EDF MEMBERSHIP AND CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE (MCC) MEETING

# Minutes

Date: 18th November, 2022

Present

* Ana Peláez Narváez, chair (APN)
* Vera Bonvalot, member (VB)
* Nadia Hadad, member (NH)
* Christina Wurzinger, member (CW)
* Foteini Zafeiropoulou, member (FZ)

In attendance:

Catherine Naughton (CN) and Loredana Dicsi (LD) from the EDF secretariat

## Opening and welcome

The chair welcomed all the committee members. She asked all the members to introduce themselves. There were two new persons who had joined the committee.

She expressed her gratitude for the work and knowledge of Rodolfo Cattani, who passed away this summer. Rodolfo was part of this committee from its beginning and he chaired it for several years. We are going to miss him a lot in the work of EDF.

## Formal Constitution of the Membership and Credentials Committee

The chair formally noted the creation of the new Membership and Credentials Committee. Its members were all elected during the General Assembly this year held in Athens on 25th and 26thJune. She pointed out that this committee was composed of women only.

## Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was unanimously adopted by all the committee members.

## Applications for membership:

The EDF secretariat has received two complete application forms that have been sent to all the committee members. Both organisations are applying for associate membership within our organisation. The chair requested Loredana Dicsi from the Secretariat to introducing each organisation.

* **Faroese Disability Organizations (MEGD), applying for associate membership**

Faroese Disability Organizations (MEGD) is the regional disability umbrella organisation for organisations for persons with disabilities of the Faroe Islands. the Faroe Islands is an autonomous region of Denmark with its own governance, so is it for the civil society representation within the island, explained LD.

There are 24 member organisations with a total of about 4000 citizen members in MEGD. The organisations are organisations of persons with disabilities and organisations of persons with chronic diseases.

MEGD is governed by a five-member executive board which follows the organizations’ structure as defined in the statutes. The board holds monthly meetings, and special meetings when necessary.

Founded on 24th October 1981 under the name *Meginfelag teirra brekaðu í Føroyum* (MBF), the name of the organization was changed at an extraordinary general meeting in March 2018 to *MEGD*.

MEGD (Faroese Disability Organizations) have a history of a struggle to become a recognized political actor in the Faroese democratic political system. It is not easy to describe all aspects of this struggle, but the overriding mission has remained the same since day one: *to improve the conditions for disabled people in the Faroe Islands*.

The main reason for applying for EDF membership is to strengthen the network and foundation which enables MEGD to represent and ensure that persons with disabilities have full access to fundamental human rights through their active involvement in policy development and implementation in the Faroe Islands.

MEGD aims to contribute to and learn from the professional EDF network and share best practices with respect to systematic monitoring of legislative proposals and strategic campaigns. The organisation is willing also to invite people from EDF to their events.

The organisation is working closely with the Disabled Peoples Organisation Denmark which is our member and DPOD recommends they be accepted as part of our network.

NH asked if the members of the governing councils are persons with disabilities themselves. LD confirmed it was the case. APN said for associate membership this was not relevant, but it is good to know that it is the case.

The chair asked the committee members whether they agreed to recommend to the board the Faroese Disability Organizations (MEGD) as an associate member.

All the committee members agreed.

* **The League of the Strong (Ukraine), applying for associate membership**

The chair requested LD to present the second complete application.

The League of the Strong is a public union founded by 6 organizations working in the field of persons with disabilities, explained LD.

They have united to change the rules of the game in Ukrainian society, to overcome the monopoly on the rights of persons with disabilities and to involve people with disabilities in the realization of their rights and freedoms.

The opportunity to participate will provide an opportunity to advocate more effectively for the needs of people with disabilities at the international level, to attract the support of foreign organizations, to gain best practices for further implementation in Ukraine; as well as to strengthen its work to achieve equalisation of opportunities for all women and men with disabilities through influencing the work of all the European institutions.

At the same time, the League of the Strong can be useful for EDF. In particular, the organization would like to share the experience gained in evacuating people with disabilities in crisis situations and improving the work within the team with the help of digital tool building; to strengthen the work in terms of advocating for change for people with disabilities, providing practical cases on how to improve policy and practice throughout Europe.

In addition, through the cooperation of EDF with the League of the Strong, the integration of European standards of law into Ukrainian legislation will be carried out, as well as the influence and participation of European institutions in the reconstruction of Ukrainian cities, taking into account inclusiveness and the needs of people with disabilities.

EDF is working a lot with the League of the Strong and they are part of our Ukrainian Programme. We also consulted our Ukrainian member and work with the organisation. The League of the Strong participate in all our work around Ukraine and were also at the meeting organised in October this year. Loredana concluded by repeating that they wish to become an associate member of our organisation.

APN asked the committee members if they had any other questions about this organisation.

The committee members wanted to know which was the difference between this organisation and the one that is already a member, the National Assembly of Persons with Disabilities.

CN explained that this organisation is a more progressive one in terms of rights of persons with disabilities. LD added that it is a smaller one in comparison to the National Assembly, which has more than 120 members.

She asked then if the committee members agreed to recommend to the board that the League of the Strong from Ukraine be accepted as an associate member.

All committee members agreed to recommend the League of the Strong to the board to be accepted as an associate member.

APN explained that there are some pending membership requests. She highlighted the importance of mentioning these ones as they may come on the agenda of the upcoming meetings. She asked LD to give a summary of these requests.

LD explained that one organisation from France - La Néuro Diversité de France - has temporarily been refused by our French member because they would like national entities first to go to them at least to have contact before applying to EDF.

NH felt it was important to reach an agreement that a NC cannot block an organisation from joining EDF.

APN explained this measure was adopted by EDF at the time because they can take your identity and do things that are against EDF’s values and those of the national councils. She explains that there needs to be a unity of the voices of persons with disabilities. A balance between the EU, the organisation and the national movement.

FZ said that the NC needs to follow a democratic procedure to be inclusive of the disability movement.

LD explained further that six applications for associate membership are still pending: two organisations from Malta which are interested in associate membership; a youth association of persons with disabilities in France; an Italian foundation; the Gibraltar National Council; and a Hungarian foundation.

1. FEDEEH - French Youth Organisation of Persons with Disabilities.
2. Gibraltar Disability Federation.
3. Equal Partners Foundation from Malta**.**
4. **Malta Trust Foundation.**
5. Fight for the Stroke Foundation from Italy.
6. Kéregtest Rendellenesség AgCC Magyarországi Alapítványa - Disorder of the Corpus Callosum from Hungary.

## Any other business

The chair wanted to bring forward the capacity of many small organisations to assume the membership fee to be part of EDF. This is a problem for some European NGOs but also for regional, local and national organisations. She thought to suggest some recommendation on this topic from the committee together with the Finance one to bring to the Executive Committee. She wanted to see if the committee members or CN had any view about this.

Neither CN nor the committee members had any view on this.

## Date of next meeting:

The next meeting of the Membership and Credentials Committee will take place in Stockholm, Sweden, on March 30th 2023.

## Close

The chair thanked all the members for their work and asked the committee members to think about the next committee meeting and to prepare recommendations from the Membership and Credentials Committee for the constitutional working groups.

The chair adjourned the meeting.