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| **Minutes of the Meeting of the EU Framework to promote, protect and monitor**  **the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) with the EU Focal Point for implementation of the CRPD**  **Wednesday 27 March 2019**  **10.30 – 11.30**  Rue Montoyer 30  Present:  Rosita Hickey (Ombudsman/Chair), Elpida Apostolidou (Ombudsman), Inmaculada Placencia-Porrero (Commission/Focal Point), Monika Makay (Parliament), Anna Juhos (Parliament), Marine Uldry (EDF); (Robert-Jan Uhl (FRA) joined by videolink. |

1. *Welcome and opening*

* The Chair welcomed all participants, and mentioned the fact that the last meeting between the Focal Point and the Framework was in April last year, and suggested organising another meeting with the Focal Point in 2019.

1. *Approval of the agenda*

* The agenda was approved.

1. *Update on relevant activities*
   * Update from the Focal Point on activities to implement the CRPD

* The Focal Point noted that the disability strategy was ending in 2020, and that the Commission was now engaged in an evaluation of the strategy ahead of planning a new strategy. The main goal is to finish and maximise outputs promised. Mainstreaming in different areas is the key issue, which will hopefully be reflected in the evaluation. The evaluation will be finalised in mid-2020
* The European Accessibility Act is about to be adopted by the co-legislators, and transposition reflection has already started; there is a need to cooperate with EU MS on this, including by reaching out to experts in ministries
* One of the main concerns flowing from public consultations on disability was the issue of the employment gap between people with disabilities and others, so there will be increased attention to the issue of reasonable accommodation at work, including through an awareness raising campaign, which will include leaflets, seminars, website information and other methods.
* The Commission will also continue to pay close attention to de-institutionalisation work in several EU MS, tackling different elements, from mental health to the rights of children..
* The EU has made a formal declaration on the the sharia law declaration to the CRPD by Libya.
* Answering a question of the Framework, the Focal point noted that a meeting between the framework and COHOM would be useful; the Focal Point indicated that the Framework could contact the chair of COHOM on this as in previous ocassions.
* It was agreed that as to the UN CRPD Committee’s concluding observations, it would be useful to follow up on this during the next meeting of the Framework with the Focal Point.
* The timeline is in principle that in January 2020, the list of issues will be sent by the UN CRPD Committee; the Focal Point would send its report by January 2021.
* It was noted that it can take around another year to actually have the dialogue; such dialogues are scheduled only when the report is handed in.
* It was noted that the report, as on previous occasions would contain information on the implementation in the EU institutions.
* It was indicated that there were many legal acts listed in theannex to the EDS progress report where disability has been mainstreamed.
* It was noted that a hearing will be organised by EDF on the implementation of the CRPD, involving the other Framework members
* The Focal Point noted the usefulness of an EC presence as observers during the UN CRPD Committee’s hearings with EU MS as requested by some MSs using the possibility in the Code of Conduct .
* Responding to the question about the situation of the adoption of the Optional Protocol to the CRPD, it was noted that unanimity was needed to achieve EU accession to it, and that the issue will need further discussion in the Council.
* It was also noted by the Focal Point that it would usable that there are CRPD Committee members from the EU knowledgable on EU disability matters.
  + *Updates from EU Framework members on activities to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of the CRPD, including an overview of the Framework's Work Programme*
* Framework members noted the new 2019-20 Work Programme and updated the Focal Point on their various plans during this period and on ongoing activities.
* *FRA* noted its work on political participation of persons with disabilities, particularly its recent paper on participation in EU parliament elections and the continued follow-up to its work on de-institutionalisation. The Focal Point noted the usefulness of the paper on political participation.
* *EDF* noted that the reference to work on legal status would be removed from the work programme.
* EDF pointed out the need for a horizontal antidiscrimination directive to be adopted (current gaps illustrated in EDF Human Rights Report on Equality and Non-Discrimination), and the Focal Point noted that the presidency has put the issue on the agenda.
* EDF also pointed to its work on accessible elections (including dissemination of the report on the right to vote of the ESSC), participation in the evaluation of the European Disability Strategy, the issue of funding needed to implement compliance with convention reflected in EDF advocacy work related to the new EU buget, and the publication of reports three reports since the beginning of the year: on equality and non-discrimination, sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls with disabilitie, and artificial intelligence and emerging technologies. EDF noted that it continues mapping CRPD implementation gaps in its human rights report serieus, and pointed to its next report, which will cover issues of poverty and social exclusion.
* Looking at CRPD Committee review of EU Member States, it was noted that Romania has not reported while the deadline to submit its first report was in 2013, and that there has therefore not been a review by the UN CRPD Committee.
* The Focal Point noted that its contractor has been working on Eurostat-based indicators, ensuring that attention was paid to disability in statistical reports on EU MS.
* The *Ombudsman* closed her strategic inquiry on the [accessibility of the Commission’s websites](https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/cases/case.faces/en/50299/html.bookmark) and online tools for persons with disabilities (OI/6/2017/EA). She was satisfied that the Commission was taking steps to improve web accessibility and made a number of [suggestions](https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/decision/en/107967) to this end. The Commission is to reply to the Ombudsman’s suggestions by 20/6/2019.
* The Ombudsman issued recommendations in her joint inquiry into two complaints concerning the [accessibility of the selection procedures of the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) for visually impaired candidates](https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/opening-summary/en/93856) (1337/2017/EA & 1338/2017/EA). She [asked](https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/recommendation/en/107637) EPSO to ensure that its online application form for selection procedures be made fully compliant with accessibility requirements for visually impaired candidates. She also called for a timely introduction of assistive technologies for candidates during the computer-based tests, which take place in testing centres around the world. EPSO replied that the new IT tool is foreseen to be in place by the end of 2020. EPSO also said that providingassistive technology in 89 test centres worldwide is impossible in terms of infrastructure and technical feasibility. It proposed computer-based tests via remote proctoring for visually impaired candidates. In this way, candidates will not need to travel to test centres and, more importantly, will sit the tests from home in ideal conditions since they will be able to use the technology they are already used to and familiar with. The Ombudsman is currently assessing her next step in this inquiry.
* The Ombudsman’s strategic inquiry on [whether the treatment of persons with disabilities under the Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme (JSIS) complies with the CRPD](https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/case/en/47803) (OI/4/2016/EA) will be closed shortly. The Commission has replied that it will revise the rules governing the JSIS and will take action to follow up on most of the Ombudsman’s suggestions.
* A complaint-based inquiry on de-institutionalisation is ongoing.
* The Ombudsman representative also referred to the Conference of the European Network of Ombudsmen which is to take place in Brussels on 8-9 April 2019.
* In the *European Parliament*, on 5 July 2018, a plenary debate took place on Participation of persons with disabilities in the European elections
* PETI organised its annual event on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 9 October 2018 with two panels on the subjects Legal capacity and Women with disabilities.
* PETI considered several petitions on disabilities issues such as support for family caregivers in Italy, healthcare and social benefits for dependent persons, access to public transport in Romania and problems encountered by persons with disabilities in Bulgaria (with a follow-up to send a letter for opinion to the Bulgarian government).
* TRAN commissioned a study on Transport and tourism for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility.
* A resolution on the situation of women with disabilities was adopted in plenary on 29 November 2018.
* The European Parliamentary Week -the annual European Semester related inter-parliamentary conference with the national parliaments- took place this year, on 18-19 February. This year one of the topics at the EMPL inter-parliamentary committee meeting was “Permanent monitoring and evaluation of Member States’ activities addressed to people with disabilities as integral part of European Semester”.
* - The EP CRPD Network will hold its next meeting on 2 April. The two main topics will be the European Schools and the accessibility of Parliaments’ websites.The EMPL Committee suggested to the European Court of Auditors to include the assessment of the EU budget spent on deinstitutionalisation into their annual work programme.
* The Focal Point informed the Framework about recently adopted standards on how organisations can ensure accessibility outcomes following a design for all approach. In that context, it is also important for standardisation organisations to mainstream the issue of accessibility in their standardisation work.

1. *Upcoming events:*
   * *Work Forum*

* The agenda for the upcoming Commission Work Forum organised by the Focal point was discussed.
  + *Meeting of EU Framework with national monitoring mechanisms*
* It was noted that a meeting would be organised during the mid-May period between the Framework and the national monitoring mechanisms.
  + *European Day of Persons with Disabilities*
* Regarding the European day on people disabilities organised by the Focal point together with EDF at end of November, it was noted that an agenda would be developed later.

1. *AOB*

* It was agreed to invite the Focal Point as an observer to the meeting of the EU framework with national monitoring mechanisms.