|  |
| --- |
| **Meeting of the EU Framework**  **to promote, protect and monitor**  **the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**  **Monday 10 April 2017**  **14.30 – 15.30**  Rue Montoyer 30, room MTS02X34  FRA joins by videoconference |

**Draft minutes**

**Participants**

European Ombudsman (EO): Elpida Apostolidou

European Parliament (EP): Monika Makay, Eloy Rebollo Piriz

European Disability Forum (EDF): An-Sofie Leenknecht

Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA): Ioannis Dimitrakopoulos, Martha Stickings

1. **Welcome and opening**

Martha Stickings opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

1. **Approval of the agenda**

The agenda was approved with no amendments.

1. **Feedback from EU Framework participation at informal COHOM meeting, 7 April in Valletta**

FRA and EDF reported back from the exchange with Member States during the informal COHOM meeting. The Framework’s intervention touched on three main issues: mainstreaming disability issues in the EU’s external actions, updating the declaration of EU competence with respect to the CRPD, and the possibility of the EU ratifying the Optional Protocol to the CRPD.

Additional inputs from representatives of OHCHR and Member States highlighted a number of legal aspects which require consideration prior to the EU’s ratification of the Optional Protocol to the CRPD. These concern, in particular, the identification of relevant ‘domestic’ remedies in the EU context.

COHOM indicated its intention to have a regular discussion on the rights of persons with disabilities.

*Action points:*

* + *Discuss the possibility of the EU’s ratification of the Optional Protocol to the CRPD at a future EU Framework meeting.*

1. **Annual EU-national CRPD Frameworks meeting, 18 May in Brussels**

Organisational matters

Taking into account other scheduled events, there is little flexibility concerning the timing of the meeting. The main available time slot is 18 May 15.00-18.00.

A short preparatory meeting will be organised after Easter to discuss the agenda and format of the meeting in more detail.

*Action points:*

* + *All Framework members to confirm to FRA their availability for 18 May 15.00-18.00 ASAP, preferably before COB 12 April.*
  + *FRA to send out a save the date message to national frameworks as soon as the time slot is confirmed. The message will include a request concerning any reasonable accommodations required.*
  + *European Parliament to explore possibilities for reserving a room (or rooms) for the meeting and check the availability of sign language interpreters.*
  + *FRA to prepare a preliminary agenda for discussion among the Framework.*

Thematic focus

EU Framework members discussed options for a thematic focus for the meeting. Given that the CRPD Committee has just adopted a draft General Comment on Article 19 of the CRPD, it was proposed to focus on the theme of independent living, in particular:

* Areas of EU/shared competence concerning independent living
* European Structural and Investment Funds, including the involvement of national monitoring frameworks in ESIF monitoring committees.

Framework members also discussed possible external experts who could contribute to the discussion:

* CRPD Committee member to present the draft General Comment and identify areas in which they would particularly welcome input.
* Representative of the European Expert Group on the transition from institutional to community-based care, to bring expertise on ESIF monitoring committees.

The outputs of the discussion could then support frameworks’ possible input to the consultation on the draft General Comment.

*Action points:*

* + *Framework members to confirm a thematic focus on independent living.*
  + *FRA to explore presence of a CRPD Committee member; EDF to explore presence of an EEG representative.*

1. **Meeting between EU Framework and EU CRPD Focal Point**

It will likely not be possible to organise this meeting alongside the Work Forum on 19 May due to other pre-existing events. It will therefore be necessary to find a date soon afterwards, possibly alongside a meeting of the EU Framework to reflect on the meeting with national frameworks.

The main aim of the meeting will be to discuss how best to ensure systematic cooperation and coordination between the EU Framework and the CRPD Focal Point.

*Action points:*

* + *FRA to identify a possible date for the meeting.*
  + *All Framework members to send suggestions for agenda points to FRA.*

1. **Implementation of the 2017-2018 Work Programme**

EU Framework members updated on their activities with respect to the 2017-2018 Framework work programme.

European Parliament:

* The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs decided to draw up an implementation report on “Implementation of the European Disability Strategy” in consultation with disability organisations and social NGOs and with the involvement of the other concerned committees of the Parliament. The resolution is foreseen to be adopted before the 4th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities, in December 2017.
* The study on Discrimination and access to employment for disabled female workers is under preparation. It should be finalised in May 2017.
* The minutes of the meetings of the EP CRPD Network and information on the disability related activities of the EP are [available on the European Parliament’s website](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/empl/subject-files.html?id=20170322CDT01321).

European Ombudsman:

* In view of improving the accessibility of her website, the Ombudsman had requested an assessment of accessibility to be carried out by an external service provider. Upon completion of this procedure, the Ombudsman’s website received the AnySurfer label and Web Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 **level AA** label by AnySurfer on 6 April 2017.
* The Ombudsman representative referred to ongoing inquiries on disability-related complaints (i.e. on the Commission’s handling of an infringement complaint concerning the application of the CRPD).

FRA:

* FRA organised a [side event during the last CRPD Committee session](http://fra.europa.eu/en/event/2017/measuring-right-independent-living) in March 2017, at which EDF and the OHCHR also spoke. It focused on how to measure implementation of the CRPD. Such events can be very useful when targeted to on-going Committee work; the EU Framework could consider organising a similar event in the future.
* FRA, in cooperation with CEPOL, organised a webinar on what the CRPD means for the EU public administration. The European Parliament and European Ombudsman also shared their experiences during the webinar, which was recorded and should be [available for download on the EU Framework webpages](http://fra.europa.eu/en/theme/people-disabilities/eu-crpd-framework/resources). Similar webinars could be organised in the future on specific topics.

EDF:

Framework members also discussed two issues of common interest:

* Conference of States Parties to the CRPD:
  + EDF is exploring possible side events e.g. European Accessibility Act, regional organisations and the CRPD, SDGs
  + FRA has been contacted concerning a possible side event on independent living
* Annual thematic focus for EU Framework work. Framework members proposed a range of possible focus areas for the Framework’s activities:
  + - Website accessibility
    - Cohesion policy
    - Review of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and preparation of the post 2020 strategy
    - European Accessibility Act
    - Pillar of Social Rights

*Action points:*

* *Framework members to share information on possible side events during the Conference of States Parties.*
* *Discuss possible topics for thematic focus during the next EU Framework meeting.*

1. **Chair and secretariat roles**

Framework members discussed the chair and secretariat roles. There was broad agreement on separating the chair and secretariat functions, with the chair rotating between different members.

The European Ombudsman representative signalled the possibility of the Ombudsman’s institution taking on the role of chair, provisionally for a two-year period.

*Action points:*

* *All members to inform concerning their agreement for the chair role to move to another member and for FRA to retain the role of secretariat.*
* *European Ombudsman to confirm its openness to becoming chair of the Framework.*
* *Allocation of chair and secretariat roles to be agreed during the next Framework meeting.*

1. **AOB**

No discussion under this point.