



EQUASS Newsflash

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

EQUASS Core group assures sustainable development



Guus van Beek, at the heart of the core group

The EQUASS Core group was put in place in order to insure the continuity of the development, management, coordination, sales and marketing of the EQUASS system. The Core group's objective is to identify and review the operational aspects and developments of the EQUASS unit (e.g. additional need for further development,

experiences with the certification programmes and consultancy activities, management aspects, co-ordination, sales and marketing strategy and activities). The EQUASS core group

consist of: Guus van Beek (EQUASS Manager), Jana Kukučková (EQUASS Coordinator), Michael Crowley (Rehab, Ireland), Karl-Wiggo Jensen (Durapart AS, Norway), Jean-Claude Schrepfer (CRM, France) and António Rilho (CRPG, Portugal). The EQUASS Core group meets three times a year.

EQUASS increases capacity through Local Licence Holders

EQUASS aims to operate the EQUASS Assurance system at the national level through the mediation of a 'local licence holder'. This national agent operates EQUASS Assurance in the national language. The Association of Vocational Rehabilitation Enterprises (AVRE) has been operating EQUASS Assurance in Norway since December 2006.

LOS has been operating EQUASS Assurance in Denmark since December 2007. Excellence Ireland Quality Association (EIQA) in Ireland and the National Rehabilitation Institute in Portugal will operate EQUASS Assurance starting Autumn of 2008. It is expected that EQUASS Licence Holders will soon be operating in Germany, the Netherlands and Hungary.

EQUASS System

Mission

EQUASS aims to enhance the social services sector by engaging service providers in quality and continuous improvement, and by guaranteeing service-users quality of services throughout Europe.

EQUASS: A unique multi stakeholder approach

EQUASS defines quality as: *'Meeting and exceeding the needs and expectations of all stakeholders'*. Therefore the EQUASS approach is a typical multi-stakeholder approach in which all stakeholders have been consulted in defining the criteria for certification. The EQUASS quality approach explicitly includes the perspective of service users. While most of the international quality approaches contribute to the efficiency of organisations and therefore focuses on control of the internal processes (efficiency), the EQUASS quality approach emphasises control in order to achieve desired results (effectiveness). The EQUASS approach also incorporates the methodology of self-assessment as a fundamental element in the audit process.



ENSA joins the Awarding Committee

Mrs Kerstin Farm from the Region of Orebro in Sweden will represent the European Network of Social Authorities (ENSA) in the EQUASS Awarding Committee. ENSA is a network of cities and

European Regions that aims to promote international co-operation, and exchange mutual understanding of knowledge and experience within the field of social services.

EQUASS on the web!

For regularly updated information on EQUASS and its activities, please check our website:
<http://www.equass.be>

EQUASS capacity building in Copenhagen

In the framework of the introduction of EQUASS in Denmark three events have been initiated in cooperation with CAKU, the Danish Organisation for Accreditation, in Copenhagen. Staff members and associates of CAKU have been trained in understanding the EQUASS approach and EQUASS certification programmes. Representatives of

key stakeholders of the Danish Social Sector have been informed about the latest developments in Europe concerning the modernisation of the social sector and the consequences for quality assurance. In September 2008 EQUASS auditors will be trained in auditing organisations against EQUASS Assurance criteria.

Upcoming EQUASS events and contributions

- **12 September 2008:** Induction seminar for staff of Excellence Ireland Quality Association (EIQA) in Dublin (Ireland)
- **29 and 30 September 2008:** EQUASS Assurance auditor training, Copenhagen (Denmark)
- **9 October 2008:** EQUASS In-Depth-Training for members of JG Gruppe, Cologne (Germany)
- **30 October 2008:** Workshop 'Quality of services and support' in conference organised by the Council of Europe, Strasbourg (France)
- **3 November 2008:** Presentation and workshop in EQUASS Seminar organised by AVRE, Trondheim (Norway)
- **26 November 2008:** Meeting EQUASS Awarding Committee, Brussels (Belgium)
- **9 December 2008:** Contribution to the conference 'Enhancing the Quality of Social Care Services' organised by Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) in conjunction with the Council of Europe, Dublin (Ireland)
- **11 December 2008:** EQUASS Awarding Event, Brussels (Belgium)

Certified Organisations

1. Åstvedt AS (Norway)
2. Durapart AS (Norway)
3. Centre de Réadaptation de Mulhouse (France)
4. Centro de Reabilitação Profissional de Gaia (Portugal)
5. Institute for Rehabilitation, Republic of Slovenia (Slovenia)
6. Josefsheim Bigge (Germany)
7. National Learning Network (Ireland)
8. Nopro AS (Norway)
9. Panagia Eleousa (Greece)
10. Pluryn (the Netherlands)
11. Rehab Care (Ireland)

'EQUASS in Practice'

'EQUASS in Practice' is an international project in the framework of the Leonardo DaVinci Programme. The project aims to develop and to share best practice in the implementation of EQUASS Assurance for VET-service providers, with the goal of improving the quality of their services and to achieve sustainable working practice and routines. Partners from Lithuania, Slovenia, Portugal, Belgium, Ireland and Norway will make EQUASS Assurance more readily available to all VET-providers

within the sector of vocational rehabilitation. The programme of the project includes development of methods, guidelines and strategies which will result in a practical web-based manual which will coach the VET-providers through their quality assurance work (quality assurance), and enable them to become certified. The Association of Vocational Rehabilitation Enterprises (AVRE) is project promoter and the project will last for 2 years.