



EQUASS Newsflash

Welcome to the third issue of the EQUASS newsflash! This publication is an initiative of the European Quality in Social Services (EQUASS) to provide you with regular updates about the most recent developments and achievements of the EQUASS system.

EQUASS in Practice Seminar



Representatives of partner organisations in Oslo

The start-up seminar for the "EQUASS in Practice" project took place on 12-13 January 2009 in Oslo. All project partners as well as representatives of the local LdV agency - SIU participated. The discussions around the table focused on the first thoughts about a national implementation strategy of EQUASS Assurance for each country and identification of potential EQUASS Local Licence Holders.

For more information please visit:
<http://equassinpractice.epr.eu> and
<http://www.equass.no>

Call for Auditors

The European Quality in Social Services (EQUASS) is looking for persons who are interested in becoming an auditor in the EQUASS Excellence system.

EQUASS Excellence auditors are involved at each stage of auditing organisations that apply for EQUASS Excellence certification. The audit team consists of two auditors who score the self-evaluation report. The team visits the applicant's company in order to clarify aspects of the organisation and to ensure that the evidence presented in the application document and self-evaluation document matches with the real "on-site" situation. The training process for auditors will contain: fundamentals of the EQUASS Excellence system (three

The importance of EQUASS for Roc Ter AA



EQUASS aims to operate the EQUASS Assurance system at the national level. The modernisation of the Social Services sector has created a demand for quality assurance in the provision of our services. It calls for benchmarking, continuous improvement and guaranteeing quality of services to the users of our services. The introduction of a market approach leads to more competition and therefore it requires transparency of our services and more efficiency. The authorities and funders already include quality criteria in the tender specifications to ensure adequate and sustainable services. Moreover, EQUASS, as a flexible concept of quality, is compatible and complementary with the existing national quality systems in the Netherlands for the VET sector. We hope to achieve the objectives for our services by using the concept of EQUASS principles rather than to come up with prescriptive standards. The self-assessment process provided a template for evaluating our current performance and identifying areas of improvement, and a methodology for drafting an Action Plan. We're very happy, and proud, we received the EQUASS Assurance certification as recognition of our quality of service as set by European criteria.

Antoinette Knoet, Director Executive Board

hours), a case study (nine hours) and benchmarking the results of the case study (three hours). Prior to attending the EQUASS Excellence auditor training, approximately six hours' preparatory work will be required.

The next training will take place in Brussels on 8 and 9 June 2009.

Quality consultants that are qualified for auditing organisation according to EFQM (or national equivalent) and/or ISO 9000 can be appointed as EQUASS auditors after a two days training.

For more information: equass@xs4all.nl



News on Prometheus Project

The first activity of the Prometheus project was the kick-off meeting of the CEN Workshop (CEN/WS51), which took place on 9 February 2009, and which should result in a CEN Workshop Agreement (CWA). 51 national and international stakeholders in the social sector participated in this consultation and debated on defining a Common Quality Framework and core criteria for quality assurance for Social Services of General Interest. The CEN Workshop should last for half a year. Contributions to the consultation will be collected via LiveLink as well

as via two follow-up meetings in Brussels on 27 April and 7 September 2009. On 10 February 2009, the project partners attended a meeting during which they were presented an overview of the project's activities, division of tasks, financial issues, etc. This meeting was also attended by two representatives of the European Commission.

For more information visit: <http://prometheus.epr.eu>

Upcoming EQUASS events and contributions

- **20 April 2009:** EQUASS Consultancy Training in Lisbon (Portugal)
- **27 April 2009:** Second meeting of the CEN Workshop in Brussels (Belgium)
- **11 May 2009:** EQUASS Core Group meeting in Amsterdam (The Netherlands)
- **8 and 9 June 2009:** EQUASS Excellence Auditor Training in Brussels (Belgium)
- **9 June 2009:** Meeting EQUASS Awarding Committee, Brussels (Belgium)
- **22 and 23 June 2009:** EQUASS in Practice project meeting in Porto (Portugal)
- **7 September 2009:** Final meeting of the CEN Workshop in Brussels (Belgium)

WWW.EQUASS.NO

The Norwegian-language EQUASS website was launched on 3 February 2009 and has received positive feedback from AVRE and ASVL's members ever since. The idea behind the website is to disseminate information about EQUASS in Norway, to share experiences among service providers and give instructions to implement the standard. Its other purpose is to be a helpful tool for organisations which are in the certification process. The website contains a list with direct links to all organisations in Norway certified with EQUASS Assurance and EQUASS Excellence. A database with detailed information on the self-assessment questions has been created. It also includes the original texts in English, the Norwegian translation and instructions on how to interpret the criteria. Advice and tips on how to implement EQUASS Assurance and examples of documentation necessary to prove the organisation meets the criteria are also published. In addition a password-protected area has been created for all organisations who attended an introduction course where a database with examples of documentation sent by the members/certified organisations is available. The protected area also includes a forum/message board where the organisations can share experience and discuss during the implementation process.

Jeanette Kværnes
Project Coordinator, Attføringsbedriftene - AVRE

Auditor training in Oslo

On 9 and 10 March 2009, AVRE organised an EQUASS Assurance Auditor Training session in Oslo (Norway). The participants from all over Norway were trained in the method of auditing to be followed through the whole EQUASS Assurance process. All participants will practice their auditing skills in an additional two days shadow training.

New EQUASS Assurance Certified Organisations

1. **Origod AS (Norway)**
2. **Norservice AS (Norway)**
3. **JobbIntro AS (Norway)**
4. **iFokus (Norway)**
5. **Bergmoprodukter AS (Norway)**



Bergmoprodukter AS is celebrating a big event! After a year and a half of continuous and intensive work, we finally managed to accomplish the EQUASS Assurance and are now the proud owner of the valuable certificate. The organisation will also in the future have a constant focus on continuous improvement!

Connie Sande Månrum
EQUASS coordinator - Bergmoprodukter AS