GDAŃSK DECLARATION

Building a Stronger, Smarter and More Inclusive Recovery for Ukraine

We, organisations of persons with disabilities, gathered in Gdańsk,

- Reaffirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence and democratic future.
- Recognise the extraordinary resilience of the Ukrainian people and the immense human, social and economic costs of Russia's war of aggression.
- Acknowledge that Ukraine's recovery is not only a reconstruction challenge but a nation-building opportunity. The decisions taken today will shape the country's prosperity, resilience and social cohesion for generations to come.
- We recognise that Ukraine has undergone profound demographic and social changes since 2022, including a significant increase in the number of persons with disabilities. Disability inclusion is therefore not a marginal issue. It is a defining reality of Ukraine's future workforce, economy and society.
- We further recognise that recovery cannot succeed if millions of people continue to face barriers to education, employment, healthcare, housing, transport, digital services and participation in community life.
- We affirm that rebuilding without inclusion weakens institutions, wastes talent and resources, undermines social cohesion and limits economic growth.
- We therefore commit ourselves to promoting a recovery that is human-centred, rights-based, accessible and inclusive from the outset.

We believe that:

- Recovery must be built with people, not merely for people.
- Accessibility and inclusion are investments that strengthen economic performance, workforce participation, innovation and long-term resilience.
- Ukrainians will return and rebuild their communities when they can do so with dignity, security and equal opportunity.
- Universal design and accessibility should be integrated into all reconstruction efforts from the earliest stages of planning and investment.
- Civil society, including organisations of persons with disabilities, must be recognised as essential partners in designing, implementing and monitoring recovery.
- Recovery investments should contribute to Ukraine's European integration pathway and reflect European values of equality, participation and human rights.

To translate these principles into action, we call upon all recovery stakeholders to:

1. Ensure meaningful participation by allocating resources and creating mechanisms that enable organisations of persons with disabilities and other representative civil society organisations to participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of recovery programmes.
2. Advance legal and policy reform through continued alignment with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other international human rights obligations.
3. Align recovery investments with European Union standards and accession commitments, ensuring compliance with principles of equality, non-discrimination and accessibility.
4. Strengthen institutions, accountability and the rule of law, including effective enforcement of rights and access to justice.
5. Accelerate deinstitutionalisation and support independent living, community-based services and full participation in society.
6. Apply a "design for all" approach across all reconstruction investments, including housing, transport, education, healthcare, employment, digitalisation and public infrastructure.
7. Prioritise those most at risk of exclusion, including persons with disabilities, women, children, older persons, veterans and displaced populations.
8. Improve data collection, transparency and accountability through the systematic use of disaggregated data to guide planning, resource allocation and monitoring.

We further call for long-term investment in accessible housing, quality education, healthcare, social infrastructure, workforce development and resilient communities that enable people to remain in, return to and thrive in Ukraine.

An inclusive recovery is not charity. It is sound governance. It is economic strategy. It is social resilience. It is an investment in Ukraine's future prosperity and stability.

Together, we commit to rebuilding strong, rebuilding smart and ensuring that no one is left behind in Ukraine's recovery.

Adopted in Gdańsk, Poland by:

1. European Disability Forum (EDF)
2. CBM
3. CBM Italia
4. National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine (NAPD)
5. League of the Strong (LoS)
6. Polish Forum of Persons with Disabilities (PFON)
7. Right to Protection (R2P)

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