# Icon of the ERDS European Regional Disability Summit: Perspectives on Pan European international cooperation

**High-level European exchange in preparation of   
the Global Disability Summit 2022**

**Date and time:** 8th February 2022 (10 to 1PM, Central European Time)

**Logistics**: online event using Zoom webinar platform

## Co-partners (in alphabetical order)

* Atlas Alliance
* European Disability Forum (EDF)
* Global Disability Summit secretariat
* International Disability Alliance (IDA)
* International Labour Organization (ILO)
* Norwegian Federation of Organisations of Disabled People (FFO)
* United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Europe and Central Asia
* UN Human Rights Regional Office for Europe
* UNICEF Europe and Central Asia
* UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Fund (PRPD)
* WHO Regional Office for Europe

## Target audience

* The EU and its EU delegations around the world
* UN agencies and UN country teams active in the region
* Donors such as members of the Global Action on Disability (GLAD) Network
* National governments in the region and key provider organisations
* Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), international organisations and other development partners
* Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs)

## Background information

The 2007 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has given the disability movement a strong legal framework to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Europe, policies related to inclusive international cooperation remain complicated, due in part by the complex landscape of our geographical region. 51 member states constitute the European continent: 27 countries within the European Union (EU), Nordic and Western European countries that are not part of the EU, Eastern European countries and Central Asian countries, which are located both on the European and Asian continents.

With that diversity in mind, European data on disability is limited. In the EU, there is an estimated 100 million persons with disabilities[[1]](#footnote-1) while in the 53 Member States of the World Health Organization (WHO) European Region, 6 to 10 out of every 100 people live with disability. In total, approximatively 135 million people in the WHO European region live with a disability[[2]](#footnote-2). With population ageing and the rising prevalence of noncommunicable conditions, including injuries, this number is set to increase in the future.

When it comes to international cooperation, the EU is one of the biggest donors of development aid in the world (with a focus on Africa and Asia), while the Eastern and Central Asian countries receive disproportionally lower financial and technical assistance support. It means persons with disabilities in these countries, in particular women, girls and children with disabilities, face high rates of poverty, discrimination and where access to universal coverage is limited. Persons with disabilities have poorer health outcomes, lower education achievements, and they are less inclined to be included in the labour market than peers without disabilities. Access to health, education, employment, transport and information is limited, with also little or no organised representative organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) to strengthen the disability movement.

## The Global Disability Summit

In 2018, the first Global Disability Summit (GDS) was organised by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland government, the government of Kenya and the International Disability Alliance (IDA). It was a historical moment for the global disability movement and the rights of persons with disabilities. The GDS “*inspired unprecedented engagement in disability inclusion and generated commitments that will help deliver Agenda 2030’s vision to ‘Leave No One Behind’ as well as existing obligations under the CRPD*”[[3]](#footnote-3). More than 1000 delegates from governments, donors, private sector organisations, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and DPOs participated in the GDS in London. Additionally, the [Charter for Change](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-disability-summit-charter-for-change), the principal legacy document of the GDS, was launched, while [170 commitments](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/commitments) were made.

The Governments of Norway and Ghana as well as IDA will now co-host the second Global Disability Summit (GDS22) the 16th and 17th February 2022. Another successful GDS will possibility further accelerate the implementation of the CRPD, the successful achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the previous commitments made during the first GDS. It can ultimately deliver real and lasting change in the lives of persons with disabilities around the world, with new strong commitments to also recover from the pandemic.

## Aim of the high-level European Regional Disability Summit

The co-hosts of the GDS22 have encouraged development partners, UN agencies, Government and Civil Society Organizations to organise regional Summits, to galvanise international cooperation, focus on region-specific discussions, with the [formulation of commitments](https://www.globaldisabilitysummit.org/blogs/the-menu-of-commitments-for-the-global-disability-summit-is-online) by the 26th January 2022.

**The aim of this high-level European Regional Disability Summit will be to discuss how international cooperation in the broader European region can become inclusive of persons with disabilities.**

The high-level speakers and participants will be taking stock of the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and building on the shared experience of years of disability inclusive development. The event will gather a range of stakeholders working on disability rights in the region, in preparation of the GDS22 - reaching governments, donors, UN country teams, CSOs and OPDs. We will ensure these stakeholders have full information about the GDS22, including the importance to implement global commitments in our region and in European international cooperation. An outcome document adopted at the high-level European Regional Disability Summit will be presented in GDS22.

## Objectives of the high-level European Regional Disability Summit

* Present the GDS22 and its relevance for European international cooperation;
* Discuss with the audience key challenges and opportunities related to inclusive development for the European region, including aid supporting the neighbouring countries of the European Union and Central Asia;
* Present findings from the European OPDs consultation;
* Use this summit to discuss how the global organisations and European Member States can support implementation of global commitments on disability inclusive development (across health, education, employment, humanitarian situation and civil society strengthening, including women’ rights).

## Themes

The themes of the EU Regional Summit will mirror the ones of the Global Disability Summit 2022. The themes were announced in September 2021, and are:

1. Inclusive Employment and livelihood
2. Capacity-strengthening of organisations of persons with disabilities in the Global South
3. Inclusion in situations of crises and conflict, including a focus on climate change
4. Inclusive Education
5. Inclusive Health

**Gender** will be taken into account as a cross-cutting theme across all five thematic areas.

## Outcome of the high-level European Regional Disability Summit

An outcome document proposing implementation of commitments in the European region and in European international cooperation will be presented for adoption during the European Regional Disability Summit. The outcome document will be shared at the GDS22.

## Accessibility

This event will be in English with real-time translation and captioning in French, Spanish and Russian and interpretation in International Sign

## Contact

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## Agenda

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| **Name of the session** | **Speakers** | **Timing** |
| **Welcome and introduction –** Setting the stage | **Moderator: Ola Abu Al Ghaib,** Manager - UN Partnership on Persons with Disabilities Fund, UNDP   * State Secretary **Bjørg Sandkjær**, Norway * **Yannis Vardakastanis**, President, International Disability Alliance (IDA) and European Disability Forum (EDF) * **Lilly Ann Elvestad,** Secretary General, Norwegian Federation of Organisations of Disabled People (FFO) * **Martin SEYCHELL,** Deputy Director-General, Directorate General for International Partnerships, European Commission (DG INTPA, EC) | 10:00 – 10:15 |
| **High level plenary discussion –** Reflection on high level commitments | **Moderator:** **Catherine Naughton,** Director of EDF   * **Mirjana Spoljaric Egger,** RegionalDirector, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, United Nations Development Programme Europe and Central Asia (UNDP)   (pre-recorded video)   * **Hans Kluge**, Regional Director, World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Europe * **Afshan Khan**, UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, and the Special Coordinator for the Refugee and Migrant Response in Europe * **Heinz Koller**, Assistant Director General, International Labour Organisation (ILO), Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia * **Christian Salazar,** Director Field Cooperation and Technical Cooperation Division, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) * **Jaroslaw PONDER,** Head of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Office for Europe * **Paraskevi Michou,** Director General, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), European Commission | 10:15 – 11:10 |
| Break 11:10 – 11:25 | | |
| **National good practices as contribution to commitments:**  How European and Central Asian region can support the implementation of global commitments on disability inclusive development across health, education, employment, humanitarian situation and civil society strengthening, including women’ rights? | **Moderator: Cathal Morgan,** Technical Officer, Disability and Rehabilitation Heath Services, World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Europe  Part 1: Empowerment and participation of OPDs: Example of good practices   * **Thorkild Olesen,** Chairperson, Disabled People's Organisations Denmark (DPOD) * **Ivanka Jovanovic,** Executive Director, National Organization of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia (NOOIS) * **Laura Kyrke-Smith,** Executive Director, International Rescue Committee UK (IRC)   Part 2: Cross-sectoral nature of disability inclusion under the CRPD - Involvement of representative organisations of persons with disabilities   * **Tatiana Lomakina,** Advisor-commissioner of the President of Ukraine * **Mina Mojtahedi,** Senior Adviser on Non-Discrimination and Disability Inclusion, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland * **Tamila Barkalaia,** Deputy Minister of Internally Displaced Persons, Labour, Health and Social Affairs, Georgia * **Anar Bayramov,** Chairman, State Agency on Medico-Social Expertise and Rehabilitation under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population,Azerbaijan | 11:25 - 12:40 |
| **Closing** - Outcome document and closing remarks | **Bernd Schramm**, Project Manager, Global Project Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)  **Gunta Anca**, Secretary, European Disability Forum (EDF) | 12:40 – 13:00 |

1. Taken from the [European Disability Forum](https://www.edf-feph.org/) website [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Taken from the [WHO Regional Office for Europe](https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Life-stages/disability-and-rehabilitation/areas-of-work/disability) website (27th July 2021) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Taken from the [GDS+2 Years Report](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/global_disability_summit_2_years_-_progress_on_implementation_of_commitments.pdf) (27th July 2021) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)