



Workability Europe e-bulletin

December 2007

Championing the right to work of Europeans with disabilities

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EDITORIAL

Dear Members of Workability Europe,

We are pleased to issue the year end edition of our internal e-bulletin. In this Editorial, we bring to you some news from the last months and look ahead to our work in 2008. As usual, you will find more information elsewhere in this e-bulletin and on our website or alternatively you may wish to contact us direct.

I begin by sharing with you the good news received from the European Commission that our application for **Structural Funding** under the PROGRESS programme has been successful. Structural (Core) funding will allow us to implement our Strategic Plan 2007-2010 by supporting the activities of our network. In this respect, we have just signed a Framework Partnership Agreement with the Commission for the period 2008-2010. On the basis of this Agreement we are currently submitting a detailed Work Programme and budget for 2008 in order to obtain an annual operating grant. The budget for the three year grant is yet to be finalised and the work plan approved by the Commission.

The PROGRESS grant will give a boost to the activities of our network and will allow us to support the participation of members in meetings and events. Of course, receiving this type of funding is important not just in financial terms but equally importantly represents recognition of the fact that Workability Europe is an active and relevant player in the disability field.

During the last two months we were very busy participating in various high-profile Conferences and events. WE staff and members attended the European Day of Disabled People, the Social Platform's Annual

Conference and a Conference on Women and Disability. In December, WE participated in a Networking Visit to Slovakia organised by the Social Platform – an activity which will hopefully help us to attract a new member in this country. Attending these forums is indeed time-consuming but important in order to obtain inside information, to make our voice heard, to enhance our visibility and to create new contacts.

In December, we were also visited in the secretariat by a small delegation from Poland who had come on a Study Visit to Brussels. The Visit was organised by our member Integracja for journalists who were winners of a national Contest known as Open Eyes. This Contest promotes positive imaging of disability in the Polish media.

In recent weeks, our President Hans Vrind and I visited EHLABE in San Sebastian to commence early preparations for the WE Annual Conference 2008 taking place from 20 to 23 May. While in Spain, we agreed with the host that the event next year would embrace the theme of Innovation, visited the excellent Conference facilities and coordinated various practical details. The Invitation letter has been issued to you and further practical details will be made available early next year. Please reserve these dates in your diaries/agendas and we look forward to see you there in good numbers!

Some news from the last **Board meeting** in Warsaw, hosted by EKON: The Board formally approved the application of two organisations for full membership in WE – *IS.FOR.D.D.-A.N.M.I.C. (Learning Institute for Disabled and Socially Excluded Persons - National Association of Disabled Persons)* from Italy – a new country for the network – and *The Three Anchors Foundation* based in Suriname and associated via the Netherlands. During the visit to Warsaw, we organised a special side meeting with our several Polish members. The meeting helped us to understand better their pertinent issues and to suggest ways how WE can respond better to their needs. Marek Lukomski has volunteered to act as the link between Workability Europe and our members in Poland; this kind offer was gratefully accepted by the Board.

Finally, we have commenced two **new projects**. First, at the end of October, an International Mission composed of several of our members visited the South American country of Suriname to commence the beginnings of a large and ambitious transnational project entitled *Challenge 4 All* and supported by Workability Europe members and experts. Second, a new EU-funded Leonardo project on Mentoring with our participation kicked-off in Bulgaria at the end of November. Meanwhile, our Matra project in Turkey is progressing. Hans Vrind was in the country a few weeks ago to deliver a keynote presentation on WE activities, disability policies and best practices. Next year, the City of Denizli in Turkey (the location of the project activities) is expected to be formally admitted as an associate member of WE and thus further expand the geographical scope of our network.

Looking towards 2008, it promises to be a busy and hopefully a fruitful one for our organisation. We will be active on all fronts – organising events, implementing projects, servicing the members and striving to be an influential voice in promoting the interests of service providers and employers of people with disabilities on a pan-European level. Therefore, it is important we plan our activities carefully and be backed with adequate resources in order to ensure that we are not overstretched in our efforts and that we continue to maintain a high degree of quality in our work.

In this context, your continued participation and contribution will be especially key in sharing future success. After all, as we always stress, the substantial expertise and resources lie in our membership base and not in the secretariat. This is the central pillar in our “member-driven” approach that makes us special as a European network and we must strive to exploit it to mutual benefit and in the interest of those most disadvantaged people in society whom we serve!

I wish all of you and your families a peaceful Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

Bertie Hunt
General Secretary

NEWS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

✚ Workability Europe represented at Conference on the Rights of Women with Disabilities (16 – 18 November 2007)

Monika Baraniewska from EKON, Poland participated on behalf of Workability Europe in the Conference entitled ***Recognising the Rights of Girls and Women with Disabilities - an Added Value for Tomorrow's Society*** and co-organised by the Spanish Committee of Representatives of People with Disabilities (CERMI), the European Disability Forum (EDF) and WE member ONCE Foundation between **16 – 18 November 2007 in Madrid**.

Monika Baraniewska said: "The Conference was really interesting. There were about 150 delegates, mostly women. I took part in the parallel Workshop on *Developing tools to include girls and women's perspective in policy work*. At the Workshop we developed a number of recommendations to improve the situation of people with disabilities." The recommendations are available upon request from the secretariat.

The Conference issued a Declaration which is available on the WE website at <http://www.workability-europe.org/index.php?page=news-2&hl=en>

✚ Workability Europe attends at Social Platform Annual Conference 2007 (26 November 2007)

Bertie Hunt and Martin Ohridski represented WE in this year's Social Platform Conference ***Social NGOs getting ready for the post Lisbon: From 'growth and jobs' to 'sustainable and social'*** that took place on **26 November 2007 in Brussels**.

Over 100 European social activists met at the event to discuss the EU priorities after 2010, deadline of the so-called Lisbon Agenda. With experts and decision-makers they discussed the social and demographic changes facing the European Union in the coming years. Taking stock of today's social reality, the Social Platform presented ***key findings and interpretation for the 2010-2020 EU priorities' agenda***. This paper is available at http://cms.horus.be/files/99907/MediaArchive/Policies/Demographic_change/2007%2011%20Social%20Platform%20Orientation%20paper%20on%20demographic%20and%20social%20changes.pdf

Delegates in the Conference exchanged ideas on a renewed vision for the EU that is shaped by a model of development, based on solidarity, social justice and sustainability.

✚ Workability Europe attends European Day of Disabled People (5 – 6 December 2007)

Hans Vrind, Leo Kooyman, Bertie Hunt and Martin Ohridski represented WE in this year's **European Day of Disabled People** organised on the topic of ***People with disabilities: Active players in the Internal Market***, on **5 and 6 December 2007 in Brussels**. During two days, experts from all over Europe analysed the gaps and proposed solutions to allow disabled people's participation in EU Internal Market.

The European internal market rules aim to facilitate the mobility of workers, goods and services within the European boundaries. If these rules have as main objective to develop the competitiveness of Europe's economy, they are also part of EU main principles and rights to be applied to all citizens.

In his written speech, Vladimír Spidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities states: "The rights of disabled people to an independent life are at the heart of the internal market. All people with disabilities should be able to move freely while keeping their rights as regards social welfare, they should be able to make their own choices as consumers and therefore, have access to quality goods and services at the best practice".

- All documents related to this Conference can be downloaded from the European Commission website:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/events/event_en.cfm?id=1005

- Download the European Commission Communication: "Situation of Disabled People in the EU: the European Action Plan 2008-2009" (November 2007):

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/events/2007/eddp/com_2007_0738_en.pdf

- EC Communication "A single market for 21st century Europe":

http://ec.europa.eu/citizens_agenda/docs/com_2007_0724_en.pdf

Workability Europe takes part in Social Platform Networking Visit to Slovakia (12 – 14 December 2007)

Between 12 and 14 December 2007 Workability Europe participated in the annual Social Platform **Networking Visit to Slovakia** together with 12 other European Social NGOs members of the Social Platform. The main **aims** of the Visit were to exchange experiences between European and Slovak NGOs; to discuss and debate issues of common interest; to raise awareness about European social policies among NGOs and to provide members of the Social Platform a basis for future cooperation with local NGOs.

The Visit was organised in the form of a Conference, with parallel workshops and bilateral meetings in the margins. The event generated great interest among Slovak Social NGOs attracting over 50 participants working with various target groups in the social field who engaged in fruitful dialogue with their counterparts from the European NGOs.

Martin Ohridski, Public Affairs Officer, represented Workability Europe and chaired one of the parallel workshops on *Promoting Quality Social Services*.

The contact made will be explored further in the coming months hopefully resulting in a new member for WE in Slovakia.

Two new members join Workability Europe

At its last Board meeting in November in Warsaw, the WE Board approved the applications for full membership of two organisations:

- **IS.FOR.D.D. – A.N.M.I.C. (Learning Institute for Disabled and Socially Excluded Persons - National Association of Disabled Persons)** from Italy - a new country for the network - and
- **The Three Anchors Foundation** based in Suriname and associated via the Netherlands

For more information on the two organisations including their contact details please visit:

<http://www.workability-europe.org/uploads/Members%20description.pdf>

UPCOMING EVENTS*

🚩 Workability Europe organises Training Seminar on Aging & Disability (14 February 2008)

In response to the strategic priorities and demands of our members we co organise with EPR a one-day Training Seminar on the theme of **Ageing & Disability**. The Seminar will take place on **14 February 2008 in Brussels**.

The event will be of interest to rehabilitation service providers and employers of people with disabilities who are looking to acquire new insights into the phenomenon of **“Ageing Workforce.”** The aim is to deliver practical training on how to develop innovative solutions and practices for two sets of different target groups but with similar needs: ageing people developing vocational disabilities and disabled employees getting older.

Key elements in the Programme include:

- Older workers – issues in job retention and recruitment
- Analysis of strategic options in service delivery
- Successful work integration approaches
- Development of new services
- Opportunity for exchange and networking

To download the detailed Seminar Programme and the Registration form, please visit <http://www.workability-europe.org/index.php?page=events-2&hl=en>

Deadline for registration is **18 January 2008**.

Please do not hesitate to contact Martin Ohrdski in the secretariat by email at publicaffairs@workability-europe.org or by phone at +32 2 235 66 64 should require more information about this activity.

We look forward to your participation.

🚩 Workability Europe Annual Conference (20 – 23 May 2008)

Mark you agendas early!

The Workability Europe Annual Conference 2008 will take place between **20 and 23 May in the Basque region of Northern Spain, in the City of San Sebastian**. The theme of next year is “Innovation” and the event will bring together WE members and sectoral stakeholders to debate the implications of major challenges such as globalisation, competition and employment of disabled people and how service providers can develop effective responses and stay at the forefront of modernisation.

As usual the We Board of Directors, WEB BV, AGM and Development Groups meeting will be linked to the Annual Conference.

More information about the Programme as well as practical details will be available early next year.

* Includes WE events outside the framework of specific Development Group meetings.

PROJECTS

Validating Mentoring 2

In November 2007, Workability Europe plus five international partners commenced a new project entitled **Validating Mentoring 2**. The project is led by Marie Curie Association of Plovdiv, Bulgaria. It is funded by the Leonardo da Vinci programme of the European Commission and will run for 24 months. The other project partners are the Belgium-based consultancy PhoenixKM, Bolu Guidance and Research Centre from Turkey, Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce and the University of Worcester in the UK. The **aim** of Validating Mentoring 2 is to support the needs of disabled people and others disadvantaged in the job market by developing systems for the recognition of their non-formal and informal learning. This is particularly important for a group that, compared to its peers, lacks formal qualifications with the consequent effects upon their employability. It will do this by establishing new mentoring programmes in 3 countries for **target groups** including disabled people, older people and young people at risk and it will transfer to them the principles and practices of effective, high quality, mentoring and validation, based on the Code of Practice for Mentoring developed the first Validation of Mentoring project.

The **main role of Workability Europe** in this project will be to contribute to valorisation activities and to manage a National Steering Group. It is also WE's idea to test the products and approaches developed in the project in interested WE members.

We will keep you updated on the project progress. Meanwhile, for more information we invite you to visit the project website - <http://www.vm2-project.eu/> or to contact Martin Ohridski at publicaffairs@workability-europe.org

“Challenge 4 all”: Sheltered employment and rehabilitation in Suriname

In October 2007, Workability Europe and partners started a large, multi-dimensional project in the Republic of Suriname in South America. The main **objective** of the project is strengthening the social infrastructure and improving the opportunities for disadvantaged people in Suriname. The project tries to achieve this by starting up new activities and combining a large number of existing initiatives. Specific project **aims** include obtaining statistics on the target group and building up client records; designing accessible transport facilities for disabled people; creating facilities for care and rehabilitation of drug addicts; promoting progressive sheltered employment models as an opportunity for human development; improvement of vocational training courses; development of activities and services to improve the urban (living) environment and increase its attraction to tourists and strengthening Dutch-Surinamese bilateral cooperation.

In order to embed a structural approach in Surinamese society, the **project activities** will be undertaken through the formation of “**The Three Anchors Foundation.**” “Three” refers to the various areas of activity: 1. (Re)integration; 2. Sheltered employment; 3. Education. It also refers to 1. Creating the right conditions; 2. Training and up-skilling; 3. A focus on permanent employment. The activities to create the right conditions can also be subdivided into: 1. Client registration; 2. Transport and 3. Social Park.

In November 2007, The Three Anchors Foundation joined Workability Europe as a full member.

A number of **phases** must be completed in order to achieve the project goals within four years: Presentation and official launch of the project; Fact-finding and trial projects; More detailed definition of the project; Build-up; Realisation; Transfer; Supervision; Evaluation and reporting.

The **official launch** of the project took place at a Conference organised in Paramaribo, the capital of Suriname, on 25 October 2007. The event presented the project and experienced specialists from the WE secretariat and members Shaw Trust, Salo Holding, Cedris and Amfors shared examples of best practices from their countries. Many high-level Ministerial officials attended the Conference. A Declaration of Paramaribo was issued too. During their stay in the South American country, the delegation from Europe had the opportunity to visit local services and to acquaint itself with the practical problems facing disabled people in this developing part of the world.

The project will be implemented by a wide **partnership** brining together Dutch and Surinamese experts. Leading players on the European/Dutch side include Workability Europe, Interconnect consultancy, Pantar,

the sheltered employment organisation of Amsterdam municipal authority, relevant ministries and public authorities plus several research bodies. Partners on the Surinamese side include Three Anchors Foundation, Suriname Trade and Industry Association, relevant Ministries and Chambers of Commerce and Industry plus several other foundations, schools and hospitals.

Funding for the project is expected to come from sources such as bilateral cooperation funds of ministries, municipal authorities, commercial companies, existing general schemes or subsidies, EU funds, private funds aimed at development cooperation and corporate investments in social development, construction industry, oil industry, transport companies, tourism sector, etc

More news about the project will be forthcoming in the months ahead. Meanwhile, for more information you can contact Leo Kooyman at lkooyman@cedris.nl or Robert Adrichem at r.adrichem@ic-net.nl

NEWS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT GROUPS

Network Development Group

The Network Development Group held a coordination meeting on 4 December 2007 in Brussels. The meeting's main objective was to agree and priorities lobbying and communication actions for next year in light of structural funding WE expects to receive under the PROGRESS Programme. The Co-Chairs, the President and the General Secretary also discussed matters related to strengthening the coordination between the different Development Groups and how to stimulate the participation of WE members in their work.

At the meeting, Martin Ohridski took the opportunity to show the new WE website to the participants and to get their feedback.

The **next meeting** of the Network Development Group will take place on **1 April 2008** in Paris, hosted by FEGAPEI.

> For more information contact the Co-Chairs Tim Papé sandy.evans@shaw-trust.org.uk or François Kuentz fegapei.kuentz@wanadoo.fr

Services Development Group

Following a very successful meeting in Stockholm in September 2007, the Services Development Group Co-Chairs met in November 2007 in Warsaw with Marek Lukomski from EKON. We have agreed to organise the following two meetings of the Services Development Group according to this outline agenda:

> 10 & 11 January 2008, Warsaw, Poland

- **Thursday, 10 January 2008**

In the morning, presentations on Workability Europe as well as UK and German funding and organisations will be delivered to Polish officials responsible for integration of people with disabilities in the labour market, NGO's and local government in order to allow our Polish colleagues to understand the various alternatives available to them for promoting the employment of disabled people in Poland.

In the afternoon, discussion and working group on State Aid and related lobbying actions will take place.

- **Friday, 11 January 2008**

In the morning, a visit to EKON services is scheduled. Discussion of the current Polish system and the lessons learnt from the presentations the day before will be summarised. Following this, the participants will split into groups to prepare the forthcoming 2008 Seminars in May 2008 on Transition and Public Procurement.

Our hosts, EKON, will arrange accommodation and meeting facilities for us. Please contact directly the secretariat of EKON sekretariat@ekon.org.pl who take care the accommodation for you (we preliminary discussed The Radisson SAS Hotel, Warsaw as a good choice, but EKON can also offer other alternatives).

> May 2008, San Sebastian, Spain

In association with the WE Conference in San Sebastian in May 2008, we will hold two Seminars (2-3 hours each), open to all WE members on the topics of **Transition** and **Public Procurement**. We will also have an additional meeting to discuss other issues and plan future meetings. The exact dates and programme will depend on the final structure of the WE Conference and will be announced later.

Please confirm to Leif Alm direct your participation in the Services Development Group meeting in Warsaw. Of course you are also welcome to come back to us with ideas and questions for the preparation of this meeting as well as about future activities.

Looking forward to hearing from you and meeting you in Warsaw - Leif Alm, Nigel Hopkins and Wolfgang Gruber.

> For more information contact the Co-Chairs Leif Alm leif.alm@samhall.se or Nigel Hopkins nigel.hopkins@remploy.co.uk

NEWS FROM WEB BV

Hardware & Software Purchasing

WEB BV is very pleased to report on progress in the areas of joint Hardware and Software Purchasing. During the last few months a number of WE members have received Microsoft Academic Licence and that process continues. We would like to remind **you** that on the Hardware side we have two running contracts with Hewlett-Packard and Lenovo for "Best buying." Yet, at the moment very few members use these agreements. Therefore, we will be investing more energy in informing our members about existing and planned agreements so that they are aware of all preferential deals WEB BV has in place and how to access them.

Current deals & Innovative concepts

WEB BV has commenced the planning activities which will reduce savings for our members in the areas of Company Cars, Fuel, Office supplies, Equipment for rehabilitation and training and others.

In December 2007 WEB BV in association with Monark-Exercise launched an Electrical Bike which can be used by employees with reduced mobility in our services. Samhall in Sweden will pilot this innovative bike.

We see growing potential in other business areas where WE members can benefit from pan-European partnerships. For instance, WEB BV presented at the Workability International Conference in September 2007 a concept of services for IKEA that could be used by the members. We also see us as a potential supplier for manufacturing and refurbishment products and materials.

The Automotive Concept EABAT is another initiative and we also looking deeper at the WEEE (Waste of Electronic and Electrical Equipment) business possibilities. New areas for discussions include charge card services and sheltered workshop products for security.

In September 2007 WEB BV also signed a contract with Workability Americas to act as their link into the European Market and vice versa.

WEB BV website

A dedicated website for WEB BV will be launched before Christmas at www.webbv.eu The website will be used as a strong promotional and communication tool of the business concepts developed by WEB BV.

Any questions?

If any members have questions regarding agreements, how to apply to obtain access or have other ideas of how we can strengthen our common position by working in partnership, do not hesitate to get in contact with Lars Lindblom, WEB BV's Executive Director at director-web@workability-europe.org

WHAT'S NEW ON THE WEBSITE?

New items posted on www.workability-europe.org since October include:

Publications section:

- WE Public Affairs e-bulletin November 2007
- WE internal e-bulletin November 2007
- WE internal e-bulletin December 2007
- WE Annual Review July 2006 - July 2007

Project section:

- *Validating of Mentoring 2* project
- *Challenge 4 all* project

Events section:

- Training Seminar *Aging & Disability: strategies & services to meet demand* (Programme & Registration form)

Description of members:

- Details of new WE members - *IS.FOR.D.D. – A.N.M.I.C (Italy)* and *The Three Anchors Foundation (Suriname)*

NEWS FROM THE MEMBERS

Personal Budgets: BAG:WfbM researches state of play in different countries

In the anticipation of new legislation on **personal budgets** for people with disabilities in Germany, BAG:WfbM is conducting research about the experience/situation with personal budgets in different countries. BAG:WfbM **requests the help of WE members** to collect this information.

BAG:WfbM is especially interested in experiences of the **Netherlands, the UK and Sweden**, as those are the countries which are often referred to by the German government. Contributions of other countries are equally most welcome. We do not expect any detailed comments, the essential facts should be sufficient.

Please send your contributions **by mid-January 2008** if possible.

For the purpose of comparison, we would appreciate very much if you could briefly **answer the following questions** on your national model of personalised budget:

- Q1: Who started the discussions about direct payments?
- Q2: What were the main arguments pro and con?
- Q3: State of play in your country (national/ regional)
- Q4: For which activities and functions are personalised budgets available?
- Q5: Are there any restrictions regarding for example the total amount of the budget, taxes, guidelines for registration etc.?
- Q6: What are the consequences for service providers?
- Q7: Perspectives for the coming period: percentage of participants, functions, availability

We shall be pleased to disseminate our "European Overview on Personal Budget" to everybody who is interested once we have gathered all the necessary information. Thank you for your cooperation.

In case of any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

Name: Thomas Umsonst or Marie-Cécile Neumann, International relations office
Organisation: Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Werkstätten für behinderte Menschen e. V. (BAG: WfbM)
Address: Sonnemannstraße 5, 60314 Frankfurt a. M., Germany
Email: t.umsonst@bagwfbm.de, m.neumann@bagwfbm.de
Tel: +49 69 94 33 94 18/ -17

Motivation Romania Foundation - Employment Services for people with disabilities

Motivation Romania Foundation initiated a programme that intends to provide adapted services, ongoing support and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. In Romania their right to employment is very little known among potential employers and their staff. Moreover, many people with disabilities are not aware of this right. Most people with disabilities are reluctant to try to find a job because of many causes, such as lack of accessibility of public transportation and work places, employers' lack of awareness and negative attitudes towards this issue. Through this programme, we identify mainstream employment opportunities for people with disabilities, provide services in the areas of employment counselling, mediation, and post-employment support and work with employers to promote mainstream employment of people with disabilities and purchase of products of sheltered workshops under the quota system established through the legislation.

News from: g.comanescu@motivation.ro

Shaw Trust holds STAR Awards Ceremony

Shaw Trust held its fourth annual STAR Awards at a glittering awards ceremony in London on 27 November. Nominees were all winners from six regional STAR Awards held across the UK for the first time this summer to celebrate the Trust's 21th Anniversary of supporting some 160,000 people with disability or disadvantage to find work and achieve independence.

Among the long list of winners was small business employer, Tim McNally from Emerald Garden Land Designers in Wales. Tim built up his business after gaining support from Shaw Trust three years ago and now helps other people with substance misuse issues turn their lives around by offering them work placements.

Another winner, Nik Brooks from Rochester was touched to have won the Shaw Trust Employee STAR Award. Inspirational Nik joined the Trust first as a volunteer, moved on to become a mentor and is now a trainer. Nik leads by example, having broken through many barriers himself, as a double amputee and with a history of bi-polar disorder.

The awards were presented by media star and multi-millionaire entrepreneur, Duncan Bannatyne OBE who said: "I'm inspired by anyone who can get up and achieve something in the face of adversity or who overcomes problems to succeed in life."

Shaw Trust Chief Executive Ian Charlesworth welcomed Duncan's support, and heaped praise on every one of the shortlisted finalists: "All the people we work with are winners in their own right, because of what they have achieved or have helped others to achieve," he said. "The event gives us the opportunity to showcase some of our clients' triumphs and shows quite clearly what can be done, with the right support.

News from: catherine.a'bear@shaw-trust.org.uk

For general information about the work of Shaw Trust visit: www.shaw-trust.org.uk

VLAB uses ESF funding to develop Supported Employment

7 Flemish sheltered workplaces took part in the ESF-project "Supported Employment", in which they strived to progress people working in sheltered workplaces to the open labour market. This pilot project was set up to develop Supported Employment to become a method of full value in the whole of employment measures in Flanders. About 100 persons with a disability working in the sheltered workplaces were interested to take part in the project. Within two years, 14 persons with a disability were employed in the open labour market. In 2008, ESF will fund another project to organise Supported Employment on a bigger scale in the Flemish part of Belgium. By the end of this second project, Flanders will adapt its regulation to this new step towards inclusion for people with disabilities. For more information visit: www.vlab.be.

News from: Karen.Lauwers@vlab.be

e-ISOTIS latest news - less barriers, more jobs

- **EU-funded project 'check and go' brings companies and people with disabilities together**

The project 'check and go', in which a total of 7 EU countries are involved, is aimed at contributing to a reduction of barriers not only in the working life of job seekers but also in companies. The e-ISOTIS organisation is the official representative of the project in Greece. Several years now e-ISOTIS successfully supports People with Disabilities and elderly persons to overcome the existing barriers.

Three tools are to be developed during the project: one of them is the '**Check and go tool**' which helps the applicants to draw up a profile of their individual demands or a profile of accessibility. The '**Training tool**' is a training designed to help people with disabilities improve qualifications and soft skills which are relevant to the job they are applying for. Finally, the '**Advice tool**' has the objective of preparing companies to deal with job applicants with disabilities. The tools will be available by the middle of 2007 as a demo version on the internet as well as a CD Rom. The final versions will be applied during the spring 2008.

More info at: <http://www.checkandgo.eu/>, Contact: checkandgo@e-isotis.org

- **Gambe project: Community focused vocational integration of people with social-psychiatric disabilities**

Currently there are a lot of unemployed people with social-psychiatric disabilities and existing qualification systems do not respect their special needs. On the other hand, professionals are working without connection to the communities and the social structures of the clients. GAMBE aims at changing this by promoting a self-determined life, strengthening the community, establish a sustainable implementation of high quality professional education, and exchange this acquired knowledge within the partner countries.

The intention of e-ISOTIS is to adapt the GAMBE project on training and employment for the civil services sector. Specifically the individuals that will be involved in this program will be pilot trained to work as administrative staff within particular public services institutions, supporting individuals with disabilities, in their transactions with the public sector. The pilot courses for trainees are going to begin during December in Athens and one city in Northern Greece.

More info at: <http://www.gambe-leonardo.eu/> Contact: gambe@e-isotis.org

- **Marie Curie launches ‘Social Employers Network’**

In the framework of the *European Year of Equal Opportunities for All* “Marie Curie” Association launched a “**Social Employers Network**” (SEN) bringing together organisations from all over Europe, positive towards disadvantaged people. SEN is a network set up to encourage, consult and support employers in recruitment and retention of all groups of disadvantaged or disabled workers. It is EU wide network with founding members from Bulgaria, Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. Membership is open to all kind of legal bodies at national and EU level, as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that share the objectives of the Network.

Any relevant organisation could apply to join SEN by filling in a registration form, available online at: <http://www.disadvantaged-employment.eu>. The registration opens the access to all informational resources of the network. SEN is financially supported by “Leonardo da Vinci” Programme of the European Commission. It provides its members with information about EU legislation, opportunities for vocational training as well as exchange of best practices. Join us!

News from: petia@marie-curie-bg.org

- **Cedris informs about new policies in the Netherlands**

The Dutch Parliament has agreed some changes in the structure of financial payouts at regional level. The annual budgets will start to be paid to each individual municipality and no longer to the association of municipalities per region. This will strengthen the steering power of the municipality as board member of the companies. More important is the call for a new policy of sheltered and supported employment in relation to other important disadvantaged groups using for example the national assistance act (80 % of the minimum wage) and the programmes for young disabled people. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment will install a committee for the re-positioning. The advice of that committee must be delivered before the summer holidays. The members of Parliament have all there own ideas about the way ahead, so there will be a heavy debate in the autumn. Cedris is happy with the study and wants a broad view of all people who are excluded from employment. 2008 promises to be a remarkable year.

News from lkooyman@cedris.nl

- **Remploy welcomes Secretary of State’s decision on modernisation**

Remploy, the UK’s leading provider of employment services for disabled people, welcomed today’s statement (29 November 2007) by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. The company will now set about achieving the objective of quadrupling the number of disabled people it supports into mainstream employment. By 2012 Remploy plans to be supporting 20,000 disabled people into employment each year. Remploy has a very good future and is grateful to Peter Hain for his endeavours in ensuring that Remploy gets its fair share of contracts from government departments and other public bodies. Employees have lived with many months of uncertainty and Remploy will be working closely with them as they decide on their options for the future. Every affected employee will have close support from a range of specialists to ensure that they are able to make the right choice.

Key points

Remploy and the Government have given a commitment that no disabled employee will be made compulsorily redundant under the modernisation programme. Employees at affected factories will have a range of options including voluntary redundancy, early retirement with a lump sum payment, or transfer to a job with another local employer on their current Remploy terms and conditions. Remploy, which employs 7,000 people, operates 83 factories. 1,425 disabled and 196 non-disabled employees are affected by today's announcement. The factories closing are at: Aintree, Brixton, Halifax, Hartlepool, Hillington, Hull, Leatherhead, Lydney, Mansfield, Medway, Pinxton, Plymouth, Southend, St Helens, Stockton, Treforest, York. The factories merging with nearby Remploy factories are: Barnsley (employees can transfer to Sheffield); Bradford (to Leeds); Birkenhead CCU (to Birkenhead); Brynamman and Ystradgynlais (to Neath); Chandlers Ford (to Southampton); Jarrow (to Newcastle-upon-Tyne); Newcastle-under-Lyme (to Stoke); Stockport (to Oldham); Woolwich (to Barking); Redruth (to Penzance). The majority of the factory closures will be completed by the end of March. All will be completed by July. Last year, Remploy found 5,200 jobs in mainstream employment for people with a range of physical, sensory and mental disabilities. It plans to quadruple that figure to more than 20,000 a year by 2012. Remploy operates a rapidly expanding network of town and city centre recruitment branches which provide specialist recruitment and development services to job seekers who have a health issue or disability. The company partners with some of the country's biggest organisations to find jobs for disabled people, including BT, Asda, Christian Salvesen, NHS, Marks & Spencer and B&Q.

News from: nigel.hopkins@remploy.co.uk

🇮🇸 Hlutverk visits ASVL in Norway

Hlutverk (The Icelandic Union of Special Employment and Training) organised a study visit for its members to ASVL in Norway in September. During 5 days the group visited several companies of ASVL in the Oslo area and also received information about the structure and work of ASVL and the Norwegian system in supporting people in getting employment in companies in the open labour market and with ASVL "Growth Companies".

"The group from Iceland consisted of 15 individuals from 9 members of Hlutverk. ASVL organised a very good programme and all participants returned home with a lot of information and knowledge about the Norwegian system of employment for people with disabilities", stated Kristján Valdimarsson Chairman of Hlutverk.

News from: kristjan.valdimarsson@smfr.is

🇨🇭 INSOS news

- The Swiss Federal Government decided to set into force a further revision of the invalidity insurance legislation on 2008. The goal of the revision is to increase the number of disabled persons getting into the job market and to reduce the number of the pensions as well to obtain socially justifiable savings within the invalidity insurance benefits. A referendum has been taken earlier this year against this revision but on a national a majority nevertheless approved the Federal Government proposals.
- INSOS reached through Workability Europe an agreement with Microsoft Switzerland and INSOS members will be able to have Academic Licenses on Microsoft Software.

News from: f.gossweiler@drahtzug.ch

VRC Projects

- **Social Return project**

This year Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre (VRC) in Lithuania is finishing several projects. Since 2004 VRC together with partners from Iceland, Italy, The Netherlands and Slovenia was implementing Leonardo da Vinci pilot project "Social Return". The project was aiming to develop a holistic and multidisciplinary rehabilitation programme for people with specific needs and those with restricted employment possibilities. The project is ended but all results are available for the using for a wide range of specialists. One of it is the handbook of social reintegration and vocational rehabilitation is available in project website in English language (www.social-return.net). As the project partnership was very successful partners are looking for further options to develop the innovations. One of the actions was that VRC implemented Leonardo da Vinci mobility project "Interfaces of Vocational Rehabilitation Content in European Countries", during which 6 specialists gained more skills on reintegration of people with disabilities.

- **Gisela project**

Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre together with partners from Italy, Germany, The Netherlands and Poland is implementing the project "Gisela" which financed within the context of the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003. The project intends to identify and develop best practices of specific guidance and placement services for women with disabilities in order to encourage their access to and participation in training and labour market in Europe. Till the end of this year the partners will prepare the **manual with guidelines** for guidance counsellors towards disabled women, stressing main points of counselling women with disabilities suffering from a "double discrimination", due to their disability and to their gender. The manual will be placed in project website in 2008 January. For general information about the project visit www.gisela-project.eu

News from: rasa.noreikyte@reabilitacija.lt

Agreement of Cooperation between China Disabled Persons' Federation and ONCE Foundation

On 6 December 2007 an Agreement of Cooperation was signed between China Disabled Persons' Federation and the ONCE Foundation. The ONCE Foundation will convey its experience in employment creation and the elimination of physical and psychological barriers to over 82 million disabled Chinese people. The long-term goal of this Agreement is to establish a long-term relationship of cooperation between the two parties in areas of accessibility, education, employment, legislation and right-protection for people with disabilities in China and Spain. The following aims will be pursued:

- Strengthening links between the two parties
- Improving exchanges of information, experience, expertise and personnel between the two parties
- Exploring potential of further cooperation

The Cooperation Agreement is signed for 3 years.

News from: manton.fundosa@fundaciononce.es

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2008*

Date	Event	Location	Contact person
10-11 January 2008	Services Development Group Meeting	Warsaw, Poland	Leif Alm leif.alm@samhall.se Nigel Hopkins nigel.hopkins@remploy.co.uk
23 January 2008	Internal Meeting for review of WE Constitution	London, England	Bertie Hunt secretary@workability-europe.org Leo Kooyman lkooyman@cedris.nl
14 February 2008	Training Seminar "Ageing & Disability: strategies & services to meet demand"	Brussels, Belgium	Martin Ohridski publicaffairs@workability-europe.org
25 February 2008	WE Board Meeting WEB BV Meeting	Athens, Greece	Bertie Hunt secretary@workability-europe.org
26 February 2008	Strategic Workshop for Directors	Athens, Greece	Bertie Hunt secretary@workability-europe.org
1 April 2008	Network Development Group Meeting	Paris, France	Tim Papé sandy.evans@shaw-trust.org.uk François Kuentz fegapei.kuentz@wanadoo.fr
14-15 April 2008	Validating Mentoring 2 Project Meeting	Edinburgh, Scotland	Martin Ohridski publicaffairs@workability-europe.org
20 May 2008	WE Board Meeting WEB BV Meeting	Donostia – San Sebastian, Spain	Bertie Hunt secretary@workability-europe.org
21 May 2008	WE Annual Conference Day I	Donostia – San Sebastian, Spain	Itziar Amorrortu ehlabe@ehlabe.org Bertie Hunt secretary@workability-europe.org
22 May 2008	WE Annual Conference Day II	Donostia – San Sebastian, Spain	Itziar Amorrortu ehlabe@ehlabe.org Bertie Hunt secretary@workability-europe.org
23 May 2008	- Development Group Meetings - AGM	Donostia – San Sebastian, Spain	Bertie Hunt secretary@workability-europe.org
9-12 September 2008	WI Annual Conference & AGM	Sapporo, Hokkaido island, Japan	Alain Rialland workability.international@wanadoo.fr
11 September 2008	WE Board Meeting	Sapporo, Hokkaido island, Japan	Bertie Hunt secretary@workability-europe.org
22-23 September 2008	Validating Mentoring 2 Project Meeting	Istanbul, Turkey	Martin Ohridski publicaffairs@workability-europe.org
17 November 2008	WE Board Meeting WEB BV Meeting	Rome, Italy	Bertie Hunt secretary@workability-europe.org

*List of events as known at the moment. Other events may be added and will be advised. Always confirm dates and location with the Development Group Chair(s) and/or secretariat prior to attending.

Editorial note:

This E-bulletin is issued three times a year exclusively to Workability Europe members. Readers are invited to reproduce the information provided the source is quoted.

Editors: Bertie Hunt (General Secretary) and Martin Ohridski (Public Affairs Officer). We welcome your questions, comments and contributions.

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