



## **REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE EUROPEAN DISABILITY FORUM IN 2014-2015 IN EASY-TO-READ VERSION**

### **The European Disability Forum**

The European Disability Forum is an organisation of people with disabilities in Europe.

In short, we call it EDF.

EDF was created by people with disabilities in 1996.

EDF works to protect the rights of people with disabilities in Europe.

EDF is the link between people with disabilities and people who make laws and decisions in Europe.

EDF believes that a fair society includes people with disabilities and that people with disabilities should decide about their lives.

### **EDF members**

EDF has many members.

These members are also organisations of people with disabilities or organisations that want to help people with disabilities.

Some of these organisations represent people with a certain type of disability for example intellectual disability.

In the first pages of this booklet, there is a list of all these organisations.

You can also see pictures of people who take decisions for EDF and pictures of people who work at the office of EDF in Brussels.

You will also find information on how to contact the office of EDF in Brussels.

## **EDF's work**

In 2014 and 2015, EDF worked on many different topics.

### **The Convention of the United Nations**

The United Nations is a big world organisation that works for peace and a better world.

The United Nations made a document which says what rights people with disabilities have and how countries can protect their rights.

This document is called

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In short, we will call it 'the Convention'.

The European Union is a group of countries in Europe.

These countries came together to make things better for their people.

The European Union agreed to do what the Convention says.

This was an important step.

It means that the European Union has to make things better for people with disabilities.

Last year the European Union told the United Nations what it did to protect the rights of people with disabilities.

The European Union wrote a report

saying everything it did for people with disabilities.

EDF thinks that the European Union can do more for people with disabilities.

So EDF wrote a report to say what the EU can do better for people with disabilities.

EDF sent this report to the United Nations.

The United Nations looked at the report of the European Union and the report of EDF.

They asked the European Union to do more things for people with disabilities.

The United Nations sent a list of these things to the European Union.

The European Union has to make things better for people with disabilities.

EDF wants this to happen.  
That is why EDF has many meetings with people who take decisions in Europe.  
We want to make sure that they respect the Convention when they make decisions.  
We want them to respect the rights of people with disabilities.

## **We are all equal**

People with disabilities are sometimes treated badly or unfairly because of their disability.  
This is called discrimination.

At EDF, we work to stop discrimination of people with disabilities.  
All people have different abilities  
but we are all equal and we should be treated with respect.

## **Freedom of movement**

People have the right to move, live and work in any other country of the European Union.  
We call this 'freedom of movement'.  
In the last two years, we continued to work for the freedom of movement of people with disabilities.  
That means that people with disabilities should also be able to move, live and work in any country of the European Union.  
When they go to another country they should be able to use the products and services of that country the same as other citizens.

For more than three years  
EDF was asking the European Union to have a strong law about this.  
Finally in December 2015 the European Union published a text for this law to happen.  
This law is called European Accessibility Act.  
This law will help people with disabilities use more products and services than before.

If this law happens, all countries in the EU will work to make certain products and services accessible. That means that people with disabilities will be able to use them. For example, people with disabilities will be able to use many websites that they cannot use now. They will also be able to use machines to buy tickets for trains or buses without problems.

EDF thinks that law is very important. We want the European Union to make this law happen because it can make the lives of people with disabilities easier.

## **Transport**

Today people can travel easily from one place to another. People with disabilities should be able to do that too. To make this happen, transport like planes, boats and trains must be accessible in all countries. This way people with disabilities will be able to use them without problems. But people with disabilities often have problems using planes, boats, trains and other modes of transport.

EDF asked people with disabilities to talk about their experiences when they travel. For example, if they had any problems to get help from people working at airports or on trains. Or if their wheelchair arrived safely and other things like that.

EDF made a report of the problems that people with disabilities have when they travel.

EDF asks the European Union to make it easier for people with disabilities to travel in the same way as all other citizens.

## **Economic crisis**

In recent years, countries in Europe have big problems with money.

They have less money than before to spend.  
This is called economic crisis.  
Because of the economic crisis, countries have less money to spend for people.  
They often decide to cut support for people.  
This has a big impact on the lives of people who need support like people with disabilities.  
With less support it is even more difficult for them to live in the community.  
EDF checked how the economic crisis changed the lives of people with disabilities.  
We asked people with disabilities and their organisations about the changes that happen in their lives because of the economic crisis.

We also met with organisations of people with disabilities and with people who take decisions in Europe.  
We talked about how things are for people with disabilities in different countries and problems they have because of the economic crisis.

We asked the European Union to protect people with disabilities and give them the support they need to have a good life.

## **Using European money**

The European Union gives money to its countries.  
This money is called 'Funds'.  
The countries have to spend this money on making schools, streets and other things that make the lives of people better.  
They should help all people take part in society.

The European Union should only give this money to countries who work hard to ensure that all people can take part in society.  
For example, people with disabilities.

EDF had many meetings with other organisations and with the European Union to look at how countries should use money from the European Union for the good of all their people.

EDF believes that the European Union should give money to countries who promise to spend part of this money to help people with disabilities and other people who need support.

EDF doesn't want countries to spend the money they receive from the European Union to institutions where people with disabilities live away from society.

Instead, countries should spend the money they receive from the European Union to help people with disabilities be active in society together with other people.

For example, they can spend money to make schools, streets and other things better so that people with disabilities can move around easily and take part in activities.

## **Work**

Some people find it hard to get a job because they have a disability. There are too many people with disabilities in Europe who do not have a job.

EDF wants people with disabilities to have the same chances to get a job as everyone else.

Having a job and making your own money helps to be independent and allows people to make their own choices.

EDF went to meetings and wrote several papers to talk about this. EDF believes that the European Union should work to make it easier for people with disabilities to get a job.

## **The European Parliament**

The European Parliament is a place where people make laws and take decisions about important things in Europe.

Some of these decisions are about people with disabilities.

These decisions can make their lives better.

EDF had many meetings with people of the European Parliament. EDF explained what people with disabilities need to be active in society. EDF also explained to the people from the European Parliament how to protect the rights of people with disabilities.

## **The right to vote**

Every five years people in Europe choose the people who will make decisions in the European Parliament and laws in Europe. This means that they vote.

In some countries, people have to go to a place to vote. In other countries, people can also vote on the computer or in other ways.

People with disabilities in Europe often have problems when trying to vote.

Sometimes it is difficult for them to go to the place in which they can vote.

For example, if the building has stairs people in wheelchairs will not be able to get there to vote.

Often, people with disabilities do not get enough information to be able to make a decision about who to vote for or they do not get information in a way that is useful to them. For example, some people with disabilities need to get simpler information to be able to understand it.

In some other cases, people with disabilities are not allowed to vote because they have a disability.

EDF thinks that all people have the right to vote and choose which people will make decisions and laws in Europe. People with disabilities have the right to vote too and their disability should not be a problem for doing so. People with disabilities also have the right to be chosen to make decisions in Europe.

In 2014, EDF met many people from the European Parliament. EDF explained to them how important it is for people with disabilities to vote and how unfair it is to not vote only because you have a disability.

EDF asked the people from the European Parliament to help people with disabilities to vote by making it easier for them to get to the place to vote and to get the information in the way they need.

## **Technology**

Today, people use more and more technology to find information or talk to other people. For example, they use computers, mobiles, the internet and other things.

People with disabilities should have access to these things. They should be able to use them like all other people. If they cannot use them, they will be left out from society.

At EDF, we wrote papers and we had meetings with people who take decisions to explain why this is so important and how they can make it happen.

## **Standards**

A standard is a document with rules that explain how something should be made. Standards are useful to explain to companies how they should do certain things.

If there were no standards, each company would do things differently and that would create problems.

For example, the bank cards we often use to pay or to take money out of our bank account would have different sizes and forms in every country.



This way, it would be impossible to use them when we travel to another country.

Also, in train stations and metros, there are some signs on the floor that blind people can feel with their feet.

This way they know where they have to stop at the platform to wait for the train to come and they do not fall down the gap.

There are standards that explain how these signs should be used. If there were no standards, each train station would use different signs and blind people would be confused or in danger.

EDF often helps to make standards that have an impact on the lives of people with disabilities. We help companies understand what people with disabilities need. We make sure companies respect these needs when they make standards.

## **Research**

Research is when experts look into different things.

They try to find out what causes a problem and how the problem can be solved.

A person who is doing a research is called a researcher.

The European Union gives money to researchers to do research on things which are important to the European Union.

EDF believes that more research is needed on the situation of people with disabilities in Europe and how the European Union can protect their rights.

People with disabilities can be researchers too.

But sometimes they cannot continue their research because of their disability.

For example, if researchers with disabilities do research for a university they may need help from the university to use certain things.

For example, they may need help to move around the university or to use a computer.

Universities usually do not have the money to give them help.

Because of this, researchers with disabilities

cannot continue their research.

EDF believes that researchers with disabilities should have the same chances as all other researchers to do their work.

### **Women and girls with disabilities**

Women are often left out or treated in an unfair way just because they are women.

Women with disabilities are more likely to be treated unfairly than other women because of their disability.

EDF wrote papers and participated in important meetings to talk about the rights of women and girls with disabilities.

Women with disabilities should have equal chances like everyone else to take part and be active in society.

### **People who need more support**

Among people with disabilities

there are some people who need more support than others.

For example, people who need help every day to move around, eat, go shopping or do other things.

At EDF, we think of the needs of these people too in the work we do.

EDF often discusses the needs of people with disabilities who need more support.

We discuss how to support the rights of these people.

### **Children and young people with disabilities**

EDF worked to promote the rights of children and young people with disabilities.

EDF has a group of young people with disabilities.

This group meets and discusses important issues about young people with disabilities in Europe.

Together we explain what problems young people with disabilities have

and what young people with disabilities need to be active in society.

### **Work with our members**

Many organisations in Europe are part of EDF.  
We work with them to promote the rights of people with disabilities.  
Together, we organise meetings in different countries.  
In these meetings, we talk about our experiences.  
This way we learn from each other.

### **Work outside Europe**

EDF also works to support people with disabilities outside Europe.  
EDF is part of a world organisation  
that works for people with disabilities all around the world.  
This world organisation is the International Disability Alliance.  
In short, we call it IDA.  
EDF works with IDA to protect the rights of people with disabilities  
in the world.

EDF goes to important meetings in different parts of the world  
to talk about the rights of people with disabilities.  
For example, in the last two years we went to important meetings  
in New York.

### **Work with other organisations**

EDF often works with other organisations  
that also want to make the lives of people better.  
These organisations can be world organisations  
or European organisations.  
For example, EDF works closely with a European organisation  
that wants to help women to be active in all things in society.  
This organisation is the European Women Lobby.

We sometimes work with companies  
who want to support the rights of people with disabilities.  
We organise meetings and other activities together

to support the rights of people with disabilities.

If you want to find more information about EDF  
please visit our website at [www.edf-feph.org](http://www.edf-feph.org).

You can also send an email to [info@edf-feph.org](mailto:info@edf-feph.org).