# **“Empower, leadership and political participation”: launch of the EDF 3rd Manifesto on the Rights of Women and Girls with Disabilities**

Date: Friday, 1st March 2024

Time: 10:00 - 12:00 (CET)

Venu: [online, via Zoom](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcpd-ChqzopG9PrQoGzOGi11fLSstIAJRJU#/registration)

The European Disability Forum (EDF) is delighted to invite you to the launch of its third Manifesto on the rights of women and girls with disabilities.

## Background

During the past ten years, since the adoption of [the 2nd manifesto on the rights of women and girls with disabilities by](http://www.edf-feph.org/content/uploads/2020/12/final_manifesto_en.docx) EDF in May 2011, Europe has been confronted with many challenges, including the Covid 19 pandemic, wars, backlash on women’s rights and the climate change and its effects. Women and girls with disabilities continue to be disproportionately affected, while too often not being part of decisions affecting their lives.

By using all lessons learnt from the challenges, this is the time to bring the experiences of women and girls with disabilities to the action. It is clear that successful leadership for women with disabilities can benefit quality education, proactive businesses, and impactful and inclusive public policymaking.

Leadership is not limited to the technical meaning of undertaking official leading positions. It is a milestone which lets everybody lead their lives in a satisfactory manner. Women and girls with disabilities, as students, mothers, employees, and in general, as members of societies, should be able to lead their affairs independently. In other words, this right must be recognised in all relative policy-making processes.

## Launch event

For the launch of our manifesto, we invite you for a conversation on political participation and leadership of women with disabilities. With elections taking place in many countries, including EU elections in June 2024, we wish to reflect on how to increase the active participation of women with disabilities. We will also hear and talk with leaders with disabilities – leading their lives, the movement and advocacy, to hear about their personal experience, aspiration and advice.

## Agenda

Moderator: Samaneh Shabani, EDF Women’s Rights Officer

**10:00 – 10:10** **Welcoming and introduction**

Catherine Naughton, EDF Director

Victoria Ignat, Programme Analyst on Women in Leadership and Governance, UN Women

**10:10 – 10:20 Keynote speech: ‘Empowerment and leadership’ – launching the third EDF’s manifesto on women and girls with disabilities**

Pirkko Mahlamäki, EDF Executive and Chair of the Women’s Committee

**10:20 – 11:00 Fostering the political participation of women with disabilities**

* **The power of disabled women in politics**: Aoife Price, Research Associate at the Centre for Disability Law and Policy, University of Galway
* **Barriers to participate in political life and the experience of Poland**: Anna Drabarz, Polish Disability Forum
* **Experience of the Republic of Moldova in advancing political participation of women with disabilities**: Elena Ratoi, Gender Expert, and Lilia Puzderi Cainareanu, Councillor in the local Council of Borogani village

Exchange with participants (10 minutes)

**11:00 – 11:10 Break**

**11:10 – 11:45 Stories and exchanges with leaders**

* **Leading your own life**: Tamara Byrne, member of EDF Youth Committee
* **Leading advocacy**: Sara Rocha, Board member of the European Council of Autistic People and co-founder and President of Associação Portuguesa Voz do Autista
* **Leading at the UN**: Heba Hagrass, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Exchange with participants (15 minutes)

**11:45 – 12:00 Closing remarks**

* Ana Pelaez Narvaez, EDF Secretary General and Chair of the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (video message)
* Mary Collins, Secretary General of the European Women’s Lobby