

Resolution on the Rome Summit

Adopted by the EDF board on 19th February 2017 in Malta

In 1957 a group of European Nations joined forces to build a peaceful common future in Europe, and to create a stable and prosperous continent for all Europeans. The European Union (EU) has grown in size and ambition over these 60 years. As we mark the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, the European Disability Forum (EDF) calls on the leaders of the European institutions and Member States to reaffirm their commitment to the vision of a European Union that promotes, protects and ensures the civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights of everyone, promotes democratic participation of civil society in its decision making processes and sees persons with disabilities and their families as an integral part of a sustainable and thriving Europe.

At this time, the EU is facing a number of challenges. EDF reaffirms its belief in a strong and united Europe, and calls on heads of States to recommit to a Europe for and with all, where Europeans with all their diversity have equal rights and opportunities and the EU is a place where human rights are respected and justice is upheld.

- Recalling that today in 2017 there are 80 million persons with disabilities in the EU and by 2020 more than 100 million Europeans will have a disability;
- Recalling that the EU and all EU Member States, except Ireland which is working on the process, have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD);
- Recalling that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that all people by virtue of their humanity are holders of human rights;
- Considering that unemployment, poverty, exclusion and inequalities remain at unacceptable levels and have grown across Europe and the EU;
- Considering that disability has an impact on the lives of persons with disabilities themselves, but also on the persons close to them, such as their parents, mothers and care givers, and that all forms of discrimination have to be abolished, including discrimination by association;



- Recalling that persons with disabilities and their families have been faced with drastic cuts in social services and benefits, leading to re-institutionalization of persons with disabilities who are often deprived of their freedom and legal capacity;
- Highlighting that persons with disabilities and their representative organisations are not fully involved and in a position to contribute with their expertise in decision making and implementation processes on matters that concern them;
- Underlining that freedom of movement is one of the four basic freedoms under the EU Treaties and that currently persons with disabilities cannot exercise this right fully and freely;
- Underlining that most of the goods and services in the EU internal market are not fully accessible to persons with disabilities;
- Recalling that millions of refugees need support and that people with disabilities and their families are often unable to travel and to escape from war and misery, and when they are able to do so, the experience is dangerous;

EDF calls on the European Council meeting in Rome on March 25th to:

- o ensure that the final summit political declaration includes and fully mainstreams the CRPD and the rights of persons with disabilities and their families;
- o revitalise a European project which will guarantee to all individuals a future based on democracy and freedom, human rights and equality, autonomy and liberty of choice, social justice, human dignity, solidarity, participation of all persons with disabilities in society, peace and environmental sustainability.

Furthermore EDF calls on the EU to:

- ° fully implement the CRPD and to adopt an overarching and comprehensive strategy for its implementation with a new Disability Rights Agenda 2020-2030 in a way to support persons with disabilities in their life choice and participation in society;
- ° swiftly ratify the Optional Protocol which establishes procedures to strengthen the protection of the rights in the CRPD for all persons in Europe;



° 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 CRPD;

EDF urges the Council of the EU to end the blockage of the Equal Treatment Directive (COM(2008)426) and the EU to swiftly adopt this legislation banning discrimination based on religion, belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, in all aspects of life, including multiple discrimination and discrimination by association.

Furthermore EDF calls on:

° the European Parliament and the Council to adopt a strong and ambitious European Accessibility Act, with a broad scope of goods and services, including Audiovisual Media Services, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), e-books, transport and the built environment where products and services are provided, in order to make a real difference in the daily life of the 80 million Europeans with disabilities at the same time to facilitate the life of all Europeans;

° the European Commission to ensure that the CRPD is fully integrated in the final text of the European Pillar of Social Rights, and to invest in social and community-based services which should play a key role in the Country-Specific Recommendations within the European Semester to guarantee the achievement of the Europe 2020 targets.

Finally, EDF calls on the EU and Member States to:

- adopt national action plans on the rights of persons with disabilities, the autonomy to make their own life decisions, participation in society, and take measures to prevent that persons with disabilities and their families live in poverty ;
- strengthen national, regional and local organisations of persons with disabilities in order for them to fulfil their mission to promote and represent the interests of persons with disabilities;
- ensure that funding of national, regional and local organisations of persons with disabilities is enshrined in appropriate laws and regulations according to the obligations stated in articles 4.3 and 33.3 of the CRPD;
- promote the setting up and launch of national plans to train experts with disabilities in order to enable them to share their experiences and contribute with their expertise in



all domains, with a particular emphasis on empowerment, accessibility, housing, transportation, employment, access to justice and to health care;

- welcome refugees, and work with the appropriate institutions to end of the armed conflicts that oblige them to flee from their homes, in particular persons with disabilities who live in a condition of permanent insecurity.