



# Our manifesto on the rights of women and girls with disabilities

## Easy-to-read version

Easy-to-read is information  
that is written in a simple way  
so that all people can understand it.

You can find more information at:

[www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read](http://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read).



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The difficult words in the text are marked in **bold**.  
You can find their explanation at the end of this booklet.

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## WHO WE ARE

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We are the European Disability Forum.  
The European Disability Forum  
is an organisation that protects the rights  
of all people with disabilities in Europe.  
In short, it is called 'EDF'.



## WHAT THIS BOOKLET IS ABOUT

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This is the easy-to-read version of our recent manifesto  
on the rights of women and girls with disabilities in Europe.  
Our manifesto is a document we wrote to explain:

- What is the situation  
of women and girls with disabilities in Europe?
- What should the European Union  
and its countries do to protect the rights  
of women and girls with disabilities?



To write this manifesto,  
we asked women with disabilities around Europe  
to tell us about their experiences and views.  
Around 500 women from 33 countries in Europe  
shared their experiences and views with us.  
Most of them were women with disabilities.  
Some of them were mothers of children with disabilities.

# THE SITUATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES IN EUROPE

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Unfortunately, Europe is not yet a place where all women and girls can enjoy their rights safely and freely. Things can be even harder for women and girls with disabilities.



Amongst others:

## Many women and girls with disabilities have experienced different kinds of violence

For example, they may have been:

- Threatened, attacked or hurt by someone.
- Forced to have sex against their will.
- Insulted or called names.



## Many women and girls with disabilities are not allowed to decide about their bodies

For example, they may not be allowed to decide if they want to have children or not. Many women and girls with disabilities in Europe are forced to have a medical procedure that makes it impossible for them to have children.



This is against their rights.  
Women should have the right to decide  
if they want to have children or not.

## **Women with disabilities are at higher risk of being poor and without a job**

It is often hard or impossible  
for women with disabilities to get a job.  
Without a job and without the right support,  
women with disabilities may not have  
enough money to live on.



As the cost of life gets higher,  
women with disabilities are at higher risk  
of being left out.

**COVID-19** made things much worse.  
Due to COVID-19, many women with disabilities  
lost their jobs and struggle to survive.

## **The impact of climate change is bigger on women and girls with disabilities**

Climate change means  
the temperature and the weather in the world  
change.

For example, there may be extreme heat  
or lack of rain in some areas.

Many people need to move from these areas  
because they cannot live there anymore  
or cultivate the earth to get food.



This is even harder for women and girls with disabilities who were already poor and struggled to survive.

## **The impact of war is bigger on women and girls with disabilities.**

In times of war, the shelters people use to save their lives may not be accessible so women and girls with disabilities may not be able to get in.

It is also harder for women and girls with disabilities to flee their countries.

Many women and girls with disabilities are left behind without any support.

Some people may take advantage of the situation.

They may help women and girls with disabilities to flee and then force them to marry or have sex against their will.



# WHAT THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS COUNTRIES SHOULD DO

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At EDF, we believe that all women and girls with disabilities should have the right to:

- Lead their own lives and make their own decisions,
- Enjoy their rights,
- Have the same chances in life as everyone else.

Amongst others, we ask the **European Union** and its countries to:

1. Carry out studies and collect usefull information about women and girls with disabilities. This will help countries undertand the situation of women and girls with disabilities and work to make things better.



2. Work to make all the rights of the **UN Convention** happen in Europe. They should not forget the women and girls with disabilities who are at even higher risk of being left out. For example, women with intellectual disabilities, women living in **institutions** and women with more than one disability.



3. Make laws to stop violence against women and girls with disabilities and punish the people who treat them badly. Also, countries should make it easier



for women and girls with disabilities to get help when they are treated badly.

**4.** Make things and services in Europe accessible so that all people with disabilities can live independently.

For example:

- Buses, trains, streets and buildings should be accessible so that people with disabilities can use them to get around without problems.
- All laws, texts and information should be available in accessible forms like easy-to-read so that people with intellectual disabilities can understand them.
- Technology should be accessible so that people with disabilities can use it like everyone else.



**5.** Recognise the right of all women and girls to make their own decisions and choices in life.

For example, women with disabilities should have the right to buy a house, have a job, or make a family if they want to. It is ok to get support to make decisions. But it is not ok if someone else makes the decisions for them.



**6.** Protect the right of women and girls to decide about their bodies and lives.





Women with disabilities should have the right to decide if they want to have children or not. Nobody else should decide for them, or force them to do anything against their will.

7. Make sure women and girls with disabilities can get good health care. Doctors, nurses and other people who work in health care should be trained to help women and girls with disabilities.



8. Make sure girls with disabilities can study and grow their skills as everyone else. For this to happen, schools should be accessible. Also, teachers should get training to know how to meet the needs of girls with disabilities.



9. Make sure that women with disabilities have the chance to get a job and be paid fairly for this job. They should not be paid less because they have a disability or because they are women. Also, mothers of children with disabilities should get support to look after their child and be able to work if they want to.



10. Make sure that women with disabilities can **vote and stand for elections**. Many women with disabilities in Europe cannot vote or stand for elections. This is unfair.



The **European elections 2024** is an opportunity to change that.

11. Spread the word about the rights of women and girls with disabilities. They should make campaigns to help people understand that women and girls with disabilities are no different than other people and should enjoy the same rights. Organisations of women and girls with disabilities should take the lead in these campaigns.



12. Listen to the views of organisations of people with disabilities when they make decisions and laws that concern their lives. They should also give money to organisations of women and girls with disabilities to continue doing their important work.



## MORE INFORMATION

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You can find more information about the work we do at EDF on our website at: [www.edf-feph.org](http://www.edf-feph.org).

For any questions, you can send us an email at: [info@edf-feph.org](mailto:info@edf-feph.org).

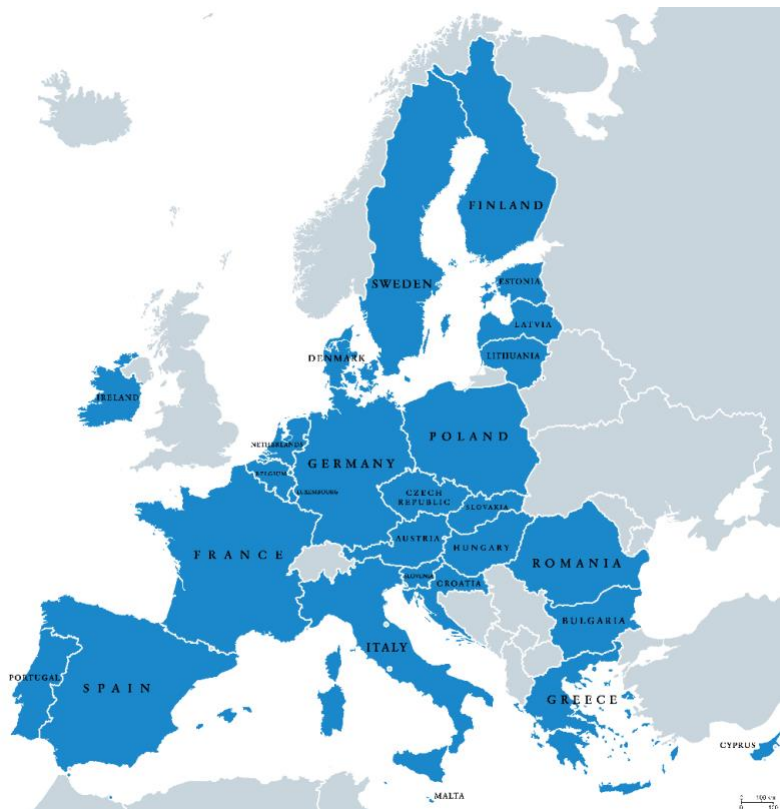


# EXPLANATION OF DIFFICULT WORDS

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## European Union

The European Union is a group of 27 countries in Europe. These countries came together to make things better, easier and safer for people.



## European elections

Every 5 years, the people who live in the European Union vote who they want to make laws and decisions in Europe. The next European elections will be in May 2024.



## Vote and stand for elections

To vote in the elections means you can choose which people will represent you and make decisions and laws in Europe.

To stand for elections means you ask people to vote for you so that you can represent them and make decisions and laws in Europe.



## UN Convention

'The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' is an agreement that many countries in the world have signed.

It says persons with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else.

It also says how countries can protect these rights.

In short, we call it 'the UN Convention' or 'the CRPD'.



## COVID-19

'COVID-19' is a disease that can pass easily from one person to another.

We also call it 'coronavirus' or 'pandemic'.

Sadly, in recent years, too many people in the world have been ill from coronavirus.

Most of the people recover but many people die from it.



## Institutions

Institutions are places where people with disabilities often live away from other people and from the community. Often people who live in institutions must follow the rules of the institution and cannot decide for themselves.

