



# OPEN ACCESS GOVERNMENT

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*Packets made from seaweed sturdy enough to contain liquids © Ooho*

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## BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FROM OUR OCEANS

TO ADDRESS MODERN-DAY SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES, THE EMBRC-ERIC WAS ESTABLISHED TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN MARINE BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

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# Because they know how it is

## Peer counselling at the eye level in the Palatinate region

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The Federal Participation Act of 23rd December 2016 changed on 1st January 2017 concerning the performance right of the social code IX and described with its changes, a fundamental paradigm shift in the right to rehabilitation and participation of people with disabilities. On this basis, the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (BMAS) promotes the establishment of supplementary and complementary independent participation counselling centres in Germany as of January 2018. Subsidies from federal funds are initially granted for a total of three years.

The Supplementary Independent Participation Advisory Service (EUTB) is a counselling centre for people with disabilities or for those at risk of all kinds of disabilities. But it also serves relatives of such people and as such, the EUTB offers a trustworthy point of contact. In addition to other established counselling services offered, the EUTB is independent of other service providers and aims to help those seeking advice. The free consultation always takes place on an individual basis and is geared towards the needs and possibilities of the person seeking advice. The focus of the EUTB is on peer counselling, which means that the counsellors themselves are impaired and can, therefore, treat their clients at an even-handed level. Users with experience advise users. The peer consultants are qualified as part-time counsellors and accompany advice seekers through the jungle of the benefits system.

In the southern Palatinate region, the EUTB was set up in the city of Landau in the south of the Palatinate region as a cooperation project between GPZ Vorderpfalz and the state network, Netz-G RLP. The GPZ Vorderpfalz (a subsidiary of the Pfalzkrankenhaus) is, together with the state network self-help mental health RLP e.V. (NetzG-RLP), a provider for EUTB Landau. The network NetzG-RLP is an association of people with mental health/illness experience and acts nationwide as experts in the field, which arises from their own concern.

The “participation-advisers” of EUTB Landau are themselves severely disabled and can, therefore, act as peers with both their professional and relevant knowledge. It is precisely this aspect of peer counselling that can facilitate an eye-to-eye exchange and a sense of understanding and acceptance. Due to their own disability-related experiences, the advisors of the EUTB Landau are sympathetic when it comes to understanding the situations of those seeking advice. In doing so, they acquaint themselves to the needs of the respective person to reduce any participation barriers.

In addition, the psychosocial situation is taken into account during the counselling so that joint solutions can be developed, accounting for the skills of the individual seeking advice. The clients are supported in finding a way to participate for themselves and without being influenced by their own self-determined decisions. Specifically, this means that counsellors do not dictate what someone “should do” or give advice on “what they think is right.” They help by listening to the clients, by reporting their own experiences, exploring possibilities and resources to be used with the person seeking advice, and then finding their own solutions.



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