

## EDF Code of Conduct

### Purpose of this document

As part of EDFs due diligence obligations under DFID funding, a Code of Conduct is required. This document was drafted by the secretariat, drawing on existing resources.

### Introduction

The European Disability Forum (EDF) is an umbrella organisation of persons with disabilities that defends the rights of 80 million persons with disabilities in Europe. EDF is a unique platform which brings together organisations of persons with disabilities from across Europe. EDF is run by persons with disabilities and their families. It is a strong voice of and for persons with disabilities in Europe.

The European Disability Forum is committed to doing its work in the interests of all persons with disabilities and their families, accountability to the public and to EDF supporters, responsible management of resources, and the highest ethical standards. This Code of Conduct and Ethics does not cover every issue and challenge which might arise, but provides the basic principles to guide staff, members, governing bodies and EDF's partners. EDF values are supported by policies and procedures that apply to EDF secretariat and governing bodies. EDF Code of Conduct should be understood and interpreted together with the [EDF Statutes](#).

### Personal and Professional Integrity

All staff, board members and any other representative such as committee members, will act with honesty, integrity and openness in their work. The organisation promotes a working environment that values respect, fairness, dignity, and integrity.



## Vision and Mission

The European Disability Forum has a clearly defined vision, mission and purpose, approved by the Annual General Assembly when adopting its strategic framework in 2017. All of the organisation's advocacy work is aligned to that mission and all who work for or on behalf of EDF are expected to understand the vision, mission and purpose.

EDF's vision is that persons with disabilities in Europe must be fully included in society on an equal basis with others and that human rights, as outlined in the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), are fully respected, protected and fulfilled. The principles of the CRPD are central to this vision, and they inform EDF advocacy objectives and way of working.

The mission of EDF is to ensure persons with disabilities' full inclusion in society and respect of their rights through active involvement in policy- making, implementation and monitoring of the CRPD in Europe.

EDF is committed to a strong and inclusive European Union, where the right to live, travel, work, study, vote or be elected, is guaranteed to all citizens in the Union, and where women, men and children with disabilities enjoy these rights on an equal basis with others. EDF sees the EU as a crucial actor to promote the rights and well-being of all people in every Member State, including of asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants arriving to the European borders.

This also means that EU should safeguard/protect from discrimination all persons regardless of age, sex, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, disability, racial heritage, ethnicity, nationality, legal status, political views or affiliation, personal convictions, religious belief, sexual orientation, appearance or cultural background, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity family structure or a combination of these. A diverse, equality-driven European Union which enables the full social and political participation of its entire population, actively removing the barriers faced by all marginalised and discriminated people, is necessary for a thriving and democratic society.

EDF is convinced that the EU can/should also play a key role in promoting human rights in the European region and globally, in particular under its neighbourhood, enlargement, development and international cooperation policies and engagement at the UN level.



By acting collectively, EDF, and its members and partners aim to advocate together for a strong social and human rights-based Europe, where democratic and active civil participation is continuously practiced and improved. The European Union institutions themselves, and the European Disability Forum, should embody the human rights principles of participation, non-discrimination and ownership in the way that they work.

EDF is committed to diversity and ensuring within its own work that no one is left behind. All persons with disabilities should be free to make their own choices and to have the same possibilities and chances in their life as other people.

In particular, EDF is committed to ensuring that the voices of the most marginalised persons with disabilities are heard and are central to its work; including women, youth and children with disabilities, persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, deafblind persons, persons with disabilities requiring more intensive support and asylum-seekers and refugees with disabilities. The role of youth with disabilities in EDF is promoted to ensure we influence EU youth policy, but also to nurture the future of the disability movement. To do so, EDF implements strategies and activities to empower, build capacity and strengthen leadership skills at all levels.

EDF is committed to work with other human rights and non-discrimination organisations to ensure that the rights of persons at risk, or facing, multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination, are respected.

## Values

EDF's values are built on the general principles enshrined in article 3 of the CRPD:

- Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
- Non-discrimination;
- Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- Equality of opportunity;
- Accessibility;

- Equality between men and women;
- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

## Governance

The organisation has active governing bodies that are responsible for setting the mission and strategic direction, and managing oversight of the finances, operations and policies. Full information on EDF governing bodies is available to the public on EDF's website including:

- EDF statutes
- Members comprising EDF Board and executive committee
- Main outcomes of EDF Board and Annual General Assembly (AGA) meetings

The Board is elected every four years; in turn, the Board elects the Executive Committee which ensure that:

1. The Executive Director and relevant staff provide all governing bodies (the Executive Committee, the Board and the AGA) with timely and comprehensive information so that they can effectively carry out their duties.
2. EDF conducts all its activities with inclusiveness, integrity and honesty.
3. EDF promotes working relationships with members, donors, partners, board members, staff and consultants that are based on mutual respect, fairness, and openness.
4. EDF is fair, transparent, and inclusive in its hiring and promotion policies and practices for all staff.
5. Policies of the organisation are in writing, clearly articulated, put in an accessible format, officially adopted and disseminated in line with EDF Open Information Policy.
6. The resources of EDF, both human and financial, are responsibly and carefully managed.
7. EDF has the capacity to carry out its advocacy work effectively and together with its members.

The staff and governing bodies are expected to follow the Belgian law (in particular the company code, <http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/eli/loi/2019/03/23/2019A40586/justel>) and applicable international conventions.

### Responsible management of finances

EDF manages its funds responsibly and carefully. The staff and Board members ensure that:

1. There is are adequate staff and external expertise (accountancy and auditing) to ensure effective accounting systems and internal controls.
2. Staff compensation is reasonable and appropriate, and in line with the norms for the NGO sector in Brussels.
3. All spending practices and policies are fair and reasonable, and take into full consideration inclusion, accessibility and reasonable accommodation.
4. All financial reports are accurate and complete.

### Openness and Disclosure

EDF strives to be as open and transparent as possible. This means proactively sharing timely, accessible, relevant and clear information about the organisation and its activities, as well as answering requests for information.

EDF has developed its open information policy to proactively share information with the general public, unless EDF has clear reasons not to share the information.

### Evaluation

EDF is committed to continuous improvement and uses a range of methods to monitor and evaluate its work.

The core monitoring of EDF takes place:

- At five Executive Committee meetings per year which provide detailed oversight into progress on work plan, activities and results.



- At the EDF Board meetings, twice per year, and at the AGA once per year, where progress on work plan and its activities are reported with a presentation of a detailed activity report.

Each Board and AGA meeting is also evaluated at the meeting itself, and in an online anonymous survey.

EDF conducts external evaluations every two years, hiring an external evaluator through an open call for tenders, and publishes the summary of the evaluation online.



### EDF Non Discrimination Policy

The European Disability Forum does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, clients, volunteers, subcontractors, vendors, and clients.

The European Disability Forum is an equal opportunity employer. We will not discriminate and will take affirmative action measures and fight against discrimination in employment, recruitment, advertisements for employment, compensation, termination, upgrading, promotions, and other conditions of employment against any employee or job applicant on the bases of race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

### EDF work on non-discrimination

Equality and non-discrimination constitute a basic and general principle relating to the protection of human rights of all persons. It is an indivisible part of international human rights law, binding on all Member States of the European Union and the European Union itself, founded on the principles of democracy, respect of human rights and the rule of law.

Despite this fact, the discrimination of people with disabilities remains a daily reality in Europe, ranging from more visible forms (such as segregated education and denial of employment opportunities) to more subtle forms (such as imposition of physical, psychological and social barriers), resulting in social exclusion of persons with disabilities.

Over the past 20 years, protecting the rights of disabled people all over Europe has been EDF's number one priority and objective.

When raising funds, the organisation acts with integrity at all times.

EDF respects the privacy concerns of individual donors, using donors resources in line with EDF agreements with them, and disclosing all important and relevant information to potential donors.

EDF presents financial information on its website and annual report, so it is fully available to the public.

EDF raises money from a range of sources including institutional donors, such as the European Commission, foundations and others. EDF can engage in Corporate Sponsorship activities in line with its [Corporate Sponsorship Guidelines](#).

## Reporting Procedures

Staff is encouraged to seek guidance from the Director or President concerning the interpretation or application of this Code. Board members are also encouraged to approach the President or other appropriate Board members with concerns or questions. EDF Women and Youth Committee members are encouraged to approach their focal point from the Executive Committee to address their concerns regarding this code. Any breaches of this Code should be disclosed to the Executive Committee. Reports of possible breaches should follow the procedures outlined in EDF's Whistleblower Protection Policy.