



**DISABILITY INTERGROUP OF THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT**

WORK PROGRAMME 2017-2019

1. The implementation of the UN CRPD Committee recommendations to the EU

The respect of the Convention is monitored by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In 2015, The European Union was reviewed by the CRPD Committee on its progress in implementing the Convention, based on the EU progress report, and received recommendations from the Committee in September 2015. These recommendations are known as the 'concluding observations' (CO) and they give clear guidance to the EU on how to better promote, protect and ensure the rights of persons with disabilities in the EU. The EU review process and the CO were historic in many senses. The EU is the first inter-governmental organisation to ratify any UN human rights treaty and therefore the first to be examined by a UN treaty body. A human rights treaty body has never given recommendations to the EU.

The European Parliament's resolution on the implementation of the UN CRPD (2015/2258) asked the EU to fully implement the recommendations and to ensure that all future legislation, policies and programmes comply with them and with the CRPD.

The EU is expected to send its second comprehensive progress report to the CRPD Committee in January 2021; EU should take action on recommendations received in 2015 to show progress.

At the same time, the CRPD Committee will review a number of individual EU member States in the coming years. As the CRPD is a mixed agreement, there is an interest for both parties (the EU and its member States) to have structures for implementation. The application of the Human rights model of disability, having impact assessment guidelines that ensure CRPD compliance, a structured dialogue with DPOs, the presence of CRPD focal points at all relevant government levels and the existence of an independent and well resourced monitoring body for the CRPD are issues that are crucial for the CRPD Committee. Disability intergroup MEPs will get closely involved in the CRPD review of these countries. MEPs will also promote the active involvement of national DPOs in the national CRPD review processes.

Upcoming issues 2017-2019:

- The follow up to the CRPD Committee recommendations to the EU of September 2015
- The follow up to the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020. The EU needs comprehensive Strategy 2020-2030 for the implementation the CRPD. This strategy should be cross-EU institutions and include budget, timeframe and a monitoring mechanism. It should be mainstreamed into the EU 2030 agenda.
- In 2017, the CRPD Committee will review the work done by the following State parties to implement the CRPD: UK, Latvia, Luxembourg, Cyprus, Slovenia, Bulgaria
- In 2017, second review for Spain and Hungary

2. All citizens must enjoy their right to vote in the 2019 European elections

The 2019 European elections must be fully accessible to persons with disabilities. All citizens with disabilities should be able to enjoy their right to take part in the European elections and to make an informed choice. However, legal, administrative and practical barriers prevent

persons with disabilities from enjoying their right to vote and to stand for election on an equal basis with others.

In the majority of EU Member States, the deprivation of legal capacity of citizens with disabilities results in losing their right to vote. 15 Member States automatically deprive persons with disabilities under guardianship from the right to vote and 6 countries may deprive them after some sort of assessment. Only a minority of countries allow persons with disabilities to fully participate in political life and elections.

Furthermore, the elections themselves are not fully accessible: inaccessible voting procedures and polling stations, incomplete reasonable accommodation provision also hinder persons with disabilities' participation.

Finally information and events related to the elections, whether it is issued by governments, public authorities, political forces or others, are rarely fully accessible to all persons with disabilities. The European parliament official campaign and the TV debates between the top candidates were only partly, or not at all, accessible..

It is also of key importance that the rights of persons with disabilities are adequately addressed within the programmes of political Groups, parties, in the candidates for the European Commission and are included within the EP election campaign.

Upcoming issues 2017-2019:

- EU elections 2019

3. Refugees with Disabilities

We stress that the EU should take a human rights based approach to the migration and refugee crisis. The EU should mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities systematically in its refugee and migration legal framework and policy work. All EU funding to its Member States and neighbouring countries, including Turkey, should as a priority provide support to minors and persons with disabilities, and their families on the move, in particular women and children with disabilities.

4. Free movement, equal access to transport and to goods and services, accessibility

EU Treaties guarantee certain fundamental rights to all citizens of the EU and among those rights are the free movement of persons, goods and services. However, persons with disabilities still face difficulties accessing mainstream goods and services, under the same conditions as any other EU citizen and they do not have the same opportunities as persons without disabilities. They face barriers when studying, looking for a job, travelling, purchasing goods and services or simply accessing information in another EU Member State.

If you want to travel abroad as a person with a disability, it can happen that you are denied boarding on your flight. Studying as an ERASMUS exchange students in another Member State can be difficult if you do not get any additional funding to pay for your personal assistant or

accessible housing in your host country. Applying for a job abroad is made even more difficult if you cannot transfer your social security benefits. It is difficult to have one's disability status recognised in another country, and therefore there are barriers to accessing support services to allow one to live work or study on an equal basis with others. Or simply going on holidays to another Member State and realizing that your disability is not recognized so you do not get the same discounts as local persons with disabilities.

Upcoming issues 2017-2019:

- The adoption and proper implementation of the European Accessibility Act
- The implementation of the web accessibility directive and of the AVMS directive
- Mainstreaming accessibility in all relevant EU legislation concerning the Digital Single Market and the Information Society
- The follow-up to the EU project on a European Disability Card
- EU proposals in the field of transport:
 - o Implementation and revision of the regulation 1300/2014 (TSI-PRM on rail accessibility)
 - o Revision of the regulation 1371/2007 on rail passengers' rights (announced for 2017)
 - o Planned Commission proposal on passengers' rights in all transports modes (expected for 2017)
 - o Planned commission proposal on multimodal ticketing

5. Economic and social inclusion, de-institutionalisation, the right to live independently and be included in the community

The economic crisis as well as the resulting continued austerity measures have had a negative impact on the living conditions of persons with disabilities and on their enjoyment of human rights in many EU Member States. Budgetary measures adopted by the EU and its Member States must not in any way negatively affect the living conditions and of the rights of persons with disabilities. The full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in society, their professional and personal development must be in the focus of legislative work and their implementation.

The CRPD Committee recommended the EU to adopt a social protection floor. The rights enshrined in the CRPD must be mainstreamed in and implemented through the European Pillar of Social Rights, the EU funds, the European Semester as well as in the overarching EU economic and social strategy, present (Europe 2020 Strategy) and future (EU 2020-2030 agenda).

Upcoming issues 2017-2019:

- Commission proposals within the EU Pillar of Social Rights
- Initiatives within the EU skills agenda
- European Semester

6. The new EU multiannual financial framework 2020-2027

The European Union will adopt a new long term budget 2021-2027. The EU should make sure that the new regulations governing the funds are CRPD compliant. In 2013, Parliament played a key role to include specific references to support the transition from institutional to community-based

care as well as accessibility for persons with disabilities as conditions to access to the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). Disability intergroup MEPs will closely follow the EP work on the new regulation governing the funds.

Upcoming issues 2017-2019:

- The revision of the regulations on the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)
- Revisions of other financial instruments

7. Sustainable Development Goals

The SDGs are now a relevant global political framework which concerns all governments, who are expected to have plans for their implementation and monitoring. With 11 explicit references to persons with disabilities under sections on human rights, vulnerable groups, education, employment, reducing inequality, inclusive cities, means of implementation and data, the SDGs are now both an EU domestic issue and an international cooperation issue. The EU should review its policies and priorities on the SDGs to ensure they pay attention to inclusion and accessibility for persons with disabilities

The High Level Political Forum on the SDGs will take place each year in July in New York. In 2017, the HLPF will be from 10 July to 19 July 2017; the theme will be "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world".

8 EU countries will be reviewed in 2017, and the EU should begin to adapt its policies to fully incorporate the SDGs to reach the goal of 'leaving no one behind' in Europe and globally.

8. Accessibility of the European Parliament meetings, communication and processes

The Disability Intergroup will continue working on making the European Parliament a model example of full accessibility of buildings, documents, websites and meetings, and recruitment and employment procedures, to promote and monitor the full implementation of the UN CRPD by the EP, including in its public administration function.

The intergroup will work closely with the Vice-President in charge, with the relevant parliamentary bodies (Bureau Working Group or other new body to be created) and with the EP Unit for Equal Opportunities and Diversity, the Groupe de Travail Inter-Service sur l'accessibilité (GTIS) and the EP Disability Support Group.

The intergroup could also explore reinforcing cooperation with interested external parties, such as the European Ombudsman.

9. Disability awareness raising and communication

The Disability intergroup Members will work to ensure that disability is higher on the European Parliament agenda and will contribute to disability as well as awareness-raising of the UN CRPD, in particular around the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December).

In line with Article 8 of the CRPD all States Parties should promote the CRPD and also combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities. The Disability

Intergroup can provide advice, guidance and leadership to the EP on ensuring all disability related language and communication is aligned to the CRPD.

10. Women and girls with disabilities

The EU should ensure that the rights of women and girls with disabilities are taken into account in all its legislative and policy work on gender equality, women's rights and the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including its upcoming initiatives to address the challenges of work-life balance. The EU and its member States should ratify the Istanbul convention on violence against women, and ban the practice of forced sterilization against women with disabilities.

Upcoming issues 2017-2019:

- initiatives on work-life balance
- initiatives on violence against women – 2017 will be the European year dedicated to combating violence against women

Annex

CALENDAR OF DISABILITY INTERGROUP MEETINGS IN 2017

Date	Time	Kind of meeting	Possible agenda	Co-organisier	Venue
Wednesday 11 January	2.30-4.30	DI Bureau Meeting (<i>in camera</i>)	Joint meeting with EDF executive committee	EDF / DI Bureau	Brussels, EESC (room JDE63)
Thursday 19 January	10-11	Disability intergroup	European Accessibility Act	EDF/S&D Sehnalova	Strasbourg
Monday 23 January evening		Disability intergroup	New year Cocktail	EDF / EPP Plura	Brussels
Thursday 16 February	10-11	Disability Intergroup	European Accessibility Act	EDF/EPP Kósa	Strasbourg
April – to be confirmed		Disability intergroup	CRPD – follow up to EP resolution	EDF/ ECR Stevens	tbc
May- to be confirmed		Disability intergroup	Sustainable Development Goals	EDF / S&D Sehnalova	Brussels
Thursday 6 July	10-11	DI Bureau meeting (<i>in camera</i>)		EDF / GUE/NGL Kuneva	Strasbourg
October (tbc)	tbc	Disability intergroup	Passengers rights/ transports	EDF/Sehnalova/ Kuneva	tbc
October/ November (tbc)	tbc	Disability intergroup	Refugees	EDF/S&D Benifei	Brussels
Tuesday 28 November (tbc)	Full day	4 th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities			Brussels
30 November / 1 December (tbc)	Full days	Commission / EDF conference for the international day of persons with disabilities			Brussels

3 December		International day of persons with disabilities – Disability intergroup press release		
Thursday 14 December	10-11	DI Bureau meeting (<i>in camera</i>)	EDF/Greens Tarand	Strasbourg