

## EPSO STATE OF AFFAIRS – 2025



Dear EPSO Partner,

April 2025, The Hague, The Netherlands

**It has been about a year since we sent you the EPSO State of Affairs.** That was June 2024, just after our successful and inspiring EPSO 'Spring' Conference in Tallinn, Estonia.

**This 36th EPSO conference in Tallinn (28 – 31st May 2024) hosted by the Estonian Board of Health** was amongst other things focused on learning from the innovative developments in Estonia, one of the most advanced countries in the world on e- health, data sharing, digital health and the use of genomic and genetic medicine to improve healthcare and healthcare regulation. We had the privilege of sharing this knowledge of e- Estonia as a frontrunner country with our EPSO partners from all over the world.

Furthermore, we discussed topics relevant to regulators in health and social care such as **Effectiveness** of regulation and inspection; **Improvement of Culture** in health and social care settings including patient safety culture and listening to 'the patients voice.'

Next to this we learned as a lot through **mutual knowledge exchange and about the usual topics at our EPSO conferences** such as new approaches based on scientific evidence, new developments in regulation and improvement of health by new working methods of regulatory authorities.

In addition to these lessons on scientific and practical developments, the **warm and welcoming atmosphere** with a lot of personal attention from the Estonian chief executive of the health board and her team was incredibly special.

After this, from a West-European perspective, 'far away conference' in Estonia, we then had the opportunity (**thanks to our three Dutch partners NZA, NVTZ and Vilans**) to **organise our winter conference in the Netherlands**. For EPSO this was a kind of 'home affair' and it was great to see how our three partners worked so harmoniously together to support our conference needs (NZA provided the venue and the basic conditions, while Vilans and NVTZ contributed in other ways).

We were therefore pleased to hear that the conference had also met their expectations and had provided them with new and practical insights into their own respective areas of interest.

**This 37th EPSO Conference in Utrecht and Zeist (11 – 12th December 2024) hosted by the Dutch Healthcare Authority NZA, in co-operation with Vilans & NVTZ** brought together the different perspectives on the 'Just Culture'-approach to safety in health and social care, including the military perspective on safety, using research on the lessons learned from a helicopter squadron. The leadership aspects of this 'Just Culture' approach as well as a wealth of knowledge and a wide range of topics of interest to regulatory and supervisory authorities that were addressed at the conference were discussed based on **high level scientific input from our partners and speakers from a wide variety of countries**.

**The historical setting of the conference dinner** at the 17th century Zeist Castle, together with the performance of a play by conference speakers and an actor that connected the 17th century philosopher Benedictus de Spinoza with the contemporary discussion on 'Just Culture' in healthcare, contributed to a wonderful coherence between the 37th EPSO conference as a scientific conference as well as a networking event in which delegates get to know each other and lay the foundation for further collaboration.

**And once again participants highly appreciated the special EPSO format** of our conferences with a limited number of delegates per country (a maximum of fifty people at a long table). Many of our partners 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.

**Our upcoming 38th EPSO conference in St Helier, Jersey 16 – 17 June 2025 hosted by the Jersey Care Commission (JCC)** with participation of the EPSO - APAC (Asia-Pacific) network **is entitled: Evolving Regulation for High-Quality of Care in a Changing World.** The conference will address the key challenges for health and social care regulators with a focus on the following main themes:

- Learning-centered approaches.
- Evolving visions and trends in regulation.
- Emerging new areas in regulation.

We are really looking forward to a great conference again! For more info, please look at our Programme: <https://epso-net.eu/upcoming-conferences/> However please note that the conference has exceeded its maximum number of EPSO delegates already, which means that **registration for new participants is closed now; online participation is still possible.**

And for those EPSO delegates who don't want to miss our next conference, online registration is already open for our 39<sup>th</sup> EPSO Conference in Ireland. To register for this conference (24-25 September), please [click here](#).

**The upcoming 39<sup>th</sup> EPSO Conference in the Autumn 2025** will be **hosted by the colleagues in Ireland (TÜSLA – children's services regulation and MHC Mental Health Commission Ireland).** The dates are set for the **24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2025 and the provisional themes** are:

- Effective methods of enforcement by regulatory agencies aimed at better health outcomes.
- Regulation of Mental Health - Prevention of Restraints.
- Challenges in the regulation of youth and social care.

This update and state of affairs would not be complete without mentioning our **EPSO Monthly Meetings** and our **EPSO working groups**.

**EPSO TF-C19 Monthly Network Meeting** 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 our 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 for the first Wednesday of the month

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<sup>1</sup> N.B. The upcoming **53<sup>rd</sup> EPSO TF-C19 Monthly Network Meeting** is planned for Wednesday the 7<sup>th</sup> of May **2025**, online in Teams, as usual with the same link at 9-10 CET [Click here to join the meeting](#)

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. Our EPSO-partners can find the Agenda's and Notes etc. password protected at our website (use password epsoc19 or this link <https://epsonet.eu/monthly-meetings/>)

Next to our Monthly Meetings we have to mention our (online and in-person) **EPSO working groups** that have been active over the past years and will continue:

1. **The EPSO-TAC working group on Telemedicine, and E-health, Artificial intelligence, and Cybersecurity (TAC working group)** started in 2021 and continued over the following years. In 2023 the group finalised its activities by agreeing on Blueprints for Cyber security, for AI and for Telehealth. The blueprints were shared with the EPSO partners to raise their awareness of these topics and support them in improving the quality of their work. **The idea of a restart of the group with a focus on AI regulation is recently suggested** and might be discussed at our upcoming Autumn conference in Ireland 24-25 September 2025.
2. **The Assisted Dying working group** for EPSO partners, invited guests and experts in this field started its activities in November 2023 at our 43<sup>rd</sup> EPSO Monthly Meeting (1-11-23) with a presentation by its chair Becky Sherrington, Chief Executive of the Jersey Care Commission. The group met online on 31st of January 2024; 27th of March 2024 and in-person and online in Tallinn 29th of May 2024.

Given the sensitive nature of assisted dying and the ethical, moral, legal, and cultural differences across nations, international consensus or regulation on this matter remains challenging to achieve. In this context the group has reviewed how different countries have their own unique approaches and legal frameworks; the purpose of the group was to understand the different approaches to regulation including the benefits and challenges of different methodologies. The group has shared its findings in 2024 in a format available to all EPSO partners.

#### **Follow up of the EPSO working group on Assisted Dying / End of Life**

In view of recent developments in the field of Assisted Dying and End of life care in the UK and France and active interest for further participation from other EPSO partners the idea was launched to restart the EPSO Working group on Regulating End of Life/ Assisted Dying at the EPSO Ireland Conference, with a new chair. Kirstin Good, Chief Clinical Advisor, Regulatory Assurance (Te Pou Whakamaru) Regulation and Monitoring New Zealand will talk about the restart at our upcoming Jersey conference (17th of June - session 3.2. 16.10 – 18.00).

**The EPSO network has been steadily expanding**, not only with the supervisory partners from our Asia-Pacific network, but also with other partners from diverse backgrounds. In addition to input from partners with a regulatory background in health and social care, EPSO is now also **collaborating with partners with a scientific and management orientation**. Active participation also came from **countries and regions around the world**.

In the past year, EPSO's collaboration once again extended to fruitful collaboration with **ISQua and our OECD partners**. **Other new partnerships** are on their way.

Furthermore, in 2024 and 2025 it became even clearer that the topics of our conferences and our sharing of knowledge are **not only relevant to health and social care-related regulators** and inspectorates but are also of interest for regulators from other sectors and for other knowledge sharing organisations; vice versa we also benefit from their input.

**Examples** of this can be found in a wide variety of topics, such as active participation of the UK's Institute of Regulation, cooperation with the Dutch knowledge sharing organisation in management and support of health and social care VILANS; cooperation on leadership in

healthcare with the Dutch Ministry of Defense in our Utrecht Conference has led to a closer co-operation with possibly future sharing of knowledge again. OECD input on inequalities in Utrecht and Risk assessment methodologies in Tallinn has provided broader reach and greater impact for our network. The need for social networks in the health and social care sectors, as reflected in many of the best practices in integrated care, shows that cooperation with a wider scope is one of the challenges for health and social care regulators and inspectorates. The influence of **technological developments such as AI in health and social care** has shown to be an important development for all regulators and inspectorates which has influenced the landscape of working dramatically and will still pose challenges in the future when it comes to supervision of AI-driven processes. Questions about leadership are highly relevant to our healthcare sector but not limited to the health and social care sector.

These developments lead to **reflections on the scope of EPSO** and may have future implications for our organisation and the participation of relevant others in our network. It may also lead to closer collaboration with organizations in a broader area of interest than just health and social care regulators and inspectorates

In all these new developments, our scientific partners, working at universities and research organisations, play an important role. **The external scientific contacts of the EPSO network** have proven to be of great importance over the years.

The **EPSO Joint Office** has supported and co-ordinated these activities together with **EPSO advisory board members**. External assistance for reporting was organised via the **Erasmus University Rotterdam**.

**For website and social network activities as well as other important organisational support of EPSO**, Carry Maria Klein Gunnewiek (in cooperation with Sociallane as technical assistance) has done a wonderful job with the updates on our website <https://epsso-net.eu/> and on [www.linkedin.com/company/epsso-net/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/epsso-net/), [Facebook](#) and [X/former twitter](#).

**Our priority remains to organize with an open mind and in a pleasant way, the exchange of knowledge and experience** with all partners in our network and the building of a useful and effective network between our partners.

**This is all financially possible thanks to the annual EPSO contributions from our EPSO partners in our network in Europe and Asia Pacific.** We are highly dependent on this support. As we intend to continue collaborating with you and further strengthening our EPSO network, we hope to receive this support again in 2025.

Jooske Vos



Chair of the EPSO Board.

**EPSO** European Partnership for  
Supervisory Organisations  
in Health Services and Social Care