European Union: Advocacy in practice
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The European Treaties

• Primary Law
  • Treaty of Lisbon
    • TEU- Treaty of the European Union
    • TFEU- Treaty of Functioning of the European Union
  • Together with Accession Treaties and National Constitutions and Legislation

• Secondary Law

• Case-Law of the CJEU
Competences

Exclusive
- Customs Union
- Competition
- Single currency
- Maritime conservation
- Commercial policy
- International agreements (on these subjects)

Shared
- Single market
- Cohesion policy
- Social Affairs
- Transport
- Consumer protection
- Energy
- Freedom, security, justice
- Research
- International Cooperation

Supporting/Coordinating/Supplementing
- Culture
- Employment
- Education
- Vocational Training
- Youth
- Sport
- Health
- Tourism
**Legal instruments**

**Regulations:** A "regulation" is a binding legislative act. It must be applied in its entirety across the EU.

**Directives:** A "directive" is a legislative act that sets out a goal that all EU countries must achieve. However, it is up to the individual countries to devise their own laws on how to reach these goals.

**Decisions:** A "decision" is binding on those to whom it is addressed (e.g. an EU country or an individual company) and is directly applicable.

**Recommendations:** A "recommendation" is not binding. A recommendation allows the institutions to make their views known and to suggest a line of action without imposing any legal obligation on those to whom it is addressed.

**Opinions:** An "opinion" is an instrument that allows the institutions to make a statement in a non-binding fashion, in other words without imposing any legal obligation on those to whom it is addressed.
The European Institutions

Source: http://eapaediatrics.eu/
The European Institutions

Source: https://www.coe.int/
How does the EU work?

Source: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/
How does the EU work?
How to advocate in the EU?

Relevant concepts

• Representativity
• Research and data support (renowned experts)
• Transparency
• Issues meet the timing and agenda...
  ... or you create the interest.
How to advocate in the EU?

Commission

• Important to find the correct person!
• Work before the proposals
• Participate in the consultations
• Keep in touch and inform them about recent findings and problems
How to advocate in the EU?

European Parliament

• Find the right MEPs: Interest, knowledge, strength (country, party, group)
• Work with the assistants, and prepare the documentation and amendments as easy as possible
• Find out what political advantages can they get from supporting your position.
How to advocate in the EU?

The committees

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How to advocate in the EU?

And the intergroups!
How to advocate in the EU?

The Council of the EU

• The most opaque institution.
• Need to work within the interests of the Presidency - the Agenda
• Work at national level: Ministries send the political mandates, Permanent Representations prepare the work.
What is EDF?

• Independent umbrella organisation joining other organisations of and for persons with disabilities in Europe
• Established **25 years** ago to campaign for the rights of persons with disabilities in Europe
• **104 members** organisations (National organisations, European NGOs)
• Registered in **Belgium**, secretariat in Brussels, Belgium
What do we do?

• Advocate for the rights of 100 million persons with disabilities in Europe and globally;

• Advocating for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;

• Work with EU institutions, Council of Europe and across Europe.
What we do

1. Advocacy towards the EU, the Council of Europe, and the UN to fully implement the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)** & related areas

2. Member of the EU’s **Independent Monitoring Framework** for the UN CRPD

3. Involvement in **projects** which bring added value in progressing the UN CRPD in the European region

4. Secretariat of the **Disability Intergroup** of the European Parliament
Areas of work

Human rights
Accessibility
New Technologies & Innovation
Built environment
Transport
Standarisation
Employment & Social Services
International Cooperation
Some of our successful advocacy

• Law on accessibility of public sector websites
• European Accessibility Act (law on accessibility of products and services)
• European Disability Rights Strategy
• Standards on accessible built environment
Who are our members?

• **104 members** including more than 3,000 members
• Full and ordinary members
• Observer members
• Associate members
How do we work? Governance

• Annual General Assembly

• Board elected every 4 years

• Executive committee elected by the Board every 4 years

• Committees of the Board:
  1. Human rights committee
  2. Social Policy Committee
  3. Youth Committee
  4. Women’s Committee
What is our structure?

1. Human Rights and Non Discrimination Committee
2. Youth Committee
3. Social Policy & Inclusion Committee
4. Women’s Committee

- Built environment
- Information and communication technology (ICT)
- Standardisation
- Transport
- Persons with disabilities requiring more intensive support
- European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)
- International Cooperation
- SDGs
- Refugees and Migrants with disabilities
- Task Force on the Accessibility Act (temporary)
- Council of Europe
- Inclusive Education
- CRPD and Human Rights

EDF Secretariat

Email expert groups

Communication & Information

- Newsletters: Members Mailing, Disability Voice, Women’s Voice, Global Action
- Reports/ Toolkits
- Events/ Workshops
- Meetings
- Website: members access
Email expert groups

Shape our position on specific issues, and provide a source of shared learning and support within our membership. The email expert groups are focusing on the following working areas:

- Built environment
- Information and communication technology (ICT)
- Standardisation
- Transport,
- Persons with disabilities requiring more intensive support
- European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)
- SDG & International Cooperation
- Refugees and Migrants with disabilities
- Task Force on the Accessibility Act (temporary)
- Council of Europe
- Inclusive Education
- CRPD and Human Rights
Secretariat

- Based in Brussels:
  - Management of the network
  - Policy and advocacy
  - Capacity building
  - Communication
  - International Cooperation
Internal Communication

- Members area on the website
- Email communication with all committees
- Members mailing: a weekly newsletter sent every Thursday
- Online meetings
- Governing body meetings (Executive Committee, Board Meetings and Annual General Assembly including all staff)
External Communication

- Disseminating advocacy campaigns and raising awareness
- Coordinating communication initiatives and engaging with members, partners and EU institutions.

  • Managing:
    - Social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn)
    - Accessible website
    - Disability Voice: our monthly newsletter
    - Getting attention of the media
Some of our current campaigns

- Supporting Ukrainians with disabilities
- **Political Participation** of persons with disabilities
- Impact of AI and new technologies on persons with disabilities.
- De-institutionalisation;
- **End forced sterilisation of women and girls with disabilities**
- European Disability Card, AccessibleEU centre
- Cost of living crisis
- Climate change
What can you do?

- Analyse your national problem: Is the EU the correct framework?
  - If yes, contact EDF!
  - If not: Can the EU institutions, or other DPOs help you?

- You can talk to your MEPs, send a petition to the European Parliament, you can share your problems in related consultations…
Thank you for your attention

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