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Welcome to the 5th edition of the EDDN Newsletter, a service of the European Disaster Disability Network to inform you about relevant topics on disaster and disability.

HIGHLIGHT

6 April 2009

Major earthquake strikes Abruzzo (Italy): specialized intervention for the most vulnerable



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In the early hours of the morning of April 6th, a major earthquake struck Abruzzo, a region of central Italy. The shock with a magnitude of 6.3 was strong enough to be felt in Rome,

95km away. At least 295 people have been killed, with 1,500 injured, of which about 100 seriously, and 20,000 left homeless. Survivors have

been temporarily accommodated in hotels or at one of the several tent camps which the national Civil Protection has erected. In addition to the human tragedy, the



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town of L'Aquila, which is considered one of Italy's architectural treasures, has been completely destroyed. Some 7000 policemen, soldiers and other emergency service personnel and volunteers took part in the rescue operation which has now been suspended. One fortunate survivor, 98 year old Maria D'Antuono, who was rescued unharmed under her collapsed home, told how she had spent the time



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crocheting while awaiting rescue. Also Unitalisi (Unione nazionale trasporto ammalati a Lourdes e santuari internazionali – National Union for the transport of sick persons to Lourdes and International Places of Pilgrimage), a national voluntary association, has contributed to providing care to persons hit by the earthquake.

The department of Civil Protection has charged Unitalsi with transporting elderly persons and persons with disability from their homes to the hospitals near the destroyed cities, with specially equipped means. The nursing home in San Demetrio, which was home to persons with disabilities, was



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completely destroyed, but the residents are safe and were transported to Aquila's stadium. Fish (Federazione italiana per il superamento dell'handicap – The Italian Federation for Persons with Disability) has appealed to specialised facilities to provide hospitality to persons with serious disabilities or with intellectual disabilities. The chairperson of Fish has said that persons with intellectual disability cannot be

housed in tents and need to be accommodated in appropriate structures. Marino's Foundation, a organisation for autism in Reggio Calabria, has offered five place for persons with autism. Finally, Unitalsi are organising recreational activities, clown therapy and psychological support to several evacuee children. The difficult task of assessing the structural

damage to buildings has now begun and Italian experts are being assisted by experts from 9 EU Member States through the **Community Mechanism for Civil Protection**.

For more information, please consult:

www.unitalsi.it

www.protezionecivile.it

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/index.htm>

NEWS

11 February 2009
European 112 Day



On 11 February 2009, the European Commission signed a joint declaration together with the European Parliament and Council establishing 11 February as European 112 Day. The single European emergency number 112 is available in all 27 Member States and European citizens, who now travel frequently within the Union for business or pleasure, no longer need to remember several numbers, but only one, wherever they are. This said, not everyone can easily call 112 in an emergency. People with hearing or speech impairments, senior citizens or people with serious injuries may find it difficult to call and explain what has happened. In this regard, a 112 multimedia service named "Total Conversation" is currently under development and will allow users to alert emergency teams through a combination of voice, video and real-time text.

For further information, please consult the following website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/112>



Publication

Trieste - 26 March 2009

Book Launch: *Accessible Safety*

Safety of persons with disability:

Good Practice – Obligations and Opportunities

The book, which is a compilation of the presentations made at the conference held in Trieste on this subject in 2008, has been put together under the coordination of Giorgio Scip and with the support of the Province of Trieste, the E.R.Di.S.U (Regional Organisation for the Promotion of Equal Access to Third Level Education in Trieste) and the Gruppo Ottima Senior. It highlights experiences and good practice and represents useful reference material to raise awareness on this theme by proposing possible solutions for improving normal planning criterion and emergency prevention mechanisms also with respect to the needs of the most vulnerable. The electronic version of the book can be downloaded at the following link:

<http://www.openstarts.units.it/dspace/handle/10077/2970>

ULSS 20 Verona

Ulss 20 Verona, one of the local public health and social authorities in the Veneto Region, provides social and health services in the Verona province.

Web: <http://www.ulss20.verona.it>

Verona Charter

Update on the Verona Charter on the rescue of persons with disabilities in case of disaster.

Web: <http://internazionali.ulss20.verona.it>

CONTACT

Web: <http://internazionali.ulss20.verona.it/eddn.html>

E-mail: eddn@ulss20.verona.it

Editor: Massimo Mirandola

Authors: Paola Paon, Ruth Davis, Anna Marinello

Designer: Silvio Bompan

This newsletter is published by ULSS 20 Verona in the framework of the European Disaster Disability Network.

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