**Meeting of the EU Framework to promote, protect and monitor**

**the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)**

**25 May 2021 - [10-12.00]** (WebEx meeting)

1. **Welcome and Opening**

The Chair, Ms Katrin Langensiepen MEP, opened the meeting.

1. **Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was approved.

1. **Discussion on the Secretariat of the EU Framework**

All members are favourable to the continuation of FRA as secretariat, and it was decided that FRA would continue to play the role of secretariat for 2021 and 2022.

1. **Discussion of the Commission’s European Disability Strategy**

The Commission’s new European Disability Strategy 2021-2030 was discussed. It was noted that the Strategy was a good starting point anchored in CRPD Committee Concluding Observations, which could make a difference if properly implemented. It was also felt that the impact of the pandemic on persons with disabilities should be closely monitored in relation to its impact on persons with disabilities. EDF noted that there was a lack of references to new legislation and to specific actions on women and girls with disabilities.

In relation to the passage on the Framework in the Strategy, it was noted that no additional funding for the framework was foreseen. It was pointed out that a more ambitious legal basis would be needed for the Framework, and that it would be useful to find out more about what the Commission’s plans are in relation to the proposed review of the Framework. It was also pointed out that the activities of the monitoring framework set up under the Strategy should be closely followed by the EU Framework. Participation of persons with disabilities in the conference on the future of Europe was also seen as important.

* Action point: FRA will ask the Commission about its plans in relation to the review of the EU Framework stated in the Strategy.

1. **Work on Council Conclusions on the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030**

It was noted that the upcoming Council Conclusions on disability could complement the new European Disability Strategy. EDF noted that there could be improvements based on what information came out about the content of the Conclusions. Although the April Presidency conference on disability was very good, both in terms of participation and accessibility, more action from the Member States on issues such as inclusion on the labour market would be needed.

* Action point: the Council Conclusions should be discussed during the next Framework meeting and included in the agenda

1. **Updates from EU Framework members on activities to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of the UN CRPD**

On 28 January, the **EMPL and the LIBE Committees of the European Parliament** held a joint hearing on ‘Consequences and lessons from the COVID-19 crisis for people living in residential institutions: a social and human rights perspective’, with the participation of Commission Vice-President ŠUICA, Commissioner DALLI, FRA, ENNHRI, EDF and the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities.

On 10 March, the Parliament adopted a resolution ‘on the implementation of Council Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation in light of the UNCRPD’, based on Ms Langensiepen’s report.

On 17 March, Commissioner Dalli presented the new Disability Strategy to the EMPL Committee.

**The PETI Committee of the European Parliament** reported that Commissioner Dalli presented the new disability strategy in its committee meeting on 22 March 2021. It further reported that it is currently working on a report on the protection of persons with disabilities based on the petitions received. The report was presented in the committee meeting on 12 April 2021. For the report, a number of petitions was examined and recommendations were drafted. The petitions concern a variety of issues for persons with disabilities in relation to problems of the implementation at MS level (e.g. accessibility of infrastructure, education). The report also highlights the need for full accessibility for the Parliament as such (e.g. petitions in all national sign languages). In the report, it was noted that the access board should provide input for horizontal accessibly in a harmonised way, including harmonised rules for persons with disabilities.

**The European Ombudsman** noted the reactive (complaints handling) and proactive (strategic inquiries) parts of its work. The Ombudsman was investigating the accommodation of EC staff in the context of the crisis, with draft best practices on this issue being drafted together with national ombuds institutions and the EU Framework). Another inquiry involved how the EC monitors the use of EU funds with a view to promoting deinstitutionalisation, with a reply pending by the end of May. The ombudsman is currently considering its priorities for strategic work in the area of disability (possibilities include a check of EU institutions’ recruitment procedures, or of EUI’s web accessibility). Input on this is welcome.

**FRA** is starting up a project on monitoring of EU funds and compliance with the Charter and the CRPD. The idea is to engage national human rights bodies in a process of peer-to-peer learning on how to monitor compliance of the use of EU funds with fundamental rights. There appear to be synergies with the Ombudsman’s work. The Agency is continuing its work on raising capacity of national bodies on the CRPD, with another meeting with the Czech Article 33-2 body planned in September, and work is ongoing on the Agency’ papers on indicators and promising practices. The Agency is continuing to publish its Bulletins on COVID, which integrate a disability perspective, with the next Bulletin coming out in July.

EDF is continuing to monitor the transposition of the Accessibility Act and is following other EU level discussions, such as the ones on the COVID pass and AI regulations. There was some progress on the regulation of passenger rights after its review. A number of papers are coming out, including on women with disabilities as victims of domestic violence and on addressing the disability pay gap, as well as on cross-border healthcare and patient’s rights (in relation to the patient mobility directive). EDF is a member of the victims rights platform and intervenes there on disability topics (also regarding hate speech). EDF raised concerns about discussion on the ratification of the 2000 Hague Convention on the international protection of vulnerable adults and other measures on civil matters, that may not be compliant with the CRPD if Member States use them to apply guardianship and substituted decision making measures. EDF is pleased that the social pillar action plan contains a disability indicator. EDF is also monitoring the discussion on the minimum wage directive. EDF expressed its concern that in relation to the recovery funds, there was insufficient consultation with civil society and that the funds do not adhere to the strict rules of compliance with the CRPD. EDF announced that it is preparing a draft interim alternative report for the second review of the EU by the CRPD Committee and that the topic of its next human rights report is right to vote and to stand for elections in the European Parliament’s elections. A Human Rights Report on the impact of COVID19 on persons with disabilities was published this year.

1. **Discussion on Framework’s work plan and activities for 2021-2022**

The draft work plan, sent around before the meeting by FRA, was discussed. FRA noted that an update would be needed in relation to EU funds, a project that had now been adopted by its Management Board. FRA explained that its data collection in tier 1 of the work plan relates to the Annual Report chapter on CRPD implementation.

EDF asked about how the Framework wanted to structure its engagement with national monitoring Frameworks. EDF also suggested a joint submission of the Framework to the UN CPRD Committee. EDF also asked if the Framework has access to the PETI Committee’s petitions, which would be useful for monitoring purposes, and whether the Framework was ever contacted on its e-mail address.

In response, PETI noted that the petitions issue should be discussed within the Committee, and that more visibility to disability petitions could be useful, also considering the fact that the percentage of disability petitions in relation to the whole of all petitions was quite low. FRA clarified that input from citizens to the framework e-mail address was extremely rare.

* Action point: FRA will send a revised version of the work plan document for adoption in writing.

1. **AOB**

FRA noted that the Framework would have to submit its input to the list of issues which is the first step in the next round of monitoring of EU implementation of the CRPD by the CRPD Committee, would have to be sent by mid-June 2022. FRA also noted that the ENNHRI working group had suggested that the annual meeting between itself and the Framework could take place in September.

The Parliament noted that any correspondence in relation to the CRPD framework for the parliament should go to Saulius Milius and Monika Makay.

* Action point: FRA will follow up and propose some dates for the meeting with the ENNHRI Disability Working Group.
* Action point: draft minutes will be circulated for comment.