

### Overview of EDF actions on the MFF

EDF is advocating around a number of regulations within the Cohesion and Values strand of the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework. We are working in particular on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR), Erasmus+ and the Regulation establishing the Rights and Values Programme. Below you can see a brief explanation of our actions for each Regulation. Under the Neighbourhood and the World strand, we will be working on the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) as well as the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA-III).

### ESF+

#### What is it?

The European Social Fund Plus will be a more flexible and simpler version of the current European Social Fund. It will support the principles of the European pillar of social rights and the implementation of recommendations under the European Semester, provide a helping hand to youth, foster social inclusion, and support actions for social innovation, mobility and health.

#### What are our key priorities?

The key priorities for ensuring that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the use and consequential benefits of the ESF+, are the following: the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) must be maintained and strengthened across all regulations and included in the legal basis of the ESF+ regulation (see Citation), attention should be given to the explicit inclusion of persons with disabilities in all actions targeting most marginalised people (see Article 4 and 6 and Recital 13, 16, 18 and 26), funds should not be invested in inaccessible infrastructure, products or services (see Article 6 and 23), and inclusive accessible and meaningful involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations should be guaranteed (see Article 8 and 23).

#### What action have we taken so far?

Before the deadlines for tabling amendments for each of the Regulations, EDF met in person with each of the rapporteur, MEP Lope Fontagné (EPP) in the European Parliament. The EDF team presented their suggested amendments in full in writing, and then outlined those amendments that are a priority for persons with disabilities (as outlined in the section above). We also met with MEP Estaràs from the Disability Intergroup who is supporting the rapporteur in tabling amendments, and they agreed to accept EDF's proposed amendments as they were. EDF then met with a number of shadow rapporteurs from different parties to share the same proposed amendments with them.

## **ERDF**

### **What is it?**

The European Regional Development Fund invests in infrastructure, innovation and research, the digital agenda, support for **small and medium-sized enterprises** (SMEs) and the low-carbon economy. Its funding of infrastructure and the digital agenda in particular are why it is important to mainstream a focus on disability throughout the text.

### **What are our key priorities?**

The key priorities for ensuring that **persons with disabilities are not excluded** from the use and consequential benefits of the ERDF, are the following: References to the CRPD need to be maintained and strengthened across all regulations and included in the legal basis; **no ESIF, ERDF included, should be invested in inaccessible infrastructure, products or services; the transition from institutional to community-based care should be restored as an investment**; ERDF should under no circumstances be used to build inaccessible infrastructure or ICT; and **it should be possible to invest in accessible housing, using the ERDF** in the same sense as investment in housing is possible for energy efficiency.

### **What action have we taken so far?**

EDF met with the office of rapporteur, MEP Cozzolino, to convey our key requests. Following this meeting, EDF send the rapporteur proposals for the wording of key **amendments**, in order that they could be copied in to the reports.

In order to strengthen its approach, EDF also contacted and transferred proposed amendments to all of the shadow rapporteurs for the ERDF meeting with a number of them in person or by phone to highlight key issues to pay attention to. This was also done for MEPs drafting opinions from other Parliamentary Committees.

## **CPR**

### **What is it?**

The Common Provision Regulation is a piece of **over-arching legislation** that applies to various EU funding programmes, **including the ESF+ and the ERDF**. It outlines rules that must be followed for the use of funds, including **partnership, governance and monitoring principles**. In its annexes it also outlines the all-important horizontal and thematic enabling conditions; the criteria by which projects must adhere to be eligible for EU funding.

### **What are our key priorities?**

Through our proposed **amendments**, the European Disability forum would like to underline the following key principles to ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities are not overlooked in the Common Provisions Regulation. Firstly, since the EU and all of its members have now ratified the UN CRPD, references to the Convention need to be maintained and strengthened across all regulations and included in the legal basis of all the regulations. Furthermore, no European funding

should be invested in inaccessible infrastructure, products or services and therefore the accessibility provisions should be strengthened in Common Provisions Regulation. Of key Importance to EDF will be the reinsertion of Article 7 on the Promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination, and the explicit mention of accessibility for persons with disabilities in the criteria outlined in Article 67. It is also crucial that the involvement of persons with disabilities and their **representative organisations be ensured in the partnership and governance principle** (Article 6), as well as in **monitoring committees** (Article 34).

### **What action have we taken so far?**

EDF met in person with the rapporteur, MEP Krehl, and the office of the co-rapporteur, MEP Novakov. Following this meeting, on a basis of where agreements with the rapporteur and co-rapporteur were deemed possible during discussions, EDF send the MEPs proposals for the wording of key **amendments**.

In order to strengthen its approach, EDF also contacted and transferred proposed amendments to all of the shadow rapporteurs for the CPR, meeting with a number of them in person or by phone to highlight key issues to pay attention to. This was also done for MEPs drafting opinions from other Parliamentary Committees.

Moving forward EDF is continuing to monitor the amendments that are tabled and will be active in advocating around the votes to accept or reject the tabled amendments. We will also be meeting with the Spanish Permanent representation to the EU, alongside the ONCE Foundation, to gage where possible allies and resistance can be found within the Council. On this basis we will be reaching out to other Permanent Representations in Brussels and stressing the elements in the regulations that need to be safeguarded.

### **Regulation establishing the Rights and Values Programme**

#### **What is it?**

It comes under Cohesion and Values heading of the MFF. It replaces the Rights Equality and Citizenship programme, and is therefore the **programme which funds DPOs at the European level**. However, the programme has been merged with Europe for Citizens and contains additional objectives related to national issues **without significantly expending budget**.

Commenté [DV2]: DPO = disability people organisations

#### **What are our key priorities?**

- **Maintenance on the focus on CRPD and anti-discrimination**
- **Reinstatement of Gender Equality Stream**
- **Adequate budget provision**

#### **What action have we taken so far?**

Coordination with anti-discrimination networks and participation of the Economic and Social Committee hearings and report. In June 2018 we sent an [open letter to the Commission](#).

## **NDICI**

### **What is it?**

The NDICI stands for **Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument**. This instrument will channel the biggest share of external action funds, with a budget of €89.2 billion. It will be the EU's main tool to contribute to eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development, prosperity, peace and stability.

The NDICI is organised into 3 pillars and one flexibility cushion:

- The **geographic pillar** will provide €68 billion worth assistance to foster dialogue and cooperation with third countries.
- The **thematic pillar**, with €7 billion, will fund support to human right and democracy, civil society, stability and peace. It will complement activities in the geographic pillar.
- The **rapid-response pillar**, with €4 billion, will allow the EU to rapidly and effectively intervene for conflict prevention and to respond to situations of crisis or instability.
- The **additional flexibility cushion**, worth €10.2 billion, will allow the EU to account for emerging challenges and priorities.

For an overview of the NDICI, please consult this [link](#).

### **What are our key priorities?**

- Establishing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its motto of leaving no one behind as the core vision for the NDICI.
- **Mainstreaming disability in geographic as well as in thematic programmes**, with particular attention to women and girls with disabilities.
- Guaranteeing that EU funding on Development Cooperation respect and fulfil the principle of aid effectiveness for ODA-eligible actions.
- Recognising Civil Society as a key actor for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and sustainable development and therefore, establishing a mechanism to ensure active and meaningful participation in the decision-making process, from planning to implementation and monitoring. Representative organisations of persons with disabilities must be included and supported in order to leave no one behind.
- Including a disability policy marker to measure the implementation and monitoring of the NDICI. Currently, there is no indicators providing a clear overview of the allocation of resources that benefit persons with disabilities. There are no means to track the progress made towards the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development and cooperation programmes.
- Including data disaggregation by disability to accomplish the objective of "focusing on a smaller number of higher quality performance indicators". This data should be disaggregated according to the Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Disability.
- Ensuring that any EU investments in infrastructure and services will be allowed only if they lead to fully accessible outcomes, so that persons with disabilities benefit from the funding, guided by the universal design principle.

- Freezing EU funds when they have breached human rights until adequate policy reforms take place. The freezing of the funds should be complemented with softer means such as dialogue with governments to ensure compliance to human rights agreements.

#### **What action have we taken so far?**

EDF have partnered with the International Disability and Development Consortium to develop a position paper with our key policy asks (see previous section). The position has been endorsed by the African Disability Forum, the Arab Organisation of Persons with Disabilities, the ASEAN Disability Forum, Hope and Homes for Children, the International Disability Alliance, RIADIS and Terre des Hommes. This position paper has been published along key amendments we would like to see in the NDICI.

We shared these documents with the rapporteurs of NDICI, as well as MEPs. We are now going to send them to Commissioner Mimica (International Development), Commissioner Oettinger (Budget) and Commissioner Thyssen (Social Affairs) and we are also going to follow-up with the rapporteurs, the MEPs to request meetings and member states. Additionally, we will have a webinar online to raise awareness on the issue. The webinar will be on the 29<sup>th</sup> October, and will focus on Financing for Development, the MFF and NDICI. DG DEVCO will speaking along with CBM and EDF. Finally, an event will be planned at the European Parliament in December, during the European Disability and Development Week to raise awareness and launch a study on the topic in collaboration with Bridging the Gap.

The position paper is available [here](#), the amendments are available on [this link](#).

#### **IPA-III**

##### **What is it?**

The third Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA-III) will be the means by which the EU supports reforms in the 'enlargement countries' with financial and technical assistance during the period of 2021-2027. The pre-accession funds assist the beneficiaries to **make political and economic reforms, preparing them for the rights and obligations that come with EU membership**. Those reforms should provide their citizens with better opportunities and allow for development of standards equal to the ones enjoyed by citizens of the EU. The pre-accession funds also help the EU reach its own objectives regarding a sustainable economic recovery, energy supply, transport, the environment and climate change, etc.

Commenté [DV3]: Pays candidats à rentrer dans l'UE

##### **What are our key priorities?**

EDF aims to ensure that all persons with disabilities are sufficiently recognized and acknowledged within the IPA-III as a population which requires targeted support to ensure they can enjoy their rights on an equal basis with others.

Key priorities include: **fostering the transition from institutional to family and community-based care through targeted investments**; ensuring the IPA-III places the best interests of the child at the core of its investments and makes explicit references to the CRC and the CRPD; the instrument should prevent any form of investments in

institutions; it should ensure that disabled persons organisations (DPO'S) are involved meaningfully in all stages of the design, programming and implementation of the IPA III; and funding should be allocated and used in line with strategic policy frameworks that include actions related to deinstitutionalisation reforms, in line with internal EU funding instruments (ERDF and ESF+).

#### **What action have we taken so far?**

EDF have partnered with organisations such as UNICEF, LUMOS, Hope and Homes and Inclusion Europe to develop a position paper which aims at ensuring explicit support for deinstitutionalisation of all children, including children with disabilities in line with EU internal policy. In addition, key amendments will be published.

EDF aims to strengthen their position by identifying and contacting key EU rapporteurs with the aim of our recommendations being copied into reports and considered.

#### **Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)**

##### **What is it?**

The funding programme related to infrastructure and mobility such as railways, roads, bridges, etc.

##### **What are our key priorities?**

- Accessibility for persons with disabilities is a right and the CEF needs to reflect this accordingly
- Objectives: The objectives of the programme mentioned in Article 3 should also include accessibility as a specific point
- **Eligibility Criteria: Accessibility for all users**, including persons with disabilities, shall remain one of the key eligibility criteria referred to in Article 9
- **Award Criteria**: The award criteria in Article 13 should favour projects that improve and support accessibility; No EU funding shall be granted to projects that promote and sustain inaccessible infrastructure
- **Monitoring**: Accessibility shall be added to the list of key indicators in part I of the Annex

#### **What action have we taken so far?**

We met with one of the co-Rapporteurs (MEP Telicka); we sent our Amendments to the TRAN committee and they all got tabled; we issued a common statement with the Railway operating companies asking for increased funding and accessibility as an award criterion.

#### **Erasmus +**

##### **What is it?**

Erasmus+ is the European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport. It is open to education, training, youth and sport organisations across all sectors of lifelong learning, including school education, further and higher education, adult education and the youth sector.

#### **What are our key priorities?**

- For definitions used in the regulation to be in line with the UN CRPD
- To take into account the need for reasonable accommodations and making sure the online tools comply with the existing EU Web Accessibility Directive
- To ensure that the cost of inclusion by itself cannot be the reason to deny someone the opportunity to participate in the new Erasmus+ Programme
- To encourage National Agencies to support and select projects where the main actors are people with fewer opportunities.

#### **What action have we taken so far?**

EDF has created a full set of proposed amendments to the Commission's text. We are currently in contact with the rapporteur, the shadow rapporteurs and other key allies within the Disability Intergroup in order to push for these to be tabled.

We are also part of the Erasmus Coalition that gathers NGOS dealing with the programmes such as the European Youth Forum, Long Life learning Platform, Erasmus Students Network etc. Together, the Coalition launched a survey to collect stories from people who did a mobility project to better illustrate our position.

### **European Solidarity Corps (ESC)**

#### **What is it?**

The European Solidarity Corps is the new European Union initiative which creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe.

#### **What are our key priorities?**

- For definitions used in the regulation to be in line with the UN CRPD
- To take into account the need for reasonable accommodations and making sure the online tools comply with the existing EU Web Accessibility Directive
- To ensure that the cost of inclusion by itself cannot be the reason to deny someone the opportunity to participate in the European Solidarity Corps.

#### **What action have we taken so far?**

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