Technical Meeting of the EU Framework to promote, protect and monitor the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

Monday 17 February 2020

10:00-12:00

**Participants:** Robert-Jan Uhl (FRA), Konstantina Stavrou (FRA), Rachel Forster (FRA), Jakub Pawlowicz (Ombusdman), Monika Makay (European Parliament, EMPL Secretariat) Katja Vatter (European Parliament, PETI Secretariat), Moira Andreanelli (European Parliament, LIBE Secretariat), Marine Uldry (EDF).

1. **Welcome and opening**

* Participants were welcomed by the Ombudsman’s Office, who continue to act as interim Chair.

1. **Approval of the agenda**

* The agenda for the meeting was approved.

1. **UN CRPD Review Cycle**

* FRA is in touch with the CRPD Committee on behalf of the Framework in order to obtain information on processes and timelines. The first step will be the publication of a List of Issues (LoI) in early 2021, which the European Commission then has one (1) year to respond to with a State Party Report (SPR). The process for the SPR should include hearings with civil society, possibly beyond Brussels (as recommended by the CRPD Committee secretariat). The CRPD Committee will then respond with Concluding Observations (CO) adopted after a “constructive dialogue” between the Committee and the EU in Geneva. The process of preparing the list of issues should be over by end of 2020, with February 2021 as the expected deadline for disabled persons’ organizations, civil society organizations and independent monitoring frameworks for submitting written input to the Secretariat of the CRPD Committee. EDF mentioned that organisations also have the opportunity to submit a second alternative report before the adoption of the CO.
* The Framework members discussed different ways for them to contribute to the CRPD review process either individually or jointly.
* It was stressed that Framework members gather information of concrete relevance in monitoring the CRPD (petitions addressed to the EP and Member States’ answers to queries about CRPD implementation, EDF and FRA research, Ombudsman cases, etc.) from which the CRPD Committee could draw in preparing the LoI.
* The EDF will be submitting a separate alternative report to the CRPD Committee, but would welcome a report from the EU Monitoring Framework to which it could additionally contribute.
* During the last review cycle, members of the Framework met separately with the CRPD Committee, in their own capacity.
* The last review cycle’s CO could be used as a starting point to determine what data to collect when preparing for the CRPD review process; another method could be to go through the CRPD article by article and select (a) key article(s) to focus on depending on the expertise of the Framework’s members.
* The Framework discussed the possibility of taking part in the SPR consultations, or organising its own civil society consultations to gather input. It also considered coordinating with national CRPD frameworks where the EU has competence, or on implementation issues. Creating an annex progress report on CRPD implementation with a list of issues the EU has acted on was also suggested.
* The European Parliament (EP) representatives recalled that the EP official positions are adopted by the plenary according to the procedures laid down in the internal rules
* Parliament could voice its assessment of the EU situation regarding compliance with the CRPD through *ad hoc* implementation reports or in the context of the annual reports on fundamental rights. Other tools at the disposal of the Parliament are public hearings, which can serve to gather input or data from different stakeholders, and the possibility to request information from Commission, Council and Member States in the exercise of its Treaty-based prerogatives.
* The EP representatives committed to consulting internally and reporting back to the Framework on the format of a possible EP contribution to the different phases of the UN CRPD review process.
* Issues surrounding the Framework’s general operability were pointed to, including consequences of the Commission no longer being a part of the Framework. This was suggested as a possible topic of discussion with the CRPD Committee. The Framework’s legal basis and whether it can interpret its rules to allow for the formulation of opinions was also discussed.
* Another option considered was to submit a joint letter and separate reports/submissions, or to limit the cooperation to informal means; however, there were concerns this may duplicate or create extra work.

1. **AOB**

* No other points were discussed.

**Action Points and Follow-Up**

* FRA will check timelines and deadlines with the CRPD Committee. It will also check whether other CRPD frameworks have similar operability issues in delivering opinions.
* FRA, EDF and the Ombudsman will begin collecting data.
* The EP will provide feedback on the outcome of its internal consultation on a possible contribution to the CRPD review process.
* The Ombudsman will email to confirm the next meeting on 30th April with National Human Rights Institutions (through ENNRI CRPD Working Group), as well as a smaller meeting a week before to prepare the meeting.
* FRA will check when the last Commission Focal Point meeting took place; a new meeting should be set up to provide general updates on respective activities. A meeting with the Equality Taskforce should also be set up.