**Minutes**

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

**the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) with the EU CRPD Focal Point (Commission)**

**4 October 2022, 11:00-13:00**

*(hybrid meeting)*

*Location: room FRS-03A001, European Ombudsman office, Rue Froissart 87, Brussels)*

1. **Welcome and Opening**

The chair, Alejandro Moledo of EDF, opened the meeting and welcomed participants.

1. **Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was approved.

1. **Preparatory discussion Framework members**

The members of the Framework discussed the issues they wished to raise with the Commission.

1. **Update on relevant activities of the Commission**

The European Commission’s representative, Ms Inmaculada Placencia-Porrero, joined the meeting. She noted that the Commission was working on responses to the List of Issues received from the CRPD Committee in April 2021, which covers many different parts of the Commission services. The list of issues will be shared with Member States and the Framework. The response, will be ready by the end of 2022. There will also be information shared in the EU Disability Platform on the response.

Regarding the implementation of the current disability strategy, the Commission is planning a series of new legislative initiatives. In addition, a call for tender on AccessiblEU was launched and was expected to be signed by the end of the year. An EU accessibility card proposal will also be made in 2023.

On independent living, preparatory work for next year’s initiatives is under way. Discussions within the Commission services on use of EU funds continue, and the Commission will take note of additional guidance from the CRPD Committee on deinstitutionalisation.

A study regarding social protection of persons with disabilities will soon be published. The flagship package for improving labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities was adopted in September 2022 during the Cz Presidency conference. The first deliverable, a toolkit for public employment services, is coming soon, while work will continue with other stakeholders on this issue. The Commission continues to support the adoption of the proposed general equal treatment directive.

On education, a toolkit is to be published and there will be further discussion in the Disability Platform. A study will be launched on the accessibility of healthcare of persons with disabilities. In addition, a number of initiatives are being planned in the area of art, recreation and tourism; the Commission is also engaging in discussions on sports with the international paralympic committee.

On international policy, the Commission’s work continues; a meeting of Ukrainian NGOs was held last year, and the Commission is paying close attention to the situation of persons with disabilities in Ukraine. Regarding EU funds, the needs of persons with disabilities are being taken into account. An awareness-raising-campaign on the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been formally launched.

On monitoring & reporting, the Commission’s reporting framework has been published on the web and indicators are being improved. One example is the inclusion of the disability employment gap in the European Pillar of Social Rights, which was a major step. The Commission continues to produce and share indicators. The Commission also participated in the Conference of States Parties, and made the EU statement as well as prepared and attended a range of side events.

1. **Update on relevant activities of the Framework**

The Framework provided an overview of its recent and upcoming activities, including its contribution to the List of Issues, its recent meeting with prof. Schefer of the CRPD Committee and its upcoming annual meeting with CRPD monitoring frameworks part of the ENNHRI Disability Working Group. The members then proceeded to provide a brief overview of their recent and ongoing activities.

*EDF* noted its participation in the alternative report process ahead of the List of Issues, and pointed out that it had trained its members on the CRPD review process. It also noted its efforts to mainstream disability in its work on reviewing EU legislation, including elections, having just published a report on the electoral situation in the Member States. It also noted its work on the directive on violence against women and on the issues of pay transparency, artificial intelligence, digitalisation of justice and the revision of building energy certificates. It also pointed out that it was working on the implementation of the Disability Strategy as a member of the Disability Platform, where it had recently focused on the disability card, employment & disability and the implementation of the European Accessibility Act. It also noted its work on drawing attention to the situation of persons with disabilities in relation to the Ukraine war.

The *Fundamental Rights Agency* (FRA) noted its upcoming paper on indicators, which contains advice and tips for national monitoring frameworks on how to set up an indicators framework, has gone for editing. It also pointed to its paper on disability-related outcomes of the fundamental rights survey, which will be published in December. It presents a range of results based on FRA’s Fundamental Rights Survey, including experiences of crime victimisation and safety (of relevance to Article 16 CRPD- Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse), discrimination (of relevance to Article 5 CRPD-Equality and non-discrimination), accessibility of services (of relevance to Article 9 CRPD-Accessibility), and rights awareness (of relevance to Article 8 CRPD-Awareness-raising). FRA also noted that it would soon receive the new research from FRANET on the situation of the implementation of the CRPD in the Member States for its annual report chapter. In addition, the Agency is continuing its research on EU funds, and will be working on a paper on the role of national human rights bodies in the EU funding cycle to be published next year. It will also pay attention to the issue of funding of institutions for persons with disabilities in this report.

The *European Ombudsman* noted that it was continuing to deal with complaints, which had been relatively limited in the area of disability recently. It had conducted two investigations looking into disability issues and initiated an inquiry into independent living and EU funds. It will soon also organise a seminar on the web accessibility directive for colleagues from ombudsman offices across Europe.

The *European Parliament* representatives noted that a minimum wage directive had been adopted in plenary, including on persons with disabilities. A LIBE report on equal rights for persons with disabilities was in progress. The Parliament had been represented by EMPL, LIBE and PETI committees at the recent Conference of States Parties (COSP); the Parliament intends to participate in COSP annually. A vote on electoral rights/mobile citizens will take place in November and a vote on the issue of the right to stand as candidate will take place in December. An initiative on AccessibleEU is also under way. The PETI Committee continues to receive petitions, notably on the issue of workplace inclusion. Its annual workshop on the rights of persons with disabilities is to be held on 30 November and will focus on the disability card and recognition of disability status.

1. **Exchange of views**

In response to a question on the examination of the functioning of the Framework foreseen in the 2021-2030 Disability Strategy for 2023, the representative of the Commission noted that what was foreseen was a studyof the practical functioning of the Framework. No decision on the modalities of this point in the Strategy had been taken.

In response to questions on a range of topics, the Commission representative noted pledges made by the Commission related to support of implementation of the CRPD outside of the EU in multilateral for a. A side event was organised to discuss disability policies with the OAS, Arab League, African Union. She pointed out that the Commission’s HR strategy would take a cross-cutting approach to ensure fulfilment of the Commission’s commitment to have an inclusive work environment. It would include measures like job-shadowing and improving virtual and physical accessibility to improve the numbers of persons with disabilities that get jobs in EU Institutions. EU-level standards are to be adopted in the area of employment at the Union which would go beyond requirements set by some local/national laws and which would reinforce efforts to ensure full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the whole cycle of employment. There would be a single entry point and point of contact on disability issues in each of the services.

In relation to the European schools, a disability audit is being conducted at the initiative of the schools, the outcome is not public yet.

There is an Inter-Directorate General working group in the European Parliament on disability - the EP will send details on this.

The Commission will raise the UN review process in upcoming meetings of the Disability Platform.

The Commission’s equality task force will mainstream disability (among other issues), including by engaging in targeted training for Commission personnel; there is also an inter-service group on disability, which focuses on mainstreaming disability.

The Commission will discuss the issue of research into ill-treatment in institutions for persons with disabilities outlined in the Strategy further with the Fundamental Rights Agency. The Agency also raised the idea of an audit of accessibility of EU agencies. The Commission noted that would rather be useful to look at how agencies mainstream disability in their work.

The Commission noted that it may still make some observations on the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities on his visit to the European Union.

1. **AOB**

None.

The Chair recalled the next meetings of the Framework and closed the meeting.