



Nothing about us without us
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NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US
Report 2016 - 2017



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WHO WE ARE

A STRONG UNITED VOICE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN EUROPE

The European Disability Forum (EDF) is an independent NGO that represents the interests of 80 million Europeans with disabilities.

EDF was created 20 years ago by its member organisations to ensure that decisions at the European level concerning persons with disabilities are taken with and by persons with disabilities. That is reflected in our motto: 'Nothing about us without us'.

EDF is run by persons with disabilities and their families and serves as a strong, united voice of persons with disabilities in Europe.

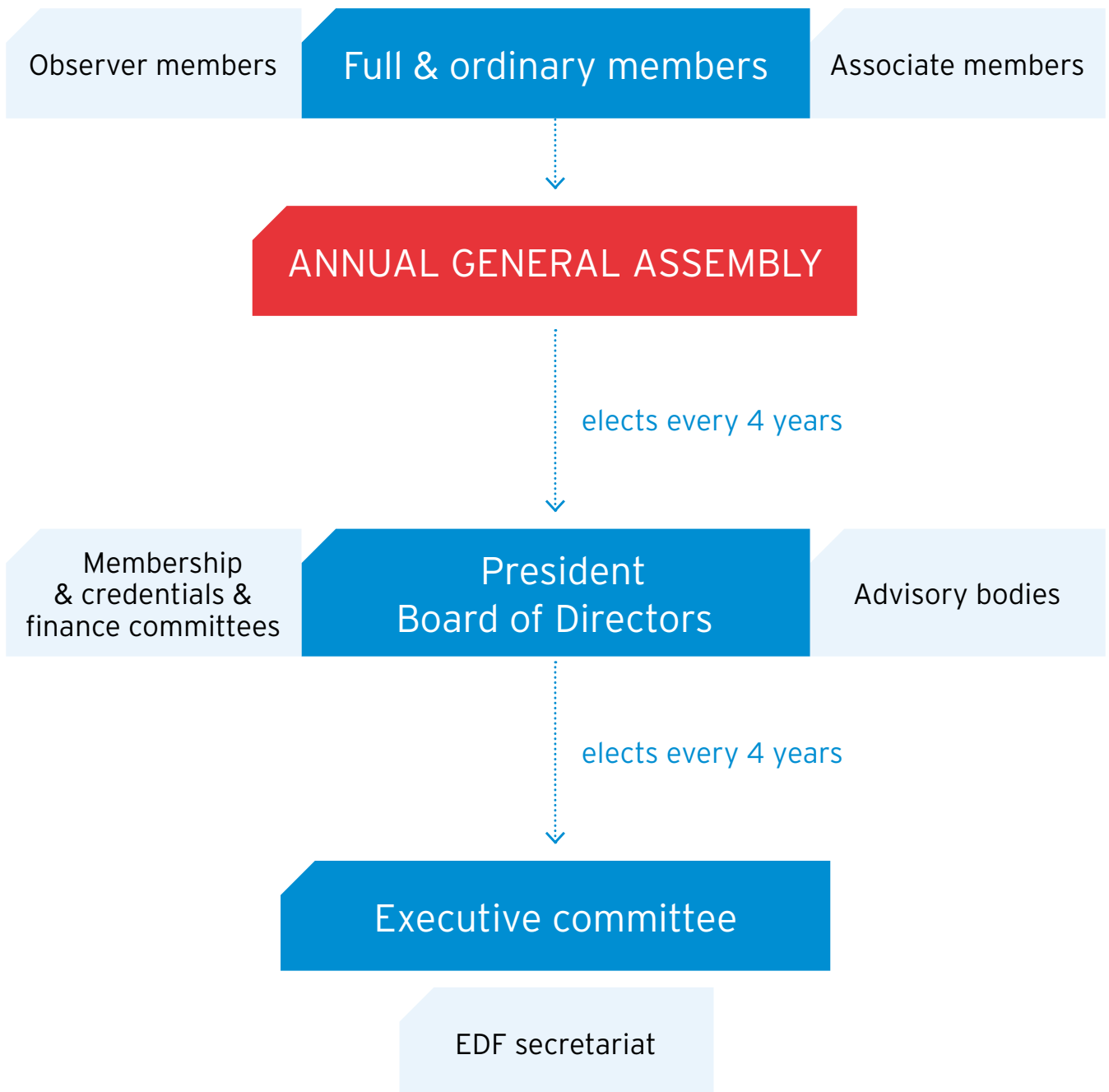
OUR VALUES

EDF's values are built on the principles of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD):

- Respect for inherent dignity;
- Individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices;
- 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.

OUR STRUCTURE

EUROPEAN DISABILITY MOVEMENT



OUR MEMBERS

54 full members

The full members of EDF are national councils and European non-profit organisations representing persons with disabilities.

29 national councils

- AUSTRIA** Austrian National Council of Disabled Persons (ÖAR)
- BELGIUM** Belgian Disability Forum (BDF)
- BULGARIA** National Council of People with Disabilities in Bulgaria (NCDPB)
- CROATIA** Croatian Union of Associations of Persons with Disabilities (SOIH)
- CYPRUS** Cyprus Confederation of Organisations of the Disabled (KYSOA)
- CZECH REPUBLIC** Czech National Disability Council (CNDC)
- DENMARK** Disabled People's Organisation Denmark (DPOD)
- ESTONIA** Estonian Chamber of Disabled People (EPIK)
- FINLAND** Finnish Disability Forum (FDF)
- FRANCE** French Council of Disabled People for European Affairs (CFHE)
- GERMANY** German Disability Council (DBR)
- GREECE** Greek National Confederation of Disabled People (NCDP)
- HUNGARY** Hungarian Council of Federations of People with Disabilities (FESZT)
- ICELAND** Organisation of Disabled in Iceland (ÖBI)
- IRELAND** Disability Federation Ireland (DFI)
- ITALY** Italian Disability Forum (FID)
- LATVIA** Latvian Umbrella Body for Disability Organisations (SUSTENTO)
- LITHUANIA** Lithuanian Disability Forum (LNF)
- LUXEMBOURG** National Disability Council of Luxembourg (Info Handicap)
- MALTA** Malta Federation of Organisations of Persons with Disability (MFOPD)
- NORWAY** Norwegian Federation of Organisations of Disabled People (FFO)
- POLAND** Polish Disability Forum (PDF)
- PORTUGAL** National Confederation of Organisations of Disabled People in Portugal (CNOD)
- ROMANIA** Romanian National Disability Council (CNDR)
- SLOVAKIA** Slovak Disability Council (NROZP)
- SLOVENIA** Slovenian National Disability Council (NSIOS)
- SPAIN** Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities (CERMI)
- SWEDEN** The Swedish Disability Rights Federation (Funktionsrätt Sverige)
- THE NETHERLANDS** Dutch Network for People with Disabilities or Chronic Illness (Ieder-in)

25 European non-profit organisations representing persons with disabilities

- Action Européenne des Handicapés (AEH)
- Autism Europe
- Brain Injured & Families - European Confederation (BIF-EC)
- Cerebral Palsy - European Communities Association (CP-ECA)
- DEBRA International
- Disabled People's International - Europe (DPI-Europe)
- European Alliance of Muscular Dystrophy Association (EAMDA)
- European Association of Cochlear Implant Users (EURO-CIU)
- European Blind Union (EBU)
- European Co-operation in Anthroposophical Curative Education and Social Therapy (ECCE)
- European Deafblind Network (EDbN)
- European Deafblind Union (EDbU)

- European Down Syndrome Association (EDSA)
- European Dyslexia Association (EDA)
- European Federation of Hard of Hearing (EFHOH)
- European Federation of Parents of Hearing Impaired Children (FEPEDA)
- European Kidney Patients' Association (CEAPIR)
- European League of Stuttering Associations (ELSA)
- European Network of (ex-) Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (ENUSP)
- European Network on Independent Living (ENIL)
- European Union of the Deaf (EUD)
- Inclusion Europe
- International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (IF)
- International Federation of Persons with Physical Disability (FIMITIC)
- Retina Europe

11 ordinary members

The ordinary members of EDF are organisations for persons with disabilities that are consistent with EDF's aims and objectives.

- Alzheimer Europe
- Association for Research and Training on Integration in Europe (ARFIE)
- Association Internationale Aphasie (AIA)
- Design for All Europe (EIDD)
- European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD)
- European Federation of Crohn's and Ulcerative Colitis Associations (EFCCA)
- European Guide Dog Federation (EGDF)
- European Multiple Sclerosis Platform (EMSP)
- European Union of Supported Employment (EUSE)
- Mental Health Europe (MHE)
- Social Firms Europe (CEFEC)

4 observer members

Observer members of EDF are national organisations of persons with disabilities from countries in Europe outside the European Union.

- Albanian National Council of Disabled People (ANCDP)
- Confederation of the Disabled in Turkey (CDT)
- National Council of Disability Organisations of FYROM (NSIOM)
- National Organisation of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia (NOOIS)

29 associate members

The associate members of EDF are non-profit organisations or companies that are committed to promoting EDF's aims.

Associazione Nazionale Mutilati e Invalidi Civili (ANMIC) • Austrian Association in Support of the Blind and Visually Impaired • CBM EU Liaison Office • Coalition for Independent Living (CIL) • Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union (COFACE) • Dachverband der Steirischen Behindertenhilfe (DSBH) • Ente Nazionale per la protezione e l'assistenza dei Sordi (ENS) • European Academy of Yuste Foundation • European Dysmelia Reference Information Center (EDRIC) • European Federation of Hereditary Ataxia (EURO-ATAXIA) • European Ostomy Association (EOA) • European Polio Union (EPU) • European Union of the Deaf Youth (EUDY) • EUROPSY Rehabilitation • Flemish civil rights organisation for persons with disabilities (GRIP) • Fundación ONCE • Housing Options Scotland (HOS) • Inclusion Scotland • International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People (IFHOHYP) • Kosovo Disability Forum (KDF) - joined EDF in 2017 • Light for the World (joined EDF in 2016) • National Commission of Persons with Disability (KNPD) • Remploy (joined EDF in 2016) • Saint Lazarus Foundation (joined EDF in 2016) • San Marino Paralympic Committee • Union of Disabled People in Bulgaria (UDPB) • Union of Disabled People Organisations' of Azerbaijan (UDPO) - joined EDF in 2017 • Vittime Italiane Talidomide (VITA) •

OUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Yannis Vardakastanis
President
Greek National
Confederation of
Disabled People



Ana Peláez
Vice President
Spanish Committee
of Representatives of
Persons with Disabilities



John Patrick Clarke
Vice President
European Down Syndrome
Association



Maureen Piggot
Treasurer
Inclusion Europe



Gunta Anca
Secretary
Latvian Umbrella Body for
Disability Organisations



Rodolfo Cattani
European Blind Union



Humberto Insolera
European Union of the
Deaf



Nadia Hadad
European Network on
Independent Living



Klaus Lachwitz
German Disability Council



Pirkko Mahlamäki
Finnish Disability Forum



Albert Prévos
French Council of Disabled
People for European
Affairs

In 2016 EDF mourned the passing of important leaders from the European disability movement: Peter Lambrechts from the EDF Board and ENIL and Christian Delorme the former president of our member CFHE.

We thank them for their work and our thoughts are with their families and colleagues.

BOARD MEMBERS



Athena Frangouli
Social Firms Europe



Branislav Mamojka
Slovak
Disability Council



Cato Lie
International
Federation for
Spina Bifida and
Hydrocephalus



Christina Wurzinger
Austrian National
Council of Disabled
Persons



Donata Vivanti
Italian Disability
Forum



Dovilė Juodkaitė
Lithuanian National
Forum of the Disabled



Ellen Jacqueline Calmon
The Organisation of
Disabled in Iceland



Erzsébet Földesi
National Council of
Federations of People
with Disabilities in
Hungary



Evelynne Friedel
Autism-Europe



Gabor Petri
Mental Health Europe



Giampiero Griffo
Disabled Peoples'
International Europe



Gisèle Marlière
Belgian
Disability Forum



Goran Kustura
Slovenian National
Disability Council



John Dolan
Disability Federation
Ireland



Jolijn Santegoeds
European Network
of (ex-) Users and
Survivors of Psychiatry



Marcel Bobeldijk
European Federation
of Hard of Hearing



Marica Miric
Croatian Union
of Associations of
Persons with
Disabilities



Pierre Gyselincq
Action Européenne
des Handicapés



Thorkild Olesen
Disabled People's
Organisation
Denmark



Vera Bonvalot
Brain Injured &
Families - European
Confederation

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Catherine Naughton
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Lila Sylviti
Communication Officer



Loredana Dicsi
Internal Communication
and Membership Officer



Virginie Niyonzima
Administration and
Logistics Officer



Etienne Cuhe
European Parliament
Officer



Simona Giarratano
Social Policy Officer



An-Sofie Leenknecht
Human Rights
Coordinator



Alejandro Moledo
New Technologies and
Innovation Officer



Marie Denninghaus
Mobility and Transport
Officer



Marion Steff
Project Coordinator
- Sustainable
Development Goals
Joined EDF in February 2017



Ernesto Zaccaria
Project Coordinator
- Children with
Disabilities
Joined EDF in June 2016

Staff that have left EDF: Lila Sylviti, Communications officer (December 2017).

OUR WORK

EDF's objective is to achieve equal opportunities for all men, women and children with disabilities.

We work closely with:

- our members;
- other non-profit organisations fighting for equality and non-discrimination;
- EU institutions and agencies;
- EU presidencies and permanent representatives of countries in the EU;
- the Council of Europe;
- the United Nations and its bodies;
- the International Disability Alliance (IDA);
- the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC).

A word from the president



2016 and 2017 have been dramatic years for the European Union, and historic years for EDF and 80 million persons with disabilities in Europe. The EU continues to face escalating challenges to its vision: increasing threats of terrorism, over one million refugees and migrants arriving on European shores and the process of losing a member state- the UK. Despite this complicated context EDF saw achievements in many areas of our work: UN CRPD, SDGs, non-discrimination, employment and social services, EU funds, accessibility, standardisation, transport, research and more.

In 2017, EDF adopted its strategic framework which defines our priorities for the coming 4 years, and elected a new Board and executive committee.

We ended 2017 with a historic gathering, the organisation of the 4th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities - marking 20 years of campaigning for the rights of 80 million persons with disabilities in Europe. With strong support from the President of the Parliament, our allies in the Political Groups and the Disability Intergroup, EDF and its members mobilised persons with disabilities from across the EU for a day of Parliamentary discussions on the rights of persons with disabilities. On that day, we adopted a Manifesto on the European Elections, a Resolution on the next European Disability Strategy and an Emergency Resolution on the European Accessibility Act - these documents will guide our work together in the coming years.

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US!

Yannis Vardakastanis
EDF President

UN CONVENTION

2016 marked the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The CRPD has given the European disability movement a strong legal framework to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities in the past decade. As it stands now, the European Union (EU) has ratified the CRPD, together with 27 of the 28 EU Member States; only Ireland has not yet ratified.

The EU and the European countries have progressed in many ways in the implementation of the CRPD in the last two years. As of November 2017, 19 European countries have been reviewed by the CRPD Committee and each has received recommendations on how to improve the situation for its people with disabilities. However, much work remains to be done. EDF continues working together with its members at the EU and the national level to ensure that the CRPD becomes a reality for all people with disabilities in Europe.

**THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS
OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MAKES
HISTORY IN EUROPE**

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017

In 2016 and 2017, EDF provided support to its members whose countries were reviewed by the CRPD Committee. We helped our members to engage with the CRPD Committee in Geneva and to draft reports reflecting the situation of persons with disabilities in their countries. Various trainings and workshops were organised, often with key partners, such as the International Disability Alliance, the UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights and Equinet. As a result, EDF members' priorities were taken into consideration by the CRPD Committee during the review of their countries.

EDF met with a range of European Commissioners to stress the importance of taking the principles of the CRPD into consideration and including disability in all EU policy areas. For example, we met with the European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen, the European Commissioner for Regional Policy, Corina Cretu, the European Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources, Günther Oettinger, and the European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides.

The next report of the EU to the CRPD Committee will be in 2021. EDF monitors and promotes progress on an ongoing basis, based on the recommendations that the EU received by the CRPD Committee. In 2016 and 2017, EDF organised two civil society meetings at the European Economic and Social Committee to gather evidence and to hear people's views about how the CRPD is implemented in Europe, and to discuss persisting barriers.

EDF and its members have been active in advocating for the review of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020. EDF replied to the public consultation by the European Commission calling for a new European Disability Strategy 2020-2030 which will cover all rights enshrined in the CRPD.

EDF also contributed to the organisation of expert dialogues at the European Parliament in preparation of the Parliament's report on the European Disability Strategy. EDF made recommendations for improvement and emphasised the importance of a European Disability Strategy 2020-2030 covering all articles of the CRPD. We also called for 2021 to be the European Year of Persons with Disabilities.

EDF has been an active member of the EU Independent Monitoring Framework (which monitors the implementation of the CRPD in Europe), together with the European Ombudsman, the European Parliament and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. In September 2017, EDF started chairing the EU Framework for the second time. The Framework has the mandate to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of the CRPD by the EU. To this end, the EU Framework organised a joint meeting with the national Monitoring Frameworks in both 2016 and 2017, and a meeting with the CRPD Focal Point at the European Commission in 2017.

EDF provided support and expertise to its members whose countries hadn't yet ratified the CRPD and advocated with them for the swift ratification of the CRPD by their governments. In 2016, Finland, Iceland and the Netherlands ratified the CRPD, a fantastic step forward towards the inclusive Europe we are working for. To date, Ireland is the only EU Member State which has not yet ratified the CRPD, and EDF, along with its Irish member, the Disability Federation of Ireland, continues to repeatedly call for its swift ratification of the CRPD.

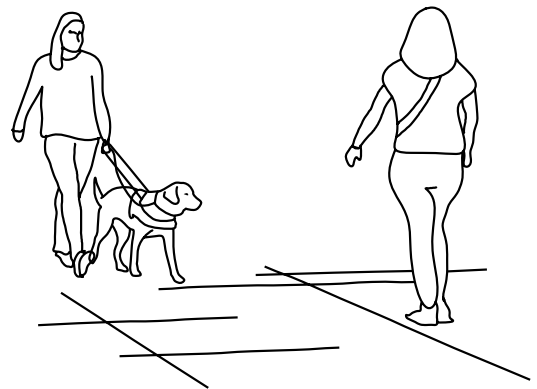
To raise awareness about the CRPD and mark the European Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December, EDF and the European Commission co-organised a two-day conference in Brussels gathering hundreds of persons with disabilities from across Europe. In 2016, the conference focused on the 10th anniversary of the CRPD and the progress made by the EU concerning its implementation. In 2017, it focused on citizenship and the right to political participation of people with disabilities.

EDF and the European Commission also co-organised the Work Forum on the implementation of the CRPD. In 2016, the conference marked the 10th anniversary of the CRPD by sharing good practices in its implementation in Europe. In 2017, it particularly focused on disability assessment and refugees with disabilities.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Equality and non-discrimination constitute fundamental principles of an inclusive society. EDF fights against all forms of discrimination, including multiple and intersectional discrimination. We pay particular attention to women, children, older people, persons requiring high level of support and refugees with disabilities.

A EUROPE WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION
AND INEQUALITIES IS A BETTER PLACE
FOR EVERYONE



HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017

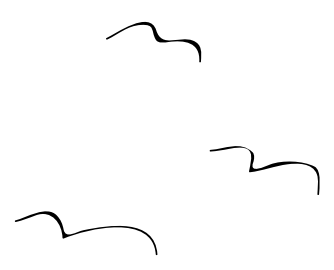
EDF continued to campaign for the adoption of a horizontal Equal Treatment Directive protecting people from discrimination on the grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief, in all areas of life. Alongside the 'Equality for All' coalition and other European non-discrimination networks, we worked to advocate and raise awareness about the adoption of this directive.

EDF mainstreamed multiple and intersectional discrimination in all of its policy work, and included specific references to the rights and needs of people requiring high level of support, and other groups of people with disabilities that are most excluded, such as women, children, refugees, people deprived of legal capacity and people living in institutions.

We wrote a submission to the UN Committee expressing the views of people with disabilities in relation to Article 5 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on equality and non-discrimination, and to Article 19 on living in the community.

In 2017, EDF established a Committee on Human Rights and Non-Discrimination. The Committee will provide input into all EDF's policy work on human rights and non-discrimination.

During its 2017 Annual General Assembly, EDF organised a conference on the future of the disability movement. Together, we looked at how the disability movement can become more inclusive and mainstream the issue of multiple discrimination and the most marginalised persons within our work. Representatives from the women's, youth and older persons' movements, as well as a young refugee with a disability gave their insight into this topic.



FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

The European Union (EU) treaties guarantee the fundamental rights of all EU citizens including the freedom of movement of persons, goods and services. This is important as it gives everyone the right to live, work or study in any other Member State of the EU. Goods can circulate freely and citizens have the right to provide and receive services in another Member State.

However, people with disabilities still cannot fully enjoy freedom of movement and have difficulties accessing mainstream products and services on an equal basis with others. They face barriers when studying, looking for a job, travelling, purchasing products and services, or simply accessing information.

**EDF ADVOCATES FOR THE ADOPTION
OF A COMPREHENSIVE EUROPEAN
ACCESSIBILITY ACT**

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017

EDF and its members worked together to advance the work on the European Disability Card. A pilot project was launched by the European Commission, and eight Member States are currently participating: Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Malta, Romania, and Slovenia. We advocate for the project to be spread to the rest of the EU with a widened scheme and adequate funding.

We continued our collaboration with the European Commission on the Access City Awards, which are given to cities which have done substantial work on improving accessibility for all their inhabitants and visitors. The awards serve also as an opportunity to raise awareness about accessibility and freedom of movement. EDF experts participate in the jury.

We published an update of our 2011 'Freedom Guide' explaining the developments concerning freedom of movement in Europe since then: what has been done so far and what still needs to be done to ensure freedom of movement of all people in Europe.

EDF expressed the views of the disability movement at key events related to accessibility, freedom of movement, tourism, and transport. We also made our views clear by publishing position papers on issues that are crucial for persons with disabilities.

EUROPEAN ACCESSIBILITY ACT

The adoption of a strong European Accessibility Act by the EU has been at the heart of our Freedom of Movement campaign. For many years, EDF and its members have been calling on the EU to adopt a law that would make products and services in Europe accessible to all people. In December 2015, the European Commission published its proposal for the Act. For the proposal to become a law in Europe, it must also be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council. EDF and its members have been advocating for the adoption of a strong Accessibility Act that will make a real difference in the lives of all people in Europe.



HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017

We have been continuously working on raising awareness about accessibility in Europe among EU decision makers, EU media and the general public. In 2016 and 2017 we used every available opportunity to talk to these audiences about the benefits of an accessible Europe and the barriers that persist.

EDF and its members advocated to strengthen the European Commission's proposal for the Accessibility Act, and later, the position of the European Parliament and the Council. We also reached out to the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and the public using different approaches, including setting up and manning a public information stall in front of the Parliament buildings in Brussels and Strasbourg. We asked MEPs to vote for provisions that would make the Act stronger, including more products and services; and allowing less exceptions.

In March 2017, we organised a public demonstration outside the European Parliament with the support of our members and partners. Together we called on the MEPs to stand by their citizens with disabilities and support a strong Accessibility Act. We also organised several trainings and webinars, as well as a successful social media campaign on this topic.

Our campaign had a positive result in the European Parliament's vote for the Act in September 2017: many positive provisions were adopted. However, unfortunately, several other crucial points of the Act were left out. In 2018, we will continue our campaign until we have ensured that the EU will adopt the strongest possible version of the Accessibility Act.

On 7 December 2017, the Council also adopted its position. While this was an important step forward towards the adoption of the Act, many important provisions are missing. EDF is continuously lobbying the EU institutions to improve the final text in the negotiations.

We achieved high media coverage, both in mainstream, as well as specialised media, of the topic of accessibility and we frequently spoke to the media about why a strong Accessibility Act will be beneficial for all people in Europe.

In 2016 and 2017, EDF brought people with disabilities across Europe together with decision makers to discuss how to make accessibility in Europe a reality for all. For example, in 2017 we had a workshop in Tallinn, as part of EDF's Board meeting, and people with disabilities shared their experiences concerning accessibility in their everyday lives.

TRANSPORT

Despite several existing European Union laws and initiatives, people with disabilities in Europe are often still excluded from using most public and private transportation. These reasons include physical, communication, informational and attitudinal barriers. EDF campaigns for a barrier-free Europe for all. This can be achieved with a multimodal, seamless, and accessible travel chain that allows persons with disabilities to travel spontaneously and independently on an equal basis with others.



HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017



Rail

EDF advocated for a strengthening of the European Commission's recast of the Rail Passengers' Rights Regulation; the legislative procedure is still ongoing.

EDF continued its active involvement in the working group on the Technical Specifications on Rail Interoperability for Persons with Reduced Mobility (TSI-PRM) of the European Railway Agency to improve accessibility of trains and railway stations. We also participated in the Commission's Advisory Body on the TSI-PRM, encouraging the European Commission as well as the EU Member States to be ambitious and ensure the Regulation is well implemented.

Regular communication with the industry was maintained via the Customer Liaison Group of the Community of European Railways (CER).

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017



Air

EDF signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Airports Council International (ACI) Europe to improve our collaboration. As part of this Memorandum of Understanding, we launched the 'Accessible Airports Award'. This is a yearly award that aims to honour the best airport in Europe in terms of its level of accessibility, as well as the range and the quality of the assistance services that it offers. The winner of the first edition of the 'Accessible Airport Award' in 2016 was Dublin Airport, Ireland. The winner of the second edition in 2017 was Larnaca Airport, Cyprus.

EDF continued regular participation in the Facilitation Sub-Group on Persons with Reduced Mobility (FAL-PRM) of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) to ensure a robust implementation of the Regulation on Air Passengers' Rights for persons with disabilities (Regulation 1107/2006).



Road

We continued our collaboration with the road transport industry in different events and initiatives, mainly related to the Bus and Coach Passengers' Rights Regulation (181/2011) as well as accessibility of taxis. EDF also participated in regular European Commission meetings of experts and National Enforcement Bodies (NEBs), to promote the implementation of the regulation.



Multimodal transport



EDF gave feedback to and advocated for the publication of the European Commission's proposal on passengers' rights in multimodal transport, and supports a multimodal approach to transport accessibility which guarantees accessibility and assistance when changing from one transport mode to another.

EDF, in collaboration with the International Association of Public Transport (UITP) and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) published a voluntary Accessibility Guide for public transport staff to raise their awareness about the needs of passengers with disabilities.

ECONOMIC CRISIS

The economic and financial crisis that began in 2008 has been followed by years of austerity, which is having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of persons with disabilities in Europe. Despite the commitment of the European Union (EU) to lift people out of poverty by 2020, the rate of poverty across Europe is increasing.

Persons with disabilities are at an even higher risk of poverty and social exclusion than the general population. At the EU level, in 2014, 30.1% of people with disabilities aged 16 and over lived in households which were at risk of poverty or social exclusion compared to 21.4% of the general population. EDF strengthened its alliances with key partners to reverse the negative impact of the economic crisis, and worked to raise awareness and advocate for the right to adequate standards of living and social protection of persons with disabilities.

**EDF STRENGTHENED ITS ALLIANCES
WITH KEY PARTNERS TO REVERSE
THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THE
ECONOMIC CRISIS**

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017

In cooperation with the 'Alliance Against Disability Cuts', we raised awareness among policy makers and the general public about the situation of persons with disabilities suffering from the impact of the economic crisis.

Persons with disabilities had the chance to address Members of the European Parliament, the European Commission and other relevant stakeholders during a wide range of events on poverty and social exclusion. We called on them to stop disability cuts and support people with disabilities living in poverty.

EDF continues providing a space for persons with disabilities to share their experiences via an online questionnaire on the impact of the economic crisis, available on the EDF website.

EDF brought the perspective of persons with disabilities to the Annual Convention on Inclusive Growth. We organised a side event on young persons with disabilities with the members of the EDF youth committee, and a workshop on inclusive labour markets with the European Trade Union Confederation. This was an opportunity to exchange information among policymakers, civil society organisations, and persons with disabilities to promote inclusive economic growth.

EU FUNDS

The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs) are a tool that can make a difference in the lives of persons with disabilities in Europe. For example, they can be used to improve accessibility, fight poverty and social exclusion, increase education and employment opportunities, to name just a few of their usages.

EDF and its members are actively working to monitor the ESIFs, and ensure that European money is used to promote the inclusion and participation of all people in society. In particular, EDF works to ensure that no project co-funded with ESIFs promotes discrimination against people with disabilities or other groups of citizens, which would be a violation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

EU FUNDS SHOULD BE INVESTED TO PROMOTE EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL CITIZENS



HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017

In the last years, EDF worked in the area of the ESIFs mainly to advocate for the effective use of disability-related provisions, meaning that the funds are spent to promote social inclusion and accessibility for persons with disabilities.

As a member of the European Commission's Group of Experts on the ESIFs, EDF raised awareness about the importance of involvement of organisations of persons with disabilities in the use of the ESIFs. We also stressed that the ESIFs are an important tool that should be used to fight discrimination.

EDF and its members work together to ensure that the ESIFs are not used to build or maintain segregating institutions. We also partner together with other organisations, such as organisations for children's rights, service providers and United Nations' agencies, through the work of the European Expert Group on Transition from Institutions to Community-based Care.

EDF promoted and monitored the use of the ESIFs as a valuable tool for the implementation of the CRPD and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. For example, we responded to the public inquiry of the European Ombudsman, who included our concerns in the overall conclusions and recommendations.

EDF supported its members' work on the ESIFs at the national level, through training and capacity building, and facilitation of exchange among its members via an Email Expert Group on the ESIFs.

EMPLOYMENT & SOCIAL POLICIES

The right to employment is enshrined in Article 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Access to employment is also a precondition for the economic and social inclusion of persons with disabilities and their families in society.

Unfortunately, more than 53% of persons with disabilities in Europe are unemployed. Women with disabilities, people with disabilities living in institutions and people in need of high level of support are even more likely to be discriminated against and excluded from the labour market. Unemployment is closely linked to poverty and social exclusion.

At the European level, the debate on employment has been boosted by the launch of the European Pillar of Social Rights (the Social Pillar) aiming to promote access to employment, decent working conditions, including work life balance, and social protection.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017

In 2016 and 2017, EDF facilitated discussions among its members on the employment situation of persons with disabilities in Europe. EDF raised awareness about persisting barriers in access to employment and built consensus among the disability movement about potential solutions and initiatives to promote the right to employment of persons with disabilities. In 2017, the EDF Board adopted a resolution to promote employment for persons with disabilities.

EDF mobilised its members to contribute to the development of the Social Pillar and make sure that it takes into consideration the needs of persons with disabilities. As a result of our contribution to the consultation, the disability perspective is better integrated in all principles promoting employment, better working conditions and inclusive social protection for persons with disabilities.

In 2016, EDF adopted a definition of 'Independent Living' that is a useful tool for public authorities to take on board when they develop policies, legislation or services.

EDF contributed to the CRPD Committee's General Comment on Article 19 'Living independently and being included in the community' by submitting a contribution jointly with its members, the European Network on Independent living, Inclusion Europe and Mental Health Europe. CRPD Committee's General Comment provide guidance on how to interpret and implement the articles of the CRPD.

As a member of the Expert Group on Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care, EDF provided trainings to public authorities (both European and National) on how to use the ESIFs to promote the de-institutionalisation of persons with disabilities, and how to facilitate their inclusion in society.

EDF, together with the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) contributed to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, highlighting barriers and discrimination against persons with disabilities in accessing adequate housing.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC AND POLITICAL LIFE

Citizenship rights, including the right to vote and to stand as candidate for elections, lie at the very heart of every democracy. They are protected by European and international laws, including European Union (EU) Treaties and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). However, persons with disabilities face a series of legal, administrative and accessibility barriers that prevent them from exercising these rights on an equal basis with others. Many people with disabilities may be deprived of their legal capacity and the right to vote. Inaccessible voting procedures, polling stations and information make it not only impossible for persons with disabilities to vote, but also to be involved in political processes. EDF campaigns for the removal of all restrictions to the right to vote on the ground of disability and for equal opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in political life.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017

EDF met with the President of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajani, to discuss the role that the European Parliament can play in ensuring that all citizens can vote or stand for election in the European Parliament elections of 2019.

During the 4th European Parliament of Persons with disabilities in December 2017, EDF presented its Manifesto on the European elections 2019 to European Parliament leaders, calling for fully accessible and inclusive 2019 elections.

EDF and its members closely worked with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on the right to vote - we provided direct examples of obstacles faced by persons with disabilities via first-hand testimonies, and supported the Committee's efforts to reform the electoral rules governing the European elections. In 2017, the EDF Board held a panel discussion with the rapporteur of the EESC during the EDF Board meeting. We also supported the organisation of a Hearing at the EESC.

EDF initiated cooperation with the Organisation for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), an international organisation promoting Human Rights in the wider Europe, Russia and North America. EDF, through the participation of its Vice-President, Pat Clarke, became a member of the expert group advising the ODIHR on the right to political participation of persons with disabilities. We want to make sure that the OSCE and its participating states consult with and adequately involve persons with disabilities and their organisations in every activity on the right to political participation. EDF contributed to several OSCE documents, including guidelines on political participation and a handbook for election observation teams.

EDF, the ODIHR and the Disability intergroup of the European Parliament organised a thematic meeting with MEPs, organisations of persons with disabilities and experts, on the topic of the involvement of persons with disabilities by political parties.

EDF and its members held a dialogue on the right to vote with the European Commission during the conference for the European Day of Persons with Disabilities 2017.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

EDF and its members have a long and rich history of close cooperation with the European Parliament. Against the backdrop of the economic, social and human rights crisis in recent years, the role of the European Parliament has often been key to preserving disability rights in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

**THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT HAS
A CRUCIAL ROLE IN SUPPORTING THE
RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017

EDF and the European Parliament jointly organised the 4th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities on 6 December 2017. This historic event took place in the Plenary Chamber of the European Parliament, and included nearly 800 delegates. Persons with disabilities from all over Europe and all disability groups met Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and high level representatives of other European Union (EU) institutions. The event also marked EDF's 20th anniversary and included the adoption of Manifesto on the European Elections, a Resolution on the next European Disability Strategy and an Emergency resolution on the European Accessibility Act.

EDF continued its cooperation with the Disability intergroup of the European Parliament, a group of over 100 MEPs actively promoting disability rights. EDF and the Disability Intergroup have a regular programme of events and meetings tackling a range of policy priorities, including the European Accessibility Act, the future European Disability Strategy, the Sustainable Development Goals and more.

EDF continued to act as the Disability Intergroup's secretariat; its membership has been extended to 105 MEPs with a powerful multi-party leadership.

EDF continued working with the CRPD network - an internal body of the European Parliament made up of MEPs and officials representing different EP Committees and tasked with promoting the optimal application of the CRPD in the Parliament's work. EDF takes part as an observer ensuring that the voice of persons with disabilities is heard during CRPD Network meetings.

We provided the European Parliament with our expertise and recommendations in several reports and on a range of issues, including the midterm review of the European Disability Strategy, the European Accessibility Act, the Sustainable Development Goals, transports regulations, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), the Social Pillar, and many others.

In April 2017, EDF had a formal meeting with the new President of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajani, which resulted in his commitment to and support for the 4th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities.

In December 2016, the second high level meeting between EDF and Presidents of the Political Groups of the European Parliament took place. The political groups Presidents signed a meeting declaration through which they renewed their commitment to support the rights of persons with disabilities in Europe.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In January 2016, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development officially came into force. These 17 goals and 169 targets must be implemented and monitored in all countries. Nations around the world, including European nations, have until 2030 to mobilise efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind. The Agenda specifically includes disability in five goals and seven targets. It also calls on all countries to disaggregate data by disability across a number of indicators. EDF sees the SDGs as a formidable advocacy opportunity to implement the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in Europe and in international cooperation, using the SDGs as a roadmap.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2014-2015

EDF actively engaged in policy dialogue with the EU and has seen a growing importance given to disability-inclusive SDGs in European policy activities (e.g. Work forum on CRPD, Disability High Level Group, Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament and Development and Employment Committees).

EDF raised awareness of disability-inclusive SDGs within other civil society platforms such as SDG Watch Europe.

EDF organised an internal training for the EDF Secretariat to build the capacity of our own staff and mainstream the SDGs across our work.

EDF organised an event at the European Parliament in June 2017 to gather experts and Members of the European Parliament to talk about their role in realising disability-inclusive SDGs at the European level.

EDF has regular meetings with EDF members to build capacity and knowledge around the SDGs, as well as give guidance to influence at the national level.

With the participation of the African Disability Forum and the International Disability Alliance, in June 2017, EDF organised a SDGs training for EDF national members to build the capacity of organisations of persons with disabilities.

EDF publishes a regular internal SDGs newsletter to facilitate communication on the topic within EDF members.

EDF mobilised its members to monitor EU external development policies and engaged organisations of persons with disabilities to participate in public consultation on external policies.

EDF successfully advocated for the inclusion of person with disabilities in the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) using the CRPD and the SDGs as frameworks for action.

EDF successfully advocated for the inclusion of person with disabilities and the CRPD in the new EU Consensus for Development, which is the new policy on international cooperation and development for the EU and its Member States.

EDF participated in the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN ECE) Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in April 2017 in Geneva, leading to the creation of regional stakeholder group of persons with disabilities.

EDF participated actively at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in the United Nations in July 2017 in New York. EDF Vice-President Ana Peláez Narváez provided input into Goal 5 ('Achieve gender equality') and gave an intervention on women with disabilities during the official HLPF session. EDF also co-organised the official disability side-event with the participation of its Board member Thorkild Olesen.

EDF participated in the International Disability Alliance study to report on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Voluntary National Reviews of the HLPF.

EDF was invited to meet the Secretary General of the new UN ECE, Olga Algayerova, to discuss the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the regional forum on SDGs.

EDF successfully celebrated the 2nd anniversary of the SDGs and contributed to the Global Day of Action called by Act4SDGs on 25 September with an awareness campaign.

EDF is working on a European Human Rights Report focusing on the SDGs, which will be published early in 2018.

E-ACCESSIBILITY

New technologies have become an intrinsic part of everyone's life and communication, and persons with disabilities are not an exception. When these technologies are accessible, persons with disabilities can also use them to overcome barriers they encounter in their everyday lives. New technologies can be used to support persons with disabilities' independent living and facilitate their participation in all aspects of society, from education and employment to culture, leisure and many others. Because of the vital role technology plays in enabling the full participation of persons with disabilities in all areas of life, EDF advocates for European legislation and new technological breakthroughs that ensure that technologies are designed for all.

In this regard, the EDF approach is threefold. Firstly, we campaign for accessibility legislation in the European Union (EU), such as the Web Accessibility Directive. Secondly, we aim at mainstreaming accessibility in major initiatives regarding Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), such as the European Digital Single Market Strategy. Thirdly, we collaborate with ICT companies and other civil society organisations to promote Universal Design and accessible technology solutions.

**EDF WANTS AN INCLUSIVE E-SOCIETY
IN WHICH ICT PRODUCTS AND SERVICES
ARE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL**

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017

In October 2016, after an intensive campaign and involvement of EDF and its members, the EU adopted the Web Accessibility Directive, which will ensure that all public sector websites and mobile applications will be accessible for persons with disabilities. This Directive also includes a robust enforcement mechanism to ensure its success.

An EDF expert is taking part in the Web Accessibility Directive Expert Group, formed by the European Commission and EU Member States, to coordinate the steps necessary to successfully implement the Web Accessibility Directive. In this regard, EDF also contributed to an EU funded study in 2016 on monitoring methodologies for web accessibility.

In February 2017, EDF reached an agreement with public and commercial broadcasters regarding media accessibility during the ongoing revision of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive which will ensure TV programmes are made progressively more accessible, including adding subtitles for the Deaf and hard of hearing, audio description, sign language interpretation, etc.

During 2017, EDF campaigned for strengthening the provisions for persons with disabilities in the review of the EU telecommunication rules (the 'European Electronic Communications Code'), with the aim of ensuring that electronic communications (like telephony and emergency services) are accessible.

EDF successfully advocated for accessibility and inclusion to be one of the general principles of the EU e-Government Action plan 2016-2020. This strategy will guide Member States and the EU in the deployment of electronic public services.

EDF has joined forces with Oracle to promote accessibility in ICT. In 2016 and 2017 we granted an 8.000 euro scholarship for high education students with disabilities in the ICT domain.

STANDARDS

Standards are the technical documents that companies, organisations and public administrations use to achieve a specific goal when they design their products and services. Even though European standards are voluntary, they are very relevant when they are used to comply with existing European and national legislation. In this context, standards are crucial for companies to ensure that their products and services are accessible for persons with disabilities. Standards themselves are voluntary- but when these standards are set out to demonstrate how to comply with European or national legislation, standards become an important means for promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.

To this aim, EDF is very active on the development of standards specifically addressing accessibility of the built environment or Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), but also on promoting accessibility requirements in other relevant standards.

**PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES SHOULD
BE INCLUDED IN THE DEVELOPMENT
OF STANDARDS THAT INFLUENCE
THEIR LIVES**

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017

EDF is a member of a multi-stakeholder advisory platform to the European Commission on ICT standards, and a member of the Strategic Advisory Group on Accessibility to CEN, one of the European standards organisations.

In 2017, the European Commission issued the Mandate 554 to develop a harmonised European standard that will help to implement the Web Accessibility Directive. EDF accessibility experts have been appointed as members of the technical group that will develop this standard.

EDF successfully campaigned for the revision of the European standard EN 301 549 on accessibility requirements for ICT products and services. The work will start right after adopting the standard for web and mobile apps accessibility.

During 2016 and 2017, EDF experts worked on a European standard on Design for All that which help diverse organisations to achieve accessibility, by incorporating a universal design approach internally. This approach includes a commitment from the management of the organisation, including a specific allocation of resources, to investigate how to develop products, goods and services in such a way that more users can access them. The approach also involves persons with disabilities throughout all of the company's internal processes.

EDF promoted and mainstreamed accessibility in the Multi-Stakeholder Platform Rolling Plan on ICT and standardisation, published annually.

EDF sent comments to the first draft of Mandate 420, the Standard on Accessibility of the Built Environment. Once adopted, it will give functional and technical specifications for public procurement of accessible buildings.

EDF applied to become an official partner organisation of the European Committee for Standardization and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CEN-CENELEC) to formally contribute to the work of its Technical Committees and Working Groups.

EDF, along with AGE Platform Europe and the European Blind Union sent a joint letter to CEN-CENELEC to criticise the lack of ambition in Standard 81-70 on accessibility of lifts, and appeal against its ratification because the final standard did not ensure sufficient contrast for the lift buttons. This is problematic for persons with visual impairments and creates extra safety risks.

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

The rights of women and girls with disabilities were an important focus of EDF's work in 2016 and 2017. Women with disabilities are three times more likely than women without disabilities to be victims of violence in Europe, including forced sterilisation. EDF campaigned actively together with the European Women's Lobby for the European Union (EU) to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence, and welcomes the progress made in this regard. EDF also called on the EU and its Member States to prevent and prohibit the practice of forced sterilisation.

To better mainstream the rights of women and girls with disabilities throughout its work, EDF has a Women's Committee which brings together women with disabilities from all over Europe and from different disability groups.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017

With the leadership of EDF Women's Committee:

In 2017, we published a report on ending forced sterilisation of women and girls with disabilities to raise awareness about the situation in Europe, and organised a hearing at the European Parliament to raise awareness on forced sterilisation of women and girls with disabilities. A photo competition and exhibition were also organised by CERMI Women's Foundation and EDF was member of the jury.

EDF continued the implementation of its Gender Equality Action Plan 2015-2017 containing actions and measures to ensure gender equality in EDF's policy, communication, human resources and finance policies. A Gender Equality Committee was established to this aim.

EDF promoted the general comment on Article 6 of the CRPD on women and girls with disabilities giving countries practical guidance on how to ensure that the rights of women and girls with disabilities is fully implemented in all their policy work at national level.

EDF continued its cooperation with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) to ensure mainstreaming of women and girls with disabilities in its efforts to collect data on gender equality. EDF also raised awareness at the EIGE conference in October 2017 on the barriers that women with disabilities face.

EDF spoke at the hearing of the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in preparation of their 2018 report on women with disabilities.

EDF brought the perspective of women and girls with disabilities in the work of the European Women's Lobby Board and its observatory on ending violence against women in 2016 and 2017.

REFUGEES WITH DISABILITIES

Europe has recently seen the arrival of more than one million persons fleeing war and persecution in other parts of the world. Refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities represent an invisible group of individuals who are forced to leave their countries. Apart from the challenge of surviving the journey, refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities face inaccessible relief and reception conditions, a lack of access to assistance, protection risks, lack of access to medical care, and insufficient access to assistive technology which could make communication and mobility easier. Women, children, unaccompanied minors and older persons with disabilities face an even higher risk of being discriminated against or excluded from receiving appropriate support.

EDF has repeatedly called on the European Union (EU) and its Members States to respond to the migration crisis with a Human Rights-based approach that puts people's lives first. The EU should address the migration situation by providing a framework that is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the 1951 Refugee Convention.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017

EDF co-organised several high-level events at the European Parliament, the United Nations Conference of States Parties, and at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), to raise awareness about the situation of refugees with disabilities and directly include the voices of refugees with disabilities in these discussions.

In October 2016, EDF took part in a mission of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) to Greece to investigate the situation of refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities. We also developed recommendations to the EU and UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for improving the situation.

Together with the Human Rights Watch and Norwegian Refugee Council, EDF met the European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides, in 2016 and 2017 to call for a disability-inclusive humanitarian aid and refugee policy. At the 4th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities, the Commissioner announced a new approach to strengthen the Commission's work in this field, including in funding, standards and dialogue and cooperation with organisation of persons with disabilities.

In May 2017, EDF collaborated with UNIDSR, CBM and IDPP and organised a workshop about disaster risk reduction. We trained persons with disabilities and experts from EDF members to take part remotely in the 2017 Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction in Cancun.

EDF participated as a trainer in a training organised by its Greek member, the Greek National Confederation of Disabled People (NCDP), and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The purpose was to train staff of the reception centres on how to identify and support refugees with disabilities.

Nujeen Mustafa, a young refugee with a disability, addressed the EDF Annual General Assembly in 2017 and spoke about her experience fleeing Syria in a wheelchair and the difficulties faced by refugees with disabilities.

EDF together with the Human Rights Watch and the Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament organised the event 'Refugees with Disabilities: Overlooked, Underserved' in March 2017.

EDF met the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to strengthen the cooperation between UNHCR and organisations of persons with disabilities, in order to improve the situation of refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities.

YOUTH & CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

YOUTH

Young persons with disabilities have fewer chances than their non-disabled peers to enter and progress within higher education. Their employment rate tends to be much lower than average, and the youth employment situation is even more difficult for young persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, those coming from migrant or minority families, or those living in institutions.

EDF works to raise awareness about the situation of young persons with disabilities in Europe and make their voices heard. In 2011, EDF created a Youth Committee to mainstream youth issues into all EDF policies and actions. The members of EDF's Youth Committee are young people with disabilities from 18 to 35 years old, coming from various countries in Europe.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017

In 2016 and 2017, the participation of youth with disabilities within EDF and the general youth movement was strengthened. To achieve this, we cooperated with the European Youth Forum, the Erasmus Student Network and networks of youth with disabilities across Europe

Our Youth Committee and the European Youth Forum jointly published a letter on the Youth Guarantee and the European Solidarity Corps to ensure that both EU initiatives are more inclusive for all young people, including those with disabilities.

EDF's Youth Committee is part of an advisory group on the MappED project of the Erasmus Student Network and gave input on the accessibility of European universities' facilities.

Members of EDF's Youth Committee took part in the European Youth Event at the European Parliament in 2016 that brought together 700 young people.

In May 2017, EDF brought the perspective of young people with disabilities to the Annual Convention on Inclusive Growth. Together with several members, we co-organised a side event focusing on the social inclusion of young people with disabilities in Europe.

Young people with disabilities were invited to express their views and participate in debates and trainings concerning important topics, such as the United Nations of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the European Pillar of Social Rights, freedom of movement, accessibility etc.

EDF used the opportunity of the International Youth Day in 2016 and 2017 to raise awareness about the challenges that young persons with disabilities face in Europe. We featured interviews of young persons with disabilities sharing their experiences and their recommendations on how governments in Europe can promote their active participation in society.

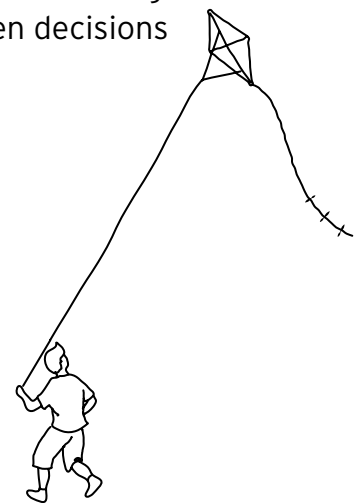
The Youth Committee Chair is also represented in EDF Board meetings and takes an active part in all discussions about EDF policies and future actions.

YOUTH & CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

CHILDREN

Children with disabilities have the right to the same opportunities in life as all other children. Their voice should also be the first voice to be heard when decisions that concern their lives are taken. These rights are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) that the European Union (EU) has ratified.

However, in reality, children with disabilities face a higher risk of living in institutions away from their families, of being victims of violence or sexual abuse, of being excluded from their local school, of not being properly included or supported, of being denied access to information on their rights or of being denied the chance to express their opinion when decisions related to their lives are taken.



HIGHLIGHTS IN 2016-2017

Starting in 2016, EDF teamed up with UNICEF and the International Children's Center (ICC) in a three-year project called 'Protecting children from violence and promoting social inclusion of children with disabilities in Western Balkans and Turkey'. The project is funded by the EU and UNICEF and aims to promote children's rights, including children with disabilities, and to tackle violence against children.

Through this project, EDF has progressively enhanced the capacity of its members and partner organisations of persons with disabilities to advocate for the promotion of children's rights. We also worked to facilitate the establishment of coalitions among organisations of persons with disabilities in the region and provided support for the preparation of alternative reports to the CRPD Committee on the situation of adults and children with disabilities.

EDF has been assisting its member, the National Organisation of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia (NOOIS), to prepare a comprehensive situation analysis concerning children with disabilities in the country. EDF has also been providing support to disability organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina to better streamline their advocacy efforts concerning the rights of children with disabilities.

EDF used the opportunity of World Children's Day in both 2016 and 2017, to raise awareness about the situation of children with disabilities in Europe. We called on the EU and its Member States to promote and protect the rights of all children with disabilities in line with the CRPD and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

INTERNATIONAL



EDF is an active member of the International Disability Alliance (IDA), and works in partnership with them to promote international cooperation policies which embrace the rights of persons with disabilities. The EDF president is the Treasurer of IDA.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2014-2015

Alongside IDA, we work to include persons with disabilities in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In September 2017, we participated in the IDA-International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) workshop in London to share information and identify ways to support CRPD - compliant SDGs.

EDF participated in the annual Conference of States Parties (COSP) at the UN Headquarters in New York. During the COSP, EDF organised events on International Cooperation, SDGs, Accessibility and Refugees and Migrants with Disabilities.

In February 2017, EDF joined IDA-DFID program inception workshop in Athens to engage in the project called "Advancing Inclusive Development and Human Rights for All Persons with Disabilities". EDF is focusing on women and girls with disabilities as well as SDGs.

EDF signed a Memorandum of Understanding for its participation in the EU project 'Bridging the Gap' ensuring the expertise of organisations of persons with disabilities throughout the project.

EDF participated in the European Disability and Development Weeks, organised by the International Disability and Development Consortium each December for a week.



EDF continues its engagement with the Council of Europe (CoE) as an observer member of its Committee of Experts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In addition, EDF did the following:

- **EDF and its members have been actively promoting their views** during the consultation on the Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023, advocating for the CoE to support the implementation of the CRPD. EDF, together with its members, sent a submission to the Council. We then participated in a conference and a roundtable discussion on the implementation of the strategy.
- **EDF also replied to the consultation on the Council of Europe's guidelines** on civil participation in political decision making, emphasising on the importance of active involvement and participation of representative organisations of persons with disabilities at all levels of policies and decision-making processes.
- **EDF, together with members and partners, did advocacy work** to change stigmatising language in the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (Oviedo Convention), urging the CoE to bring the instrument in line with the CRPD.
- **Finally, EDF submitted a third-party intervention** to the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Stoian vs Romania together with the International Disability Alliance and our Romanian member. The case concerns a young man with physical disabilities who was refused inclusive education in Romania.

OUR PARTNERS & CLOSE COLLABORATORS

- Academy of European Law
- AGE Platform Europe
- Airports Council International (ACI) - Europe
- Alliance Against Disability Cuts
- ANEC - The European consumer voice in standardisation
- Association of Commercial Television in Europe (ACT)
- Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER)
- Digital Europe
- Equinet, the European network of Equality Bodies
- European Broadcasting Union (EBU)
- European Digital Rights (EDRI)
- European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- European expert group on transition from institution to community based services
- European Network for Corporate Social Responsibility and Disability (CSR-D Network)
- European Network of National Human Rights Institutions
- European Trade Union Confederation
- European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF)
- European Women's Lobby (EWL)
- Funka
- Global Accessibility Reporting Initiative by the Mobile & Wireless Forum (GARI)
- Google
- incluD-ed network
- International Association of Public Transport (UITP)
- International Disability Alliance (IDA)
- International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC)
- International Road Transport Union (IRU)
- Microsoft
- Oracle
- SDG Watch Europe
- Semester Alliance
- Siteimprove
- Social Platform
- The European Agency for Fundamental Rights
- The European Passengers' Federation (EPF)
- Transmedia Catalonia Research Group
- UNICEF

FINANCES

In 2016-2017, EDF's work was made possible by the generous support of the European Union, the Open Society Foundation (New Executives Fund), the ONCE Foundation, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and UNICEF.

We also thank the EU Institutions, including the Commission, the Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee, the EU Presidencies, National governments and EDF members for hosting, co-organising and supporting our events and governing body meetings in Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece, Spain, Ireland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Malta, the UK, Latvia and at the United Nations in the United States in 2016 and 2017.

EXPENSES	2015	2016
Expenses related to projects	896.645,05	854.606,94
Staff costs	753.783,63	674.556,94
Travel costs	192.498,17	318.622,1
Administrative and office costs	73.311,56	105.774,14
Costs for services (communication, meetings, equipment, interpretation)	101.026,27	210.916,5
TOTAL EXPENSES	2.017.264,68	2.164.476,62
INCOME		
Operating grant subsidies	896.496,21	1.007.222,2
Membership fees	162.151,04	177.460,35
Other members contributions	68.267,7	94.828,14
Project subsidies	899.542,06	954.424,69
TOTAL INCOME	2.026.457,01	2.233.935,38
REPORTED RESULT	9.192,33	69.458,76

EASY-TO-READ



This is a summary of this booklet in easy to read.

Easy to read is a way to make information accessible so people with intellectual disabilities and all people can understand it.

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 20 years ago.

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.

We talk to people who make laws and decisions in Europe about what people with disabilities need to have a good life and same chances as everybody else.

EDF believes that a fair society includes people with disabilities and that people with disabilities should decide about their lives. We believe that nothing should be decided about us without us.

We believe that all people have the right to:

- be treated fairly
- have same chances in life
- make their own choices
- take part in the community and live together

EDF members

EDF has around 100 members from all over Europe.

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.

On page 50 of this booklet

there is a list of all the organisations that are members of EDF.

EDF members come together and discuss important things for people with disabilities. They also choose the people who can take decisions for EDF. All together they decide how to make things better for people with disabilities in Europe. On page 8 and 9 of this booklet you can see pictures of people who take decisions for EDF.

Also EDF has an office in Brussels. On page 10 of this booklet you can see pictures of people who work at EDF office. You will also find information about how to contact EDF office.

EDF's work

In 2016 and 2017, EDF worked on many different things that are important for people with disabilities.

The UN Convention

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

In short, we call it 'the UN'.

The UN made a document which says what rights people with disabilities have and how countries can protect these rights.

This document is called

'the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities'.

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

The European Union is a group of 28 countries in Europe.

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

Some years ago, the European Union signed the UN Convention and agreed to do what it says.

This was a very important step.
It means that the European Union agreed to make things better for people with disabilities in Europe.

Almost all countries of the European Union also signed the UN Convention.
They agreed to work hard to make the lives of their people with disabilities better.

Both the European Union and its countries have to present to the UN the work they do to make the UN Convention happen.
They write a report talking about what they do for people with disabilities.
The UN checks this report and tells them what they must do better to protect people with disabilities.

There is still many things that the European Union and its countries must do to make sure that people with disabilities in Europe have good lives and same chances as everybody else.

EDF wants the UN Convention to happen in Europe.
and we think that the European Union can do more for that.
That is why EDF had many meetings with people who make decisions in Europe.
We want to make sure that they respect the UN Convention when they make decisions.
We want them to respect the rights of people with disabilities. We also want the European Union to have a good plan saying what they will do in the next years to make the UN Convention happen in Europe.
We call this plan 'European Disability Strategy'.
We want this plan to respect all the things that the UN Convention says.

Discrimination

People with disabilities are sometimes treated badly or unfairly because of their disability.

This is called discrimination.

Some people with disabilities have bigger risk of being treated badly or unfairly.

For example, women, children, older people or people who live in institutions.

At EDF, we work to stop discrimination of people with disabilities.

We want the European Union to make a law that protects people from all kinds of discrimination.

People may have different abilities, religion, age or views but we are all equal and we should all be treated with respect.

Freedom of movement

In the European Union, people have the right to move, live and work in any country of the European Union.

When they move to another country, they should be able to use products and services exactly as the people who live in this country.

For example, a German person can move to Belgium and live there.

Or a French student can go study at a university in Spain.

We call this right 'freedom of movement'.

Unfortunately, many people with disabilities cannot enjoy this right.

It is often hard for them to travel, study or get a job in another country.

That is because many things are not accessible for them and they cannot use them like other people.

In the last two years, we continued to work to make freedom of movement happen for people with disabilities.

People with disabilities should have same chance as everyone else to move, live and work in any country of the European Union.

To help this happen, EDF asked the European Union to make a 'European Disability Card'

This card could make things easier for people with disabilities when they visit or live in another country of the European Union.

The European Union made this card.

Unfortunately, until now only 8 countries were interested to have this card for their people with disabilities:

- Belgium
- Cyprus
- Estonia
- Finland
- Italy
- Malta
- Romania
- Slovenia

That means that the card can be used by people with disabilities who are traveling only among these countries.

For example, a person with disability from Belgium who moves to Cyprus can use this card.

The card gives to people with disabilities some advantages in culture, sports and other activities.

For example, they may get lower prices

when they buy tickets for museums or for a football match.

Or they may get information that is easy to read and understand.

EDF was happy that the card was made

but we want the card to be used in all countries of the European Union.

We want the European Union to make this happen so that all people with disabilities can use the card when they travel in any country of the European Union.

Also, EDF went to meetings and wrote papers to explain how important freedom of movement is.

We said to people who make decisions in Europe how they can make sure that people with disabilities can enjoy freedom of movement like everyone else.

Accessibility Act

People with disabilities cannot use many things and services in Europe because they are not accessible. For many years, EDF was asking the European Union to make a strong law that will make things and services accessible so all people can use them.

We call this law 'the Accessibility Act'.

Finally some time ago, the European Union published a text saying how this law should be.

If this law happens certain things and services in Europe will become accessible so all people will be able to use them.

For example, cash machines, televisions and ticket machines will become accessible.

That will make it possible for people with disabilities to get money from a cash machine
watch programmes on television
or get a ticket from a ticket machine when they travel like everybody else.

EDF thinks that this law is very important.
We want the European Union to make this law happen.
We had many meetings with people who make decisions in Europe.
We explained to them what people with disabilities think about this law
and how it can make their lives better.
We asked them to make this law stronger
and make more things and services accessible for all people.

Now people who make decisions in Europe are discussing this law.
They will decide if they will make this law happen in Europe
and what things and services will be accessible.

We hope that they will hear what we tell them
and they will make a strong law
that will make things better for people with disabilities in Europe.

Transport

It may be hard for people with disabilities to travel
because transport like planes, boats and trains
are often not accessible to them.
Also they may not get the support they need
or information may be difficult for them to understand.

EDF thinks that people with disabilities should have the same chance
to travel when they want like everyone else.
For this to happen, transport like planes, boats and trains in Europe
must be accessible for all people.
This way people with disabilities will be able to use them
without problems.

If transport is not accessible
people with disabilities will not be able to use it
to go to their work or to visit their family and friends.
They will be left out.

We work to make sure that people who take decisions in Europe understand this and make all transport accessible for all people.

We often work together with other organisations who also think that transport should be accessible for all people. For example, lately we worked together with two world organisations and we made a very useful paper.

The paper says how people who work in buses, trains and metros could help people with disabilities.

For example, it says how the driver of a bus can help a person in a wheelchair to get in the bus and have a safe trip.

Economic crisis

In recent years, there is an economic crisis in Europe.

That means that countries in Europe have problems with money.

They have less money than before.

Many people in Europe don't have enough money to have a good life.

It may be hard for them to find a job.

Things are even harder for people with disabilities.

Some countries in Europe give little or no support to them.

Often people with disabilities do not have enough money to have a good life.

Without money and without a job, they may be left out of the community.

EDF asks countries in Europe to protect people with disabilities from the economic crisis.

We ask them to help people with disabilities to have a good life and same chances as everyone else.

Using European money

The European Union gives money to its countries.

This money is called 'Funds'.

The countries should spend this money to make schools, streets and other things that make the lives of people better.

This money is very important for people with disabilities too.

It can be used to make things accessible for them

and help them to be part of the community like everybody else.

For example, countries can use this money to build accessible schools so students with disabilities can go to school together with other students.

Or they can make streets, metros and buildings accessible

so people with disabilities could go around and be part of the community like everybody else.

The European Union should give this money only to countries who work to make sure that all people can take part in the community and have same chances in life.

Countries should spend part of this money

to help people with disabilities and other people who need support.

EDF checks how countries use this money.

We check if they use it for the good of all people

and if they use it to do good things for people with disabilities too.

EDF doesn't want countries to spend

the money they receive from the European Union

on things that make people with disabilities be left out.

For example, we don't want countries to spend this money

to build institutions where people with disabilities

live away from the community.

Instead, countries should spend this money

to help people with disabilities be part of the community

like everyone else.

Work

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

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.

Without a job, they may not have enough money to buy the things they need and have a good life. They may be left out of the community.

For some people with disabilities, it is even harder to get a job. For example, women with disabilities or people with disabilities who live in institutions.

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

EDF believes that the European Union should work to make it easier for people with disabilities to get a job and have a good life.

EDF talked to people who make laws and decisions in Europe about the problems that make it hard for people with disabilities to get a job.

For example, buses and metros are often not accessible for them so they cannot use them to go to work.

Or some people do not want to work with them because they have a disability.

That is unfair.

We want people who make laws and decisions in Europe to help people with disabilities have same chances to find a job and be part of the community like everyone else.

The right to vote

Every five years there are European elections.
That means that people in Europe vote and choose
who will make decisions and laws in Europe.
The next European elections will be in 2019.

It is very important to be able to vote.
It means that your voice counts.
It is also important to be able to stand for elections.
That means that people can vote and choose you
to make decisions and laws in Europe.

People with disabilities in Europe often have problems
when they try to vote or stand for elections.
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.
Also people with intellectual disabilities
may not get information that is easy to read and understand
so they may not know how to vote.
Often people with disabilities are not allowed to vote
or stand for elections because they have a disability.

EDF thinks that all people should have the right to vote
and choose the people who 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 that.

EDF met many people who make laws and decisions in Europe.
We told them it is unfair to not vote only because you have a disability.
We asked them to make sure that all people with disabilities
can vote in the next European elections.

The European Parliament

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

These decisions are also about people with disabilities.

They can make their lives better.

EDF works close with the people of the European Parliament.

We tell them what people with disabilities need

to be able to take part in the community like everyone else

We tell them how they can make things better for them.

We also make sure that they do not forget people with disabilities when they make decisions and laws.

In all the decisions they make

they should always respect the rights of people with disabilities

and work to make their lives better.

In December 2017

we made a very big meeting at the European Parliament.

Around 800 people with disabilities from different countries in Europe came to this meeting.

We talked with the people from the European Parliament about our rights.

We told the people of the European Parliament

how they can make sure that people with disabilities in Europe

have same chances in life like everyone else.

We asked them to make things better

for all people with disabilities in Europe.

Sustainable Development Goals

Some years ago, countries came together and made an agreement that they will work to make the world better.

They set some goals to make this happen.

We call these goals 'the Sustainable Development Goals'. They have to make these goals happen by 2030.

For example, they agreed to protect people who are poor and make things better for them.

They also agreed to try to make peace in the world and to protect the planet.

Countries in Europe also agreed to make these goals happen.

These goals concern people with disabilities too.

When countries in Europe work to make these goals happen they should always keep in mind people with disabilities and the UN Convention (read more on page 13).

They should make sure that no one is left behind.

Both the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Convention are very important for people with disabilities.

If they happen, all people with disabilities will have better lives and same chances as everyone else.

EDF met people who make decisions in Europe and asked them to remember people with disabilities

when they work to make the Sustainable Development Goals happen.

They should use the Sustainable Development Goals to make things better for people with disabilities too.

They should leave no one behind.

Technology

Most people in Europe use technology every day for many things.

For example, they may use:

- computers at their work
- mobiles to talk with their friends and family
- the internet to look for things

Technology can be very useful for people with disabilities too. If technology is accessible, they can also use it as everyone else. For example, it can help them to learn new things, work or stay in contact with their friends. It can help them to take part in the community like everyone else.

EDF thinks that technology should be accessible for all and that everyone should be able to use it.

In the last years, EDF was asking the European Union to make websites accessible for all people.

In 2016, the European Union made a law that says that public websites in Europe should be accessible.

For example, the website of your hospital or the website of the community you live at will be accessible and people with disabilities will be able to use them and find the information they need.

This was a great step.

We hope that more websites and technology will become accessible for people with disabilities.

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 our bills or to get money from a cash machine

would have different sizes and forms in every country.

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

Thanks to standards, the bank cards have the same size and form and we can use them to get money in every 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 should stop at the platform to wait for the train to come and they do not fall in the gap.

There are standards that explain how these signs should be made.

If there were no standards, each train station would use different signs and blind people would be confused or in danger.

EDF often helps people in the European Union who make standards.

We talk to them about the needs of people with disabilities

and we ask them to think of them when they make standards.

Standards should make things better for all people.

Women with disabilities

Often women with disabilities are treated badly or unfairly.

They may also go through 'sterilisation' against their will or without being well informed about it.

'Sterilisation' is a medical operation that makes it impossible for women to become mothers and have kids.

EDF made a document to talk about this.

We want this to stop.

Women with disabilities should have the right to decide if they want to become mothers and have kids.

There are laws that protect women with disabilities.

Countries in Europe should work harder to respect these laws

and protect women with disabilities.
They should make sure that they are treated fairly.

Refugees with disabilities

In the last years, more than 1 million refugees came to Europe. These people had to leave their countries and their homes because it was not safe for them to stay there anymore. Their countries had war and their lives were in danger. Among these people, there are also people with disabilities.

Things are often very hard for refugees with disabilities who arrive in Europe. Often, the places they stay are not accessible for them. For example, showers and toilets may have steps so people in wheelchairs cannot get in. Or refugees with intellectual disabilities may not get information which is easy to read and understand. They can be confused or left out.

Things can be even harder for women, children and older people with disabilities. They may not get the support they need.

EDF talks to people who take decisions in Europe about the rights of refugees with disabilities. We ask them to respect their rights and make sure they are treated fairly. We explain how they can make things better for refugees with disabilities who arrive in Europe.

Young people with disabilities

It is often hard for young people with disabilities to finish school go to the university or find a job.

Many things are not accessible for them and they may be left out. They do not have same chances in life as other young people without disabilities.

EDF works to protect the rights of young people with disabilities. We want their voices to be heard. We want them to have same chances in life like everyone else.

EDF has a group of young people with disabilities. This group meets and discusses important issues about young people with disabilities in Europe. We tell people who make decisions in Europe how they can help young people with disabilities to have same chances and take part in the community like everyone else.

Children with disabilities

Many children with disabilities live in institutions away from their families. They may also be treated badly and be left out. For example, they may not be able to go to school with other children.

EDF works to protect the rights of children with disabilities and make sure their voices are heard.

We often work together with other organisations who try to make things better for children. For example, we work with a world organisation for children called 'Unicef'. We help them to do some important work to protect children from being treated badly.

Children with disabilities and all children have the right to have a good life and be treated well.

Work outside Europe

EDF is part of a world organisation that works for people with disabilities all around the world. This world organisation is called 'International Disability Alliance'. In short, we call it IDA.

EDF and IDA go 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. We talked about many important things there. For example, we talked about:

- refugees with disabilities
- women with disabilities
- the Sustainable Development Goals (read more on page 34)

EDF also works with the Council of Europe.

This is an organisation that works to protect the rights of all people.

EDF talks to the Council of Europe about the rights of people with disabilities.

We ask them to help to make the UN Convention (read more on page 13) happen and make things fair for people with disabilities in Europe.

Work with other organisations

EDF often works with other organisations who 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 protects the rights of women.

This organisation is called the 'European Women's Lobby'.

Sometimes we also work with companies who care to help people with disabilities. We organise meetings and other things together to support the rights of people with disabilities.

On page 50 of this booklet, you can see a list of these organisations and companies.

Our money

On page 51 of this booklet, you will see a table with the money we used to do our work.

We got this money from the European Union and other organisations who wanted to help us to do 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.

You can also send us an email at info@edf-feph.org.



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