training opportunities funded by staff, or signalling incentives, such as travel or accommodation affordable rates, to entice you to attend the seminars
- EASPD may organise a conference in Brussels on social system reforms in former communist states with participation of MEPs, EC, national representatives and other
- Research function to be developed- specifically in the area of demographics, increased longevity, changing needs etc. And the challenges which this presents to providers across Europe. Also if time allowed for dedicated time to be made to showcase examples of good practice at General Assemblies particularly where difficult challenges common to all have been overcome.
- Establish open days to support members to submit applications for funding in Europe, sending the same by streaming in order to make them available to a wider audience, or do the tutorial in the same area.
- More focused approach to EU/ES grants.
- Continuation of working out the differences of national regulations and cultural frameworks in all areas of service provision
- Provision of financial resources allocated by EASPD through financial competition among members. An opportunity for exploring and providing financial resources would really develop the current situation, allocated by EASPD through financial

competition among members related to your questions and topics about the service capacity, professionalism, expansion, quality of services etc. within EASPD.)

- Workshops on Staff training
- More lobbying on regional level
- Add technological components, for instance video instruments

This report was compiled by Ms Stefana Cankova, based on interviews with EASPD members conducted by the Executive Committee members:

Mr Franz Wolmayr- President

Ms Carmen Duarte- Vice-President

Mr Fabrizio Fea- Vice-President

Mr Phil Madden- Vice-President

Ms Bernadette Grosyeux- Treasurer

Mr Luk Zelderloo- Secretary General

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