

Newsletter

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*Joining academia and business for new opportunities in
creating ERGOnomic WORK places*

A Word from the Coordinator

Dear Readers, welcome to the 1st ERGO WORK e-newsletter!

The right to work and to actively participate has become one of the basic rights in modern society. Furthermore the work, work place and work processes need to be designed in a way to ensure that they are safe, efficient and easy to use. Here **Ergonomics** steps in. There are several other modern design concepts that contribute, in ensuring that designs are user friendly, fully accessible work for All, regardless of one's ability or disability. Some of the most common and related approaches are **Universal design**, **Design for all** and **Inclusive design**.

ERGO WORK considers how to design work places and organize work and work process, so they are not only accessible to employees without disabilities, but also to meet the needs of those employees with an impairment. Through the ERGO WORK project the discipline of Ergonomics will be taught and applied to try to achieve improved work-based inclusion.

Through a strong Business, Academic and Research alliance the project will bring a deeper insight into methods, approaches and solutions for creating **Ergonomic Work Places** for persons with physical disabilities, the blind and visually impaired, the deaf and hard of hearing as well as persons with mental health problems and/or intellectual disabilities.

The partnership aims to update the existing Ergonomics teaching contents at partner universities. It will then test and implement the impact of the teaching in companies within 4 multidisciplinary working groups of students, professors, company staff and targeted persons with disabilities. Through an intensive promotion and dissemination campaign, it will promote sustainable cooperation between Academia and Business and all other relevant stakeholders in Ergonomics for persons with disabilities in order to foster **Reasonable Accommodation at work**.

Through this first ERGO WORK e-newsletter we would like to share the ERGO WORK project with you, explain some basic definitions and concepts, introduce partners, and list some previous and upcoming events. The ERGO WORK e-newsletter will be available every 4 months, but you are more than welcome to follow us also on our web page <http://www.ergo-work.eu>

We wish you a great read!

Nataša Rebernik, Coordinator
OZARA Service and Disability Company Ltd.

About the ERGO WORK project

“**ERGO WORK – Joining academia and business for new opportunities in creating ERGOnomic WORK places**” is a European project conducted under the Lifelong Learning Programme (Erasmus). The consortium involves 10 partners from Slovenia, Poland, United Kingdom, Italy, Spain and Belgium. During its lifetime the project will seek to improve the ergonomic design of jobs and workplaces for people with disabilities. It will promote Knowledge, Skills and “Social Cohesion” in order to create Reasonable Accommodation at work for all employees, including Persons with Disabilities (PWD).

The **ERGO WORK project arose from the need for new knowledge, methods and approaches for equal opportunities in PWD labor market inclusion.** The reasons for undertaking this project therefore are:

- Lack of Higher Education Institutions and Business (HEI-B) cooperation in Ergonomics in general and specifically for persons with disabilities;
- Lack of specific contents, modules and approaches in addressing equal opportunities work place design for persons with disabilities in most Curricula Ergonomics and lack of experts with specific knowledge in Ergonomics for persons with disabilities;
- Lack of equal opportunities for persons with disabilities due to a.) lack of ergonomic work places responding to PWD special needs, b.) lack of awareness amongst employers about the potential work efficiency of persons with disabilities with adapted ergonomic work places.

While looking for solutions, experts concluded that the problem should be explored and addressed within a wider HEI-B alliance, not only within the employment area. Currently the teaching of Ergonomics and approaches to the inclusion of persons with disabilities lack strong cooperation and knowledge exchange between students, academia, schools, Vocational Educational Training system and Business. There is also, variability across Europe.

Our long-term objective, aligned with the Article 27 of UN Convention on the Rights of PWD, is to set the foundation for a systematic sustainable cooperation between Academia and Business and all other relevant stakeholders in Ergonomics for persons with disabilities in order to foster Reasonable Accommodation at work.

Duration: 24 months (1st October 2013 – 30th September 2015)

Who are we?

The **ERGO WORK project** consortium includes **10 partners** with **45 experts** from **6 countries** (Slovenia, Poland, United Kingdom, Italy, Spain and Belgium) covering the complete spectrum of expertise and experience needed for the implementation of the project in:

- Ergonomics and Universal Design,
- Labour market insertion for persons with disabilities,
- Higher Education (HE) and R&D,
- Extensive dissemination capacities etc.

ERGO WORK project partners:

Slovenia



OZARA Service and Disability
Company Ltd.
www.ozara.si



University of Maribor
www.um.si



KOVINARSTVO, Drago Bučar s.p.
<http://www.bucar.eu/>

United Kingdom



Coventry University;
www.coventry.ac.uk

Spain



INFAD
www.infad.eu

Poland

University of Natural Sciences
and Humanities in Siedlce;
www.uph.edu.pl



Luksja ;
www.luksja.com.pl



Medical and Diagnostic Centre;
www.centrum.med.pl



Italy

TENDER;
www.polytropos.it



Belgium

EASPD - European Association of
Services providers for Persons with
Disabilities;
www.easpd.eu

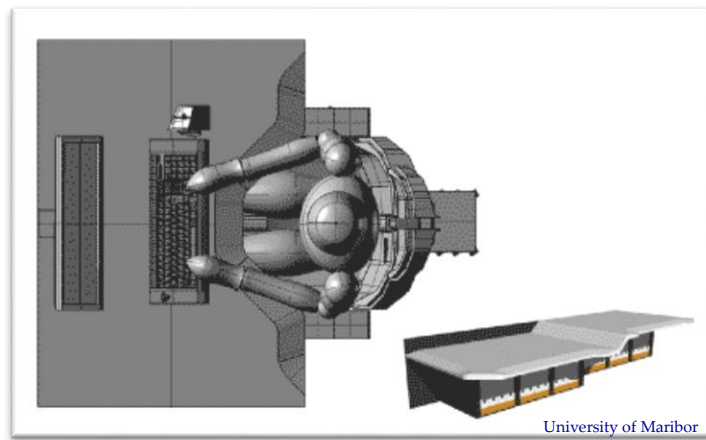
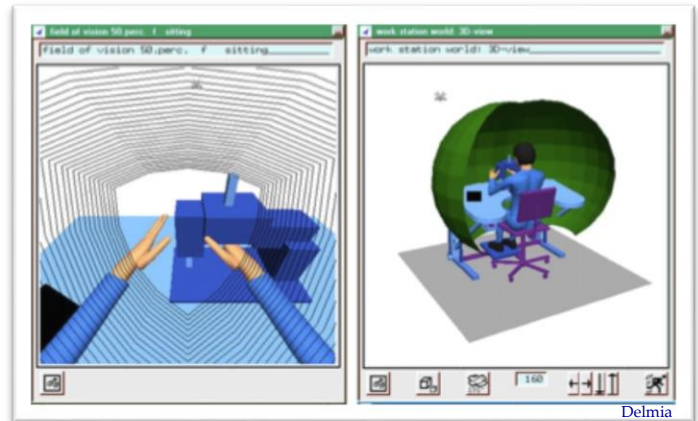


Ergonomics, Inclusive, Universal and Accessible Design

Ergonomics

Ergonomics is an interdisciplinary discipline aiming to optimize relations between humans and their work places and environments as well as the systems and the products they use. The emphasis is on ensuring that design, complements the strengths and abilities of people. It seeks to minimize the impact of personal limitations, rather than forcing the user to adapt to a product.

Ergonomics is a multi-disciplinary subject drawing together relevant information from fields including engineering,



psychology, design, business, biomechanics and sociology. It aims to improve the fit between the user, their equipment and environment. It considers the capabilities of the user and their limitations to ensure that tasks, functions, information and the environment suit the individuals working with and in them.

In order to provide a safe, efficient and user friendly workplace, Ergonomics specialists consider the work being done, the demands on the user, and the equipment and information being used in order to optimize the environment.

Universal Design, Inclusive Design and Design for All

Universal and Inclusive Design provide a framework for the design of places, things, information, communication and policy that focuses on the user. In this case, the 'user' focuses on the widest range of people, operating in the widest range of situations, without special or separate design for limitations or disability.

Universal design refers to an approach to the design of buildings, products and environments to ensure that they are inherently accessible and usable to older people, people without disabilities and people with disabilities. By designing for disability, it is argued that the solution will work better for all people. Universal design may suggest a single universal solution is desirable, or possible. So often the term inclusive design is preferred.

The Universal design philosophy encourages consideration and involvement of diverse range of users from the start of the design and development process. That way, it can make the lives of ALL people, regardless of their ability or disability, easier. Economically, Universal design is argued to offer extensive benefits by being applied up front, rather than through post production adjustments. The approach can be applied to the design of living environments, built-up areas and buildings, products, communications and systems, technological design, and work place design.

Within the context of this project, we recognize that some solutions, in order to allow inclusion in the workplace, will need to be based on individual needs, for example through the introduction of assistive technology. However, we want to equip students of ergonomics to recognize and address individual needs to allow greater inclusion within the workplace, not only through physical changes and accessibility, but through an inclusive approach to the design of workflows, systems and procedures.

It is the responsibility of designers and ergonomists, to be aware of the context and broader impact of any development, and strive to have a beneficial impact beyond the individual worker. Workplace improvements developed through this project, should work better for people with disabilities, and work better for everyone.

Meetings/Events

Partnership meeting 1: Kick-off-meeting in Coventry, United Kingdom (27-29 November 2013):

In November 2013 the ERGO WORK partners met for the first time as a complete project team.

The aim of the meeting was:

- To present partners;
- To provide an overview of the work and time plan;
- To gain familiarity with contractual arrangements, financial and administration rules;
- To set a foundation for management and successful implementation of the project;
- To set a foundation for the analysis and curriculum supplementary modules development;
- To set a foundation for dissemination, promotion and evaluation activities.



The Kick-off-meeting was organised in Coventry, United Kingdom and held jointly with two Knowledge visits. Here we were able to see amazing, UK-based good practice in the field of ergonomic design for persons with disabilities at:

- Hereward College (<http://www.hereward.ac.uk/>)
- Severn Trent Water (<http://www.stwater.co.uk/>)



Coordinators' meeting in Brussels (23-24 January 2014)

OZARA d.o.o. as the coordinator of the ERGO WORK project attended the Erasmus coordinators' meeting, organized by EACEA in Brussels. The two-day meeting was a good opportunity to meet other coordinators, learn about other projects, to get in details and be informed about the administration and financial rules of the Erasmus programme, and last but not least, to network for potential future collaborations.

International Congress INFAD-G21 held in Zamora, Spain on 12-14 February 2014

The congress on active and healthy ageing, is organised by the Spanish partner INFAD in Zamora, Spain. INFAD is a network of universities, research centres, companies and other entities. It promotes networking, dissemination and exchange of good practices. There are more than 100 participants expected at the congress, and this will be the first event of such size, importance and wide ranging target audience that the ERGO WORK has been presented at.

More about the congress at: <http://www.xcongresodepsicogerontologia.com/>

Meetings with Business: Business Challenges, Siedlce, Poland, 13th March 2014

Meetings with Business is an International Conference and Workshop organized annually (sixth edition) by the Faculty of Economic and Legal Sciences of the University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce, Poland, in collaboration with the Eastern Chamber of Commerce. Its goal is to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Over 100 participants are expected this year, among them business people and academics from Polish and foreign universities. The ERGO WORK project will be presented in the context of modern business challenges. All three Polish partners (University, Łuksja and Medical and Diagnostic Centre) are going to participate as well as a representative of the University of Maribor (Prof. Vojko Potočan).

More about Meetings with Business at: <http://www.wnep.uph.edu.pl>

Partnership meeting 2 in Maribor, Slovenia (22-23 May 2014):

The next partnership meeting will be in Slovenia, the originating country for three of the partners, including the coordinator.

The aim of the meeting will be:

- To evaluate the content of the five curriculum supplementary modules;
- To set the conditions for innovative pilot projects at companies (definition of target groups, selection of targeted products and work places, persons with disabilities and students involved in the working multidisciplinary groups etc.);
- To plan the implementation of the innovative pilot projects;
- To plan further dissemination, promotion and evaluation activities.

AHFE 2014 - 5th International Conference on Applied Human Factors and Ergonomics held in Krakow, Poland on 19-23 July 2014

We are glad to be able to announce that the ERGO WORK project is going to be represented at the AHFE 2014 conference. An academic paper, representing collaborative effort between the 3 academic partners has been accepted for publication. The work will be presented by polish partner, University of Siedlce, and will cover:

- The importance of ergonomics in the context of employment of people with disabilities, workplace and job design;
- The social responsibility rationale for the work;
- The context in the three partner countries, based on previous research and knowledge of our partner universities in Poland, Slovenia and United Kingdom;
- Exploration of variation across Europe;
- The workplace needs of persons with disabilities and the need for improved ergonomics education.

More about the conference can be seen at http://www.ahfe2014.org/files/CFP_2014.pdf.

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This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.