



Estonian Presidency  
of the Council of the  
European Union



Kodanikuühiskonna  
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EESTI PUUETEGA INIMESTE KODA  
THE ESTONIAN CHAMBER OF DISABLED PEOPLE



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## **EDF campaign on political participation in view of European elections 2019**

Document for information and discussion

### **Purpose**

Update Board members on the recent developments in relation to political participation of persons with disabilities in which EDF has been involved and discuss plans for 2018. The work on political participation is led by Pat Clarke in the EDF executive, with Albert Prevos as substitute. Etienne Cuhe provides support from the EDF secretariat.

**Moderator:** Pat Clarke

**Speaker:** Krzysztof Pater, EESC rapporteur on the right to vote

EDF national councils and ENGOS invited to give an overview of the enjoyment of the right to political participation in their country.

**Questions for discussion: Do you have update from your country or organisation, on progress on political participation, or specific persistent challenges?**

### **EESC report on the right to vote – update and DPOs consultation**

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) continues to work on an own-initiative report on 'the right of persons with disabilities to vote in European Parliament elections', with the help of EDF, which was nominated as expert. The rapporteur, Mr. Krzysztof Pater (Poland) will attend the Board meeting. The EESC plans to adopt the report in January 2018.

The EESC rapporteur has always underlined the importance for him to collaborate with DPOs. He invited EDF members to send inputs about the situation in their member States and for their disability groups during the first data collection phase, in spring, which focused on legal capacity. More than 15 EDF member organisations submitted input, and so did many members of our members. A hearing was held at the EESC in Brussels in June. From the end of September, a second survey will be sent to EDF members, focusing on the accessibility of the voting process itself for persons with



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disabilities. By contributing widely, EDF membership can ensure that the rapporteur looks at all obstacles faced by all disability groups.

### **Update on the OSCE programme on Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Political and Public life**

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR, an internal body of the regional security organization OSCE promoting democracy and Human rights) continues its programme on Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Political and Public life in the OSCE region. It has established an expert advisory group, of which EDF is a member (through Pat Clarke, focal person in the executive committee responsible for the topic).

Recent and upcoming activities/ events include:

- An event in Warsaw on 12 September 2017, during the annual OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, the adopted a [handbook on election observation missions](#), with advises to election observers regarding monitoring the proper enjoyment of their right to vote by persons with disabilities, as well as a [booklet, “Persons with Disabilities and Ensuring their Right to Participate in Political and Public Life”](#).
- The ODIHR is planning a public seminar at the European Parliament in Brussels on the involvement of persons with disabilities by political parties, in collaboration with MEP Helga Stevens. This is foreseen to take place in mid November. EDF secretariat will disseminate information as soon as we have it.

### **EDF activities for 2018**

Political participation will be one of the three main themes on the agenda of the 4<sup>th</sup> European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities. The event will kick off EDF's campaign in view of the European elections 2019. It is proposed to follow-up with the following activities:

- Presentation of EDF Manifesto on the European elections to EU institutions, political parties and candidates. Dissemination of the Manifesto and possible joint actions with other CSOs (eg. the European Youth Forum and European Movement will launch a joint website, called 'On our watch' inviting human rights and social NGOs to disseminate their Manifestos).



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- Adoption of an EDF position paper on the right to vote for persons with disabilities and presentation of the report at the European Parliament during a disability intergroup meeting
- Adoption of recommendations on the accessibility of elections information published by EU institution, to disseminate to the institutions.
- Participation in the European Commission high level event on democratic participation with a particular focus on encouraging best practices to increase the participation of young people and vulnerable and underrepresented groups. The Commission is interested in receiving suggestions of good practices that promote democratic participation of persons with disabilities.