Our Annual Report 2023

The work we did in 2023
to promote the rights of persons with disabilities

Easy-to-read version

Easy-to-read is information
that is written in a simple way
so that all people can understand it.
You can find more information at:
www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read.
WHO WE ARE

We are the European Disability Forum. The European Disability Forum is an organisation that protects the rights of all people with disabilities in Europe. In short, it is called ‘EDF’.

At EDF, we believe that all people with disabilities have the right to:

- Be treated fairly and with respect.
- Take part in the community.
- Be equal and have the same chances in life.
- Make their own choices.
  Nothing should be decided about us without us!

WHAT THIS BOOKLET IS ABOUT

We wrote this report to show some examples of the work we did in 2023.

In the next few pages, you will read more about the things we are mostly proud of.

We have split the text by area of work.

Some difficult words in the text are marked in bold. You can find their explanation at the end of this booklet.
OUR WORK IN 2023

These are some of the areas we worked on in 2023:

UN Convention

‘The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities’ is an agreement that many countries in the world have signed. It says what rights people with disabilities have. It also says how countries can protect these rights.

In short, we call it ‘the UN Convention’.

The European Union and its countries have signed the UN Convention. That means they have agreed to protect the rights in the UN Convention.

In 2023, we kept pushing for the European Union and its countries to work harder to make the UN Convention happen in Europe.

We also helped our members to make reports about the situation of people with disabilities in their countries.

These reports show what their countries do to make the UN Convention happen and what they could do better.
Women with disabilities

Women with disabilities are at higher risk of being left out or treated badly than women without disabilities.

Sadly, many women with disabilities in Europe have experienced violence.

For example, they may have been:

- Threatened, attacked or hurt by someone.
- Forced to have sex against their will.

Also, many women with disabilities are forced to have a medical procedure that makes it impossible for them to have children. This is called ‘forced sterilisation’.

This is cruel. Women with disabilities should have the right to decide if they want to become mothers or not.

In 2023, we continued to promote the rights of women and girls with disabilities. We asked the European Union to protect women with disabilities from violence and to ban forced sterilisation in Europe.
The right to vote and stand for elections

To vote in the elections means you can choose which people will represent you and make decisions and laws in Europe.

To stand for elections means you ask people to vote for you so that you can represent them and make decisions and laws in Europe.

People with disabilities should have the right to vote and stand for elections like other people.

However, many people with disabilities still cannot use this important right.

In 2023, we continued to push the European Union to make it possible for all people with disabilities to vote like everyone else.

We organised an important event at the European Parliament. Many people with disabilities and people who make decisions in Europe took part in this event.
During this event, we asked people who make decisions in Europe to:

- Make the elections **accessible** so that people with disabilities can take part too.
- Recognise the right of people with disabilities to vote and stand for elections like everyone else.

**Freedom of movement**

Freedom of movement is one of the rights we have thanks to the European Union. It means that people in the European Union can travel, work and live freely in any country of the European Union. For example, a person from Germany can move to France to live or work there.

Unfortunately, it is still hard for most people with disabilities to travel to another country in the European Union.

For many years, we have been pushing the European Union to make a European Disability Card that will help people with disabilities when they travel to another country.
As a result of all these years of work, the European Union is now working to make this Card.

People with disabilities will be able to use the European Disability Card when they travel to another country of the European Union to:

- Show they have a disability,
- Get the same advantages in culture, sports, and other activities as the people with disabilities in that country.

The European Union is also working to make a European Parking Card. This card will help people with disabilities who travel to another country of the European Union to use parking spaces for people with disabilities in that country.

Also, we kept pushing for:

- The European Union to better protect the rights of people with disabilities when they travel by plane.
- Airlines to give a free ticket when they ask people with disabilities to travel with a support person.
People with disabilities in risky situations

The lives of many people in the world are at risk because of things that are out of their control.

For example, due to the climate change, there may be extreme heat or lack of rain in some areas. People have to move from these areas because they cannot live there anymore or cultivate the earth to get food. In these situations, things are even harder for people with disabilities.

In 2023, we took part in important meetings together with the European Union and other organisations that work to make things better for people and the planet.

We asked them to take into account the needs of people with disabilities too.

We also worked to help people with disabilities in Ukraine where there is war.
Among other things:

- We worked with organisations in Ukraine to help find safe places for people with disabilities and their families.

- We pushed for the **European Union** to support people with disabilities in Ukraine.

- We supported organisations of people with disabilities in Ukraine to continue doing their important work.

**Events and meetings**

Among other events and meetings, in 2023 we organised:

- The European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities. This is a big event that takes place every few years at the **European Parliament**. This meeting brings together people with disabilities and people who make decisions in Europe. During the meeting, we asked people who make laws and decisions in Europe what we want them to do for people with disabilities.
• The European Day of Persons with Disabilities. This is a big event that takes place every year at the European Commission. The event brings together people with disabilities and people who make laws and decisions in Europe. Together we discuss how we can make things better for people with disabilities in Europe.

• The European Accessibility Summit. This is an event that takes place every year. In 2023, the discussion was about accessible technology. We talked about how accessible technology can make it easier for people with disabilities to work, study and take part in many activities.
Spreading the word on our rights

In 2023, we used every chance we could to speak up about the rights of people with disabilities.

We tried to reach as many people as possible by:

- Writing articles on our website,
- Sharing stories of people with disabilities on our blog called ‘Disability Realities’,
- Speaking to the media,
- Sharing news on social media, like Facebook and Instagram,
- Sending out news and information to people by email.
HOW WE WORK

EDF has 101 members all over Europe. Our members are organisations of people with disabilities or organisations that work to help people with disabilities. Our members come together several times a year to discuss important things for the rights of people with disabilities. You can find all the organisations that are members of EDF on our website at: www.edf-feph.org/our-members

EDF members also choose the people who can make decisions for EDF. You can find the people who make decisions for EDF on our website at: www.edf-feph.org/executive

Among our members, we also have smaller groups of people working on specific topics. For example, we have a group of people working on the rights of young people with disabilities. You can find more information about these groups on our website at: www.edf-feph.org/committee-and-expert-groups

Also, EDF has an office in Brussels. You can find the people who work at our office on our website at: www.edf-feph.org/edf-secretariat
HOW WE GET AND HOW WE SPEND OUR MONEY

EDF needs money to make its work happen.

In 2023, we got most of our money from:

- The European Union,
- Our members,
- Other organisations and companies that wanted to support our work.

We spent this money:

- To pay the people who work for us,
- To travel for important meetings,
- On other things that are important for our work.

MORE INFORMATION

If you want to find more information about EDF and our work you can visit our website at: www.edf-feph.org.

If you have any questions, you can send us an email at: info@edf-feph.org.
EXPLANATION OF DIFFICULT WORDS

Accessible

Things are accessible when they are easy to use for people with disabilities. For example, when buildings have ramps that people in wheelchairs can use to get in. Or when information is easy to read and people with intellectual disabilities can understand it.

Climate change

Climate change means that the temperature and the weather in the world change. For example, there may be extreme heat or lack of rain in some areas. Many people have to move from these areas because they cannot live there anymore or cultivate the earth to get food.

European Union

The European Union is a group of 27 countries in Europe. These countries came together to make things better, easier and safer for people. They agreed to work together and help each other.
European Commission

The people of the European Commission suggest laws for the European Union. They also run the day-to-day work of the European Union.

European Parliament

The people of the European Parliament are elected by all people in Europe to stand for their rights. They have a big say in which laws will happen in the European Union.
European elections

Every 5 years, the people who live in the European Union vote who they want to represent them and make laws and decisions in Europe.

This easy-to-read text is written by ‘Say it easy’
www.sayiteasy.eu