

Disability organisations welcome Bulgaria's objection to the draft Additional Protocol to the Oviedo Convention

Brussels, 6 September 2018

We welcome Bulgaria's leadership in objecting against the draft additional protocol to the Oviedo Convention, which, if adopted, would authorise forced treatment and forced placement, notably in institutions of persons with disabilities, in particular persons with psychosocial disabilities. These practices are unacceptable under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

While the opposition of Portugal to the draft was reported, Bulgaria is the first country to publicly object against the Council of Europe's draft Additional Protocol "concerning the protection of human rights and dignity of persons with mental disorder with regard to involuntary placement and involuntary treatment".

It makes it the first European state to officially declare that the Council of Europe move away from institutionalization and involuntary treatment of persons with psychosocial, intellectual and other disabilities.

The objection against this addition to Council of Europe's Oviedo Convention on biomedicine was announced during the 20th session of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Bulgaria's position against the draft illustrates the world's current developments in the field of on human rights, shifting away from exclusion and towards supporting each person to exercise their rights and will.

We strongly welcome this statement and encourage other Member States of the Council of Europe to join Portugal and Bulgaria in this effort to withdraw the draft additional protocol. If adopted, the protocol will allow serious human rights breaches, solidify institutionalisation of persons with disabilities and runs counter the rights established by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

This statement is endorsed by:

European Disability Forum

International Disability Alliance

Autism Europe

Mental Health Europe

Inclusion Europe

ENUSP - European Network of (ex)users and survivors of psychiatry (ENUSP)

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Related information

- [Campaign page](#)
- [Mental Health Europe statement](#)
- [ENUSP's page on the Draft Additional Protocol](#)
- [#WithdrawOviedo campaign](#)

Note to editors

Oviedo Convention

Council of Europe's Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, better known as [the Oviedo Convention](#), is a European legally binding instrument on the protection of human rights in the biomedical field. It establishes that human rights must come before other considerations in the field of biomedicine. It lays down a series of principles and prohibitions concerning bioethics, medical research, consent, rights to private life and information, organ transplantation, public debate etc.

Despite its name, the "Draft Additional Protocol concerning the protection of human rights and dignity of persons with mental disorder with regard to involuntary placement and involuntary treatment", would not protect such persons and would authorize some forms of involuntary placement and treatment of persons with disabilities.

European Disability Forum



The [European Disability Forum](#) is an independent NGO that defends the interests of 80 million Europeans with disabilities. EDF is a unique platform which brings together representative organisations of persons with disabilities from across Europe. It is run by persons with disabilities and their families. EDF is a strong, united voice of persons with disabilities in Europe

International Disability Alliance



The [International Disability Alliance](#) (IDA) is an alliance of [eight global and six regional organisations of persons with disabilities](#). We [advocate at the UN](#) for a more inclusive global environment for persons with disabilities and their organisations. The [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#) is our touchstone. We are invested in ensuring that the [2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals](#) are inclusive and in line with CRPD. We [support organisations of persons with disabilities](#) worldwide to take part in UN and international human rights processes, and use international accountability mechanisms. With [member organisations](#) globally, IDA represents the estimated one billion people worldwide with disabilities. This is the world's largest and most frequently overlooked marginalised group.

Autism Europe



[Autism-Europe](#) aisbl is an international association whose main objective is to advance the rights of autistic people and their families and to help them improve their quality of life.

It ensures effective liaison among almost 90 member autism organisations from 38 European countries, including 26 Member States of the European Union, governments and European and international institutions. Autism-Europe plays a key role in raising public awareness, and in influencing the European decision-makers on all issues relating to the rights of autistic people.

Self-advocates and parents play a central role in our organisation to ensure that the views and interests of persons with autism are adequately reflected in our work.

Autism-Europe is recognised by the European institutions as the voice of autistic people and their families in Europe. To maximise our impact on the European Union's policies, Autism-Europe also works in strategic coalitions with organisations that share the same concerns and goals. Autism-Europe is also regularly consulted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and cooperate with the United Nations (UN).

Mental Health Europe



[Mental Health Europe](#) (MHE) is a European non-governmental network organisation committed to the promotion of positive mental health, the prevention of mental distress, the improvement of care, advocacy for social inclusion and the protection of the rights of (ex)users of mental health services, persons with psychosocial disabilities, their families and carers.

Inclusion Europe



Inclusion Europe

[Inclusion Europe](#) is an association of people with intellectual disabilities and their families in Europe. Since 1988, Inclusion Europe fights for equal rights and full inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities and their families in all aspects of life. The association has members in nearly 40 European countries. Inclusion Europe focusses on a number of key areas, mainly: Education, Legal capacity, Non-discrimination, Independent living, Social inclusion and Accessibility and Health. The association is based in Brussels in Belgium.

ENUSP – European Network of (Ex-)Users and Survivors of Psychiatry



[ENUSP](#) gives (ex-)users and survivors of psychiatric services across Europe a way to communicate so that we can support one other in the personal, political and social struggle against injustice and discrimination.

We are the only grassroots umbrella organisation working across Europe to unite local and national organisations of (ex-)users and survivors of psychiatry. We directly represent the views of people who are or have been on the receiving end of psychiatric services.