# Minutes of the EDF Board Meeting held online on 23 October 2020

## Venues : <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAqfuqvrzgjE9ftSWHdgDGbaD1sAjVec-Ix>, <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMlfuigqTwtEtMnKoVvx4AUynXtf-RDmMBt>

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Vice-president apologies Gabor Petri, Nadia Hadad, Luisa Bosisio as well as the President. He opened the meeting and gave the floor to the Director who gave some information with regards to the practicalities with regards to the online meeting process. She explained, among others, the accessibility features provided such as captioning and Sign language interpretation. She went through the agenda that was adopted with no changes.

1. President and Executive Committee report (DOC-BOARD-20-10-01)

The Vice-President presented the report. No comment was made.

1. Report on 2020 main achievements (DOC-BOARD-20-10-02)

The Vice-President presented the report on main achievements. No comment was made.

1. EDF finances (DOC-BOARD-20-10-03)

The EDF Vice-President gave the floor to the Treasurer who went through the financial situation and presented the interim accounts for 2020. She explained that, due to the particular conditions this year, some underspending would result at the end of the year. She mentioned in particular the cancellation of the AGA in Croatia, the Board in Berlin, etc. She added that some of the underspent amount has been reallocated to meeting facilities and accessibility features and to the consultancy costs linked to Human Right Report and that this was done in agreement with the EC project officer. She also mentioned that some project expenses were also impacted by the impossibility to travelling.

She mentions that income for this year would allow us to meet expenses. She thanked the members for paying their fees and encouraged the members who had not already done so, to check and pay their fee as soon as possible. She mentioned the importance of the unrestricted and sponsorship funding that we have obtained and should continue to chase.

She added that staff costs were not creating any over or underspending due to the full capacity of staff used this year.

She mentioned that the cashflow position was currently very good and would remain so until the payment of the next EC Grant in 2021 but that we expected the next year to be complicated due to the Covid-19 situation.

Finally, she mentioned the outcome of the EC financial control that shows a small amount of 4000 € of rejected expenses which were a very good result. She insisted on the need to gather documents, signatures and all evidence of persons attending to meetings.

Following a question of the Board, the Director clarified that 2021 was the fourth year of the EC framework agreement and that a new framework contract would need to be set up from then. She also mentioned that EU funding should be accessible to national associations and that this was closely followed up in the framework of social policies.

1. Membership update (DOC-BOARD-20-10-04)

The Vice-President gave the floor to the EDF secretary, also chair of the Membership and Credentials committee who presented this item.

Gunta Anca, explained that three organizations applied for membership to EDF: CBM Global Disability Inclusion, The European Council of Autistic People, Special Olympics Asia Foundation). She explained that an email was sent to all Board members in order to receive their vote about the membership of these applications. The Secretary explained that details of the applications were included in the attached document.

The Director reminded the board of the particular interest to include in the membership association with a global international scope in order to highlight CRPD work and to attract various funding.

1. European Disability Rights Agenda (DOC BOARD-20-10-05) and external speaker

The Vice-President gave the floor to the Director. She explained that the external speaker had been apologized.

The Director reminded that the EU had committed to adopting a strengthened European Disability Strategy early in 2021, that in June 2020, EDF adopted its position paper regarding the post-2020 European Disability Strategy and initiated some advocacy activities. She added that, however, except for a round of consultations held by the European Commission (EC) early July, there had not been any major developments since, that there was no draft strategy published, or any outline of a strategy, nor was the report of the external evaluation published.

She explained that the purpose of this agenda item was to present the state of play of the EDF continuous advocacy plan on the European Disability Rights Agenda at the European level, as well as to hear from EDF’s board members which actions they wished to undertake at the national level.

1. Update on Social Policy (DOC-BOARD-20-11-08)

The Vice-President gave the floor to Rodolfo Cattani and Haydn Hammersley who gave an update from the human rights committee held the day before.

Haydn explained that the Social Policy and Inclusion Committee spoke about the new budget (MFF) and new COVID-19 recovery package (Next Generation EU). An overview was given of the budget foreseen for different policy areas.

A briefing was then given on how the European semester is being overhauled. The country-specific recommendations will be replaced by the Recovery and Resilience Plans, which Member States must send to the Commission and have approved in order to access all that money in the Recovery Resilience Facility (672.5€ bn). The Commission advises from now until January to contact national ministries for finance and social affairs, as well as semester desk officers based in national capitals urging to be included in consultations on the plans, and presenting lists of issues you want to see mentioned. EDF will draft a letter that Members can use.

A short explanation was given of EDF’s activities around the Commission’s new Social Pillar Action Plan.We took part in consultations on the Social Pillar Action Plan as a whole, the Digital Education Action Plan and the Child Guarantee for Vulnerable Children. In addition we launched a statement on minimum income and minimum wage, and a research paper on inclusive education and COVID-19.

Finally we had a discussion on COVID-19 and EDF's future social policy priorities. During the pandemic members have been working mostly on persons with disabilities in institutions, triage and access to healthcare, accessibility of information on covid-19 and assistance in rural areas. Going forward the members wanted to see EDF work more on institutions and independent living, funding, migrants and refugees, education and employment, income and poverty, freedom of movement, healthcare, disability assessment and data collection. Members wanted support from EDF regarding identifying good practice, access to resource and support with expertise.

1. Update on Human Rights (DOC-BOARD-20-10-06)

The Vice-President gave the floor to Klaus Lachwitz who gave an update from the human rights committee held the day before.

The Chair of the Human Rights Committee reported on discussion that took place in the meeting of the Human Rights and Non-Discrimination Committee. He reported about issues raised by members during the roundtable on updates on human rights issues and situation in countries. He said that there were some successes such as the recognition of Dutch sign language as an official language in the Netherlands, but also many issues in many countries, for instance in relation to institutionalisation and lack of support services to persons with disabilities and their families to live in the community. He reported on the - CRPD and human rights email expert group and its online platform saying that members decided to continue the use of the platform. He said that the CRPD Committee is working on a General Comment on work and employment and established a working group to support desinstitutionalisation. Regarding CRPD Committee elections he stressed the importance of having at least one EU candidate elected and reported the decision of the Committee to discuss the profiles of the candidates and potential support within EDF Executive Committee. He informed about the new UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Dr. Gerard Quinn.

EDF Human Rights Officer, Marine Uldry, informed that the upcoming review by the CRPD Committee and other UN Treaty Bodies need to be confirmed. She said that support have

been provided to members from France and Estonia, for review by CRPD Committee, and member from Greece, for review by the CEDAW Committee.

In relation to EU strategies and policies, Marine informed that several new strategies have been adopted. EDF advocacy was successful regarding the Strategy on Gender Equality, and Strategy on Victims’ Rights. There was success regarding the New Migration and Asylum Pact, so EDF is increasing advocacy on migration issue. She added that EDF is preparing input to several other policy initiative including on review of EU law to combat violence against women, on integration of migrant and on children rights.

Pat Clarke reported on the work done against the draft additional protocol to the Oviedo Convention. He informed about the next meeting of the Committee of Bioethics of the Council of Europe on 4th of November, and on the third party intervention that will be prepared by EDF, Mental health Europe, Autism Europe, Inclusion Europe and IDA, before the European Court of Human Rights.

Luisa Bosisio said that DPOs also have the opportunity to raise human rights issues before the UN Committee Against Torture and shared the alternative done for the review of Italy. Adam Zawisny said it is important to influence the child rights strategy, especially regarding desinstitutionalisation.

1. Update from Women’s Committee (DOC-BOARD-20-10-07)

Ana Pelaez Narvaez reported on the work done by the Women’s Committee, as Chair. She first asked EDF Human Rights Officer to give an overview of the work done to influence EU Strategies. Marine reported on the EU Gender Equality, Gender Action Plan, Victims’ Rights Strategy, Disability Rights Strategy and the roadmap of the legislation fitness check on violence against women. She also mentioned that the Women’s Committee Committee also gave input on several reports and resolutions of the European Parliament including on: implementation of the EU employment equality directive in light of the CRPD; reducing inequalities with a special focus on in-work poverty; gender perspective in the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period.

In relation to EU Presidency, Ana reported that the engagement of the Committee had been successful with the Croatian presidency, and less with the German presidency as so answer had been received to request sent by the Secretariat. Concerning COVID-19 EDF organised a webinar on the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls with disabilities, with 2 representatives from the Women’s Committee. The Committee gave input to EDF Human Rights Report on COVID-19’s section on women and information on domestic violence. Ana reported several capacity building activities designed by the Committee: an online workshop on the Istanbul Convention and reporting to GREVIO, and an online training on reporting to the CEDAW Committee were organised for EDF members, with participation of Committee’s members. In addition EDF published a guide for DPOs on engaging with the CEDAW Committee was published in September. She also reported in channels of communication (EDF Women’s

Voice and Disability Voice), participation in the European Women’s Lobby through Pirkko and Luisa, and in the European coalition to end violence against women and girls, and participation in many external events. Finally, she said that the committee met on 11th of May and the next meeting will be on 30th of November. She gave the floor to Luisa and Sanja to add information, and to Marine regarding information from the Secretariat. Ana reported from CERMI on legislation to prohibit forced sterilization. Marica talked about activities against gender based violence and participation in the EDF webinar. Dovile Juodkaite shared that her organization translated the ETR Istanbul convention in Lithuanian.

1. Update from the Youth Committee

The Vice-President gave the floor to Kamil Goungor who gave an update from the youth committee. He explained that despite the pandemic the Youth Committee since the last board in February 2020 has been. They have participated in several events and took the floor or co-organized activities.

The Youth Committee participated in seven events. The highlights have been young people with disabilities in times of COVID-19, European Youth Event online version with participation of MEP Kympouropoulos, two webinars with speaker from the European Commission one on Erasmus+ and one on The European Solidarity Corps.

The Committee participated to draft the recommendations COVID-19 children and young people with disabilities with input given on the reinforcing the Youth Guarantee to the European Commission and European Parliament. They also gave a training to Croatian young people on Independent living and participated to the organization of five more events planned till the end of the year, including the event on Sexuality in co-operation with International Federation of Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, and a ENIL and a MEP and 3rd European Youth Work Convention.

Finally, he announced that the Youth Committee launched a survey on COVID-19 and young people with disabilities, that 40 answers had been received and that the findings would be communicated to the membership and externally.

1. Standardisation and Public Procurement (DOC-BOARD-20-11-09)

## The Vice-President gave the floor to Alejandro Moledo who presented the item

Alejandro Moledo, EDF Policy Coordinator, gave a presentation about the Board document 20-10-09. He underlined the importance of raising awareness of the Public Procurement Directive provisions, as well as how the European Accessibility Act can underpin accessibility in public procurement. He also mentioned the three European standards (on ICT, on built environment and on Design for All) that can be used in public procurement, and called EDF Board members

to lobby their national governments to include « accessibility » in the national eForm for public procurement, which should be based on the European template provided.

Lastly, Alejandro explained an ongoing campaign with Microsoft and G3ICT to push for greater accessibility in public procurement of new technologies. These partners are willing to organise with EDF national members a national roundtable discussion to raise awareness about these provisions. They are ready to cover the financial costs of organising the national roundtable discussion. Two countries have already been confirmed, Austria and Spain, and if any EDF member is interested in pushing for this issue at national level, joining forces with ICT industry, they can write to [alejandro.moledo@edf-feph.org](mailto:alejandro.moledo@edf-feph.org).

EDF Vice President opened the floor for questions.

Nadia Hadad asked for an overview of countries respecting this legislation, and Luisa Bosisio expressed her concern about a questionnaire prepared by the European Commission on Children Rights which is not accessible.

Alejandro replied that unfortunately there is not a clear overview of how countries behave when it comes to public procurement (we will know more when the legislation is evaluated by the Commission). The lack of accessibility by the EU institutions is far from being ready, and that EDF and its members will need to push for this in the next Disability Strategy.

Maureen Piggot said on the chat that the EU should be accountable of the policies they adopt for Member States too. Giampiero Griffo asked about the position of the EU on digitalisation, and what means we must control. Branislav explained that in Slovakia they face problems to convince the government to make use of the binding condition on accessibility and asked how they can formulate this. Alejandro replied that the EU is committed to accessible digitalisation as proven by legislation such as the Web Accessibility Directive and the European Accessibility Act. Concerning control, nevertheless, the Public Procurement legal framework does not allow citizens to challenge procurement decisions (e.g. when buying inaccessible products, services or buildings).

As for how to formulate this at national level, Alejandro stressed that a key to succeed is to raise awareness about the binding accessibility requirements of the European Accessibility Act related to public procurement (in Annex I of the Directive), and the European standards available mentioned in the Board document.

1. Evaluation of the Board

The Director explained that an online survey would be sent to all participants.

1. Any other business

No other business were mentioned.