## Meeting of the EU Framework to promote, protect and monitor the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) with the European Commission EU CRPD Focal Point

## 15 December 2021, 13:30-15:00 (online meeting)

**Update on relevant activities and exchange of views on CRPD implementation**

### European Commission – The **Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030** is very rich in actions, covering all articles of the CRPD and involving all relevant stakeholders including Member States, civil society and EU institutions. There are 8 areas and 23 actions in which Member States are called upon to take action.

Related **deliverables** since March 2021 include the presentation of a guide on inclusive procurement, including accessibility for persons with disabilities; proposals for a regulation in the area of transport and the adoption of an action plan on the social economy. The Commission is following the schedule and will publish the first steps of the monitoring framework with all details of the actions and the links to the different initiatives soon.

Regarding **monitoring**, important steps were taken: the adoption of the indicator of the employment gap between persons with and without disabilities, for the first time as part of the formal Pillar of Social Rights scoreboard as an indicator (last year it was only the poverty indicator). Eurostat has started to publish the indicators.

The **Disability platform** was launched today as a formal expert group and will have an annual work programme. It enhances the governance of the strategy. Member States representatives are the organisations who act as focal points for the implementation of the CRPD – a wider scope of discussion will therefore be possible.

The **List of issues** for the review of the EU is to be received after their adoption by the Committee in April 2022, and the Commission will have one year to prepare the report.

Notes and questions to the Framework members:

* The CRPD Committee will need clarity as to the different capacities of each Framework members.
* Next year the examination of the functioning of the framework should take place and we could propose actions on that basis. The Commission would like the views of the framework members.
* The UN Special rapporteur for disability, Gerard Quinn will visit the EU and its different institutions, in their capacity as implementing the CRPD but also will probably meet the framework as well – more information to come.

### **Disability card, planned for 2023** European Commission – The EC started internal discussions and clarifications with the DGs notably on free circulation of persons, and with the legal services regarding the legal basis to use. Building on the replies, the EC should envisage and choose the most reasonable political and legal options. Depending on the choice, there might also be the launch of an impact assessment to present a proposal. How to include the parking card with it remains open but the goal would be one proposal as concrete as possible.

The outcome of the pilot actions related to the **disability card** shows the potential for future action. We need to clarify the recognition of the card itself and on the national implications of such a card. The pilot is based on a voluntary setting as to mutual recognition, services and benefits. EC will give updates when there is more information available.

**Labour market and phasing out of the institutions**

European Commission – We are currently working on the **disability employment package** that is large and comprehensive. At the French EU Presidency event on 9 March the EC will present the draft proposal, after agreement by Commissioners Schmit and Dalli. The package will be discussed with the disability platform. The package might be presented during the Czech EU Presidency 2022 for validation.

It will give a boost to the employment of persons with disabilities by introducing measures and deliverables such as

* Working with public employment services so that they have tools at their disposal, like a toolkit to provide guidance to have a more active role.
* Working on the positive actions and combatting stereotypes, in the context of the EMCO group – and all the units of DG employment.
* Focus on reasonable accommodation – employment is difficult without this. An awareness raising campaign on the directive was carried out to address the fact that people do not know how to accommodate persons with disabilities since reasonable accommodation is a personalised measure and employers did not have resources to invest in this.
* Prevention and safety at work – also disability acquired on the job – including skeletal issues and mental health – making sure that measures at taken regarding work safety and accidents, in cooperation with different institutions such as OSHA.
* Issue of sheltered employment and inclusiveness of employment to facilitate transition the open labour market.

### European Disability Forum, EDF – **Next steps of the monitoring framework of the strategy?**

European Commission *–* The monitoring framework aims to be published by the end of 2021, with a monitoring page on the EC’s website. COM will set the basis for the framework. It will consist of 1) data on the situation of persons with disabilities with key gaps and developments to be published; and 2) information on each of the actions, strategies and maybe the commitments that the EC calls the EU Member States to implement and report on.

### EDF – **Action plan on web accessibility planned for 2021 – is the disability platform or the action in general open to input before it is adopted by the EC?**

European Commission *–* The lead is taken by DG communication. It is a technical and communication issue with political priority. It will soon be published. There is a forum with all the webmasters of all EU institutions with the goal to have a web presence on the Europa site.

European Ombudsman – **any updates on internal rules?**

European Commission – An HR strategy is in preparation and soon to be published. In line with the strategy, it will include the employment and recruitment of persons with disabilities in EU institutions. At this stage, there are no specific new rules for reasonable accommodation.

EDF - **Mainstreaming disability actions in DGs, positive development with the proposal to add hate speech and hate crime referring to persons with disabilities? Any news on the EC equality task force**?

European Commission *-* Mainstreaming is done in different ways. It includes horizontal issues for EC initiatives, training on disability policies and mainstreaming open to Commission colleagues in the future. The interservice group works in the various actions and can identify actions where disability needs to be mainstreamed. The system is in place and time is needed to implement the actions. The EC will continue to organise dialogues with civil society and EDF should also participate, so that issues are raised and communicated: the outcome of the strategy is based on the process but is also strongly on the input of the public consultations.

EDF – EDF has been working on an online database to gather cases related to inaccessibility of transport, such as train, airplanes, buses, and other issues faced when using transports. EDF has not launched this **transport database** on the website but gathered already a lot of input: <https://accessibility.edf-feph.org/incidents/>. In relation to the review of the EU by the CRPD Committee, the shadow report of EDF will be sent to the Committee in February. EDF organised some **trainings** for members for the review process, and is considering to **brief the Committee about the role of the EU and EU competencies**, and organise this jointly potentially with other EU CRPD Framework members. Other members are planning to send a joint submission with the key issues.

European Commission – The EC is available to cater the Committee with clarifications.

FRA – The Framework will deliver a common submission. The EC should convey to the Committee any clarifications regarding the interinstitutional Framework of the EU and EU competences.

EDF - The preparatory meeting will be discussed with the Framework once the submission is sent to the CRPD Committee. Some members of EDF will cover different aspects in their reports.

European Ombudsman - Is there any preliminary **information about the revision of the Framework** available?

European Commission – The EC will examine its functioning. There will not necessarily be a revision, but it would be important to hear the views of the Framework members to address concerns while examining the Framework. An external independent study to look at the process would be beneficial, potentially with a contractor. The process will be launched next year 2022.

**Events in 2022**

EDF – EDF will support members from HU and NL with the review of their country by the CRPD Committee next year with training, and will continue to submit information notes to the Committee on European wide issues, with specific issues related to the transposition of EU legislation. Early next year, there will be a human rights report on political participation and the right to vote and a report on reasonable accommodation and employment. EDF is still discussing with the FR Presidency of the Council of the EU whether there will be a board meeting on 10th March in Paris.

FRA – The Agency is carrying on its capacity-building activities with the national monitoring Frameworks and will publish a paper on indicators in the course of 2022. FRA also started a project on EU funds, including the monitoring of the funds spending.

European Ombudsman – The Ombudsman will close the investigation on the use of funds at the beginning of 2022 by a decision to that effect.