

EPSO STATE OF AFFAIRS – MAY 2023



European Partnership for
Supervisory Organisation
in Health Services and Social Care

Dear EPSO Partner,

May 2023, The Hague, The Netherlands

It is about a year since we sent you the EPSO State of Affairs 2022. That was **June 2022**, just after our successful and inspiring EPSO 'Spring' Conference in Singapore.

This **32nd EPSO Conference** entitled '**Health Regulation and Supervision for the Digital Frontier and Changing Climate**', should have been **the first in-person conference after Covid**. Therefore, it was scheduled in June at the latest possible time before summer 2022. However, at that time Covid-19 was still heavy with us. Some staff were unable to attend, and some speakers, partners and delegates were unable or not allowed to travel to Singapore to join in-person. Given this situation, the **hybrid format** of the conference was the best possible option and proved its worth.

So, while conditions were far from ideal due to COVID, the conference **organised in co-operation with the Ministry of Health of Singapore and the Centre of Regulatory Excellence (CoRE, Duke_NUS Medical School)** was a great success!

We had excellent speakers, highly innovative topics such as digital health and changing climate, good conversations, and interesting debates (in-person and online) about the latest developments relevant for our partners (health- and social care regulators, inspectorates, and evaluating organisations worldwide).

Participants highly appreciated **the special EPSO format** of conferences with a limited number of delegates per country (a maximum of 50 people at a long table). Many of our partners have found this to be an effective way of exchanging information and experiences. This setting makes it possible to discuss good as well as less good or effective practices in a trusted setting.

As a result of the timing of our 'Spring' Conference, the '**Autumn' conference 2022** had to be rescheduled as well. Initially it was replaced by a purely in-person **2-day event on Effectiveness of Inspection and Regulation** in Riga (October 2022). However, with the help of our partners and the improvisational skills of the colleagues in Riga, we managed to turn the 2-day event into a full-fledged conference that, in terms of content and opportunities to learn from each other, was just as good as other EPSO conferences. This became our **33rd EPSO-Conference in Riga hosted by the Latvian Health Inspectorate and the Ministry of Health (7-9 December 2022)** focused on regulatory innovation related to **Telehealth/Digital Health, Prevention of Illness, Cooperation between internal and external regulators and Effectiveness of Inspection and Regulation**. The special climatic conditions of snow and -12^o Celsius did not prevent us from having an inspiring conference with active participation of all delegates in the Paul Stradiņš Museum of Medicine and a walking tour in the beautiful old city of Riga led by our Latvian colleagues.

After so many conferences with Covid complications, it was a relief that at **the 34th EPSO conference in Malta (19-21 April 2023)** we didn't have to constantly shift and adjust our plans. Finally, we were able to present excellent speakers in-person and virtually on key topics for the future of Regulation, Inspection and Supervision without further Covid 19 restrictions.

We think this conference has more than lived up to its title: **Innovative supervisory approaches and scientific findings in the context of integrated care, social care, and ageing**. The high-level and innovative content of the conference and the lively discussions were made possible by our host in a perfect environment. Next to this the quality of the Maltese food also left nothing to be desired.

Our next, **35th EPSO conference** is scheduled to take place in **Cardiff, Wales, 18-20 October 2023**.

We are looking at travel options and affordable hotels and will inform you shortly about your booking options. Our host, the Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, has already made a reservation for a nice venue in Cardiff city center. The usual 'conference walk' is this time planned in the context of Cardiff as a famous 'Rugby City'. The topics of the conference relate to 'Future Generations' and also include a follow-up to the topics discussed in Singapore, Riga, and Malta.

This update wouldn't be complete without mentioning our monthly EPSO TF C19 network meetings and our TAC working group meetings. On the initiative of our English colleagues (Care Quality Commission, CQC) we started from the first of April 2020 with our **weekly EPSO Covid-19 Taskforce** sessions. During the first 16 weeks this group has provided each other with practical tips, experiences and help during the Covid-19 outbreak.

After this dynamic start, the network continued as **Monthly TF C19 network meetings**¹ where topics of interest to EPSO partners are presented and discussed and the latest information relevant for our partners is shared. Topics are introduced for no longer than 10-15 minutes. This way of working offers room for discussion and possible bilateral follow-up. Meetings are scheduled on the first Wednesday of the month and last no longer than one hour. This initiative has provided a platform for supervisory and regulatory authorities to share information and learn from each other. The network has also provided valuable lessons for the future such as shared experiences with the use of digital health and experiences with e-inspections.

From these monthly meetings the EPSO Working group on **Telemedicine, and E-health, Artificial intelligence, and Cybersecurity (TAC working group)** emerged. The **TAC working group** started in 2021 and continued in 2022 and 2023. In Malta 2023 the group agreed on its final working documents (Blueprint for cyber security; Blueprint for AI and Blueprint for Telehealth). It was decided to share the blueprints with the EPSO partners to raise their awareness of these topics and support them in improving the quality of their work.

The EPSO network has steadily expanded, not only with the supervisory partners from our **Asia-Pacific network**, but also with **other partners from various backgrounds**. In addition to input from partners with a supervisory background, EPSO collaborates now also with partners with a **scientific, management-related**, or other orientation. Active participation came from a wider range of **countries and regions across the globe**. EPSO's cooperation also extended to **ISQua** and to cooperation with our **OECD partners**.

¹ N.B. The upcoming monthly network meeting is planned for Wednesday the 7th of June 2023 as usual at 9-10 CET.

Another expansion that should be mentioned here is the start of our **EPSO Academy** as of 2023. The first pilots with EPSO partners started this year. The Academy will provide training by professionals for professionals: 'a general online education and training for inspectors and regulators in Health and Social Care.'

The support and co-ordination of these activities has been provided by the EPSO Joint Office.

External assistance for reporting is organised via the **Erasmus University Rotterdam**. For ICT and Technical support **WCCS** and **nTERRA** are contracted, and for website and social network activities **Sociallane** in cooperation with **Carry-Maria Klein Gunnewiek** assist.

Our priority remains **organizing excellent exchange of knowledge and experience** as well as **building a useful and efficient network** between our partners.

This is all **financially possible** thanks to **annual EPSO contributions from our EPSO partners** in our network in Europe and Asia-Pacific. We rely heavily on this support. As we intend to continue collaborating with you and further strengthen our EPSO network, we hope to receive this support again in 2023.

Jooske Vos



Chair of the EPSO Board.

