

Human rights: A Reality for All

Conference to launch
the Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023

Filoxenia Conference Centre
Nicosia, Cyprus

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Biographies of speakers and moderators

Opening Session



Alfredo Ferrante (moderator) is responsible for Family Policies Unit at the Prime Minister's Office in Rome after being Head of Unit for Disability Policies at the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies from 2002 to 2016, coming from the experience of the National Institute of Public Administration. After graduating with honours in Political Sciences at "La Sapienza" University in Rome, he followed a specialisation in EU Studies, and holds a Master of Arts diploma in International Relations from St John's University. He also holds a PhD in Public Governance from "Tor Vergata" University in Rome. He is

the Italian representative in several working groups at the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. In 2016, he was elected Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee of experts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CAHDPH) of the Council of Europe.



Zeta Emilianidou holds a law degree from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and a diploma in Marketing Management from the Cyprus Institute of Marketing. She succeeded in the Cyprus Bar Examinations and was registered as a lawyer in 1978. Zeta Emilianidou was first appointed in the Department of Customs and Excise of the Republic of Cyprus in 1979 and has worked in almost

all of its sections. From 1988 to 1992 she worked as a member of the team that drafted the legislation for the VAT and was then appointed as a Senior VAT Officer in 1992 and as Chief Customs and Excise Officer in 1996. From August 2001 to March 2010 she was Director General of the Department of Customs and Excise, as well as VAT Commissioner. From March 2010 to April 2013, she was appointed as Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. During this period, she was responsible for the completion of the Second Round of hydrocarbon exploration licensing offshore Cyprus. On the 3rd of April 2013, Zeta Emilianidou was appointed by the President of the Republic, as Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance of the Republic of Cyprus.



Marja Ruotanen is Director of the Directorate of Human Dignity and Equality within the Directorate General of Democracy. Issues under her responsibilities cover violence against women, rights of persons with disabilities, trafficking in human beings, children's rights, gender equality, sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as minority protection, fight against racism and intolerance, and sport. Marja Ruotanen joined the Council of Europe in 1990 and has held several positions, including Director of the Private Office of the

Secretary General, and recently Director of Justice and Human Dignity within the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law. She has served as Secretary to various Parliamentary Assembly Committees, notably the Political Affairs Committee, the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population and the Committee on Gender Equality. She was born in Rovaniemi, Finland, and studied International Relations (Political Science and Law) at McGill University in Montreal (Canada).



Nils Muižnieks is the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights since April 2012. He has been working in the field of human rights for the past two decades, including as Director of the Advanced Social and Political Research Institute at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Latvia, as Chairman of the European Commission against Racism and

Intolerance, as Latvian minister responsible for social integration, anti-discrimination, minority rights, and civil society development, and as Director of the Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies. Nils Muižnieks has published extensively on racism, discrimination and minority rights.

Panel 1 – Equality and non-discrimination



Christakis Nicolaides (moderator) is an Administrative Civil Servant at the Ministry of Finance (Department of Public Administration and Personnel) since April 1993. He studied Psychology and Mathematics and specialised in Clinical Psychology at the Universities of Marburg and Heidelberg, Germany, from 1980 to 1990. From 1990 to 1992, he attended postgraduate studies in Electronic Data Processing at the University of Marburg, where he simultaneously served as Assistant Professor at the Department of Psychology. In 2005, he was elected President of the Pancyprian Organisation of the Blind and in 2011, as President of the Cyprus Confederation of

Organisations of the Disabled, where he serves until today. He was also appointed by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus, Chairman of the Administrative Council of St Barnabas School for the Blind in Nicosia from 2008 to 2015. Christakis Nicolaides served as President of the Welfare Counselling Committee of the Lottery Fund until 2014.



Dr Andrea Broderick is Assistant Professor at the Department of International and European Law at Maastricht University. She completed a Marie Curie fellowship under the framework of the DREAM (Disability Rights Expanding Accessible Markets) network of researchers. Her doctoral research project involved a critical analysis of the equality/non-discrimination provisions of the United Nations

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Her doctoral thesis was nominated for the Max van der Stoel award (2016) and she has published widely in academic journals, as well as contributing to legal and policy reports. As a qualified solicitor, Andrea Broderick previously worked in legal practice in Ireland.



Dr Stephen Duckworth works both in the private and not-for-profit sectors. He is currently responsible for running a business that is reassessing over 1 million persons with disabilities to determine their benefit entitlements and supporting persons with disabilities into work through his involvement with the Shaw Trust.

Previously, Dr Stephen Duckworth has run his own business, advised ministers on the introduction of antidiscrimination legislation and was a board member of the Olympic Delivery Authority for London 2012. Stephen Duckworth qualified as a doctor but then, having broken his neck, completed a PhD titled “Disability and Employment: the imperative for a new approach”.



Alain Faure is a European Disability Forum (EDF) Board member and member of the Executive Committee. He is also a member of the UNAPEI Board of Directors (National Union of Associations of parents, persons with mental disabilities and their friends). He has been elected for two consecutive mandates as President of the French Council of persons with disabilities for European Issues (CFHE). All his life, as the father of a child with an intellectual impairment (Down syndrome), he has been an activist, at regional and national levels, to ensure that persons with intellectual impairments are empowered to take their own decisions concerning their lives and future.



Pedro Landfors is an expert in disability at the Swedish Agency for Participation. He has almost three years of experience working with monitoring and analysis regarding disability politics. The Agency for Participation is part of the Swedish Government administration, promoting implementation and monitoring of disability policy in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Sweden. Pedro Landfors has worked for two years as an advisor regarding societal issues relating to the everyday life of persons with disabilities in a non-governmental disability organisation. He graduated with a Bachelor in International Relations at Malmö College in 2009, and a Bachelor in Human Ecology from Lund University in 2012.



Mechthild Rawert is a Member of the German Bundestag from the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). She studied at the Catholic University of Applied Sciences of North Rhine - Westphalia (Münster campus), graduating in youth and community work. She also studied adult education at the Free University of Berlin, graduating with a degree in education. Mechthild Rawert taught at a training centre for youth and community workers. She then worked as a Managing Director of the Berlin branch of the Catholic Women's Welfare. Later on she worked for 'Zukunft im Zentrum', a provider of services in the field of employment, education and quality management. In 2004, she became first women's issues officer at Charité University Hospital in Berlin. Mechthild Rawert is a member of the Committee on Health in the Bundestag since 2005; she is also a substitute member for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) since 2014. From 2014 to 2015, she was Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Disability and Inclusion of PACE. Mechthild Rawert is spokeswoman for the Bundestag group of SPD parliamentarians from Berlin since 2009.

Panel 2 – Awareness raising



Elodie Koukoui (moderator) is in charge of issues concerning persons with disabilities for Monaco and a Manager of the Division on Social Inclusion and Disability. She graduated in specialised education, educational sciences and psychology. Elodie Koukoui started her career as a social worker by participating in the creation of a Service for Specialised Education and Home-based Care (SESSAD) for children with disabilities in South East of France. In 2006, she joined the Government of Monaco to ensure the educational monitoring of adults and minors with disabilities. She then took a two-year break to work in the international co-operation service in Madagascar, ensuring the educational co-ordination of shelters for street children. Afterwards, Elodie Koukoui returned to the Principality of Monaco in charge of several social missions, including in the field of disability. She has developed various actions such as the creation of an educational individualised system for education and school enrolment (DESI) as well as disability awareness-raising workshops for children in school to ensure the educational monitoring of adults and minors with disabilities.



Katrijn Dekoninck set up her own organisation, 'International project office (inproof)', in 2014. Inproof mainly helps social profit organisations to design project proposals, manage and evaluate European projects. Inproof also writes case studies for project management courses in schools and has been certified as a European Union (EU) Project Manager. Katrijn Dekoninck acts as an evaluation expert for the National Agency in Flanders, Belgium. She also works as an assessor for an international human resources company and trained EU officials on competency assessment for the selection of staff. She currently follows a Master in Public Management and Public Policy at the University of Ghent.



Ramy El-Bergamy is On Screen Diversity Executive within the Creative Diversity team at Channel 4. His focus is on delivering on the commitments in Channel 4's 360° Diversity Charter which incorporates diversity in all guises. He works in partnership with the commissioning service at Channel 4 and the independent sector to

ensure the best people are being recruited onscreen from the widest possible pool. Prior to joining Channel 4, Ramy El-Bergamy worked in the independent sector for 10 years, primarily in casting. He has experience working across a broad range of programmes and genres, and most recent credits of his time in the sector include hit shows such as Big Brother and The Voice.



Margaryta Kropivnytska is the Deputy Director of the Department of Analytical and Organisational Support of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine. Margaryta Kropivnytska graduated in economy and holds a Master degree from Odessa I.I. Mechnikov National University as well as a Bachelor's degree in law from the National Academy of Internal Affairs. She spent her entire career in the field of disability. Margaryta Kropivnytska officially started a process of establishing early intervention services in Ukraine.



Signe Maria Christensen is deputy head of department at the Office of People with Disabilities at the Danish Ministry for Children and Social Affairs. The Office is responsible for legislation and reform initiatives, which currently include legislation regarding the prohibition of discrimination against people with disabilities. Signe Maria Christensen was previously with the Office of Finance. Before joining the Ministry, Signe Maria Christensen worked with persons with disabilities as an occupational therapist which was also her first line of education. Signe Maria Christensen has since studied International

Development Studies and Public Administration at Roskilde University, Denmark.



J. Patrick Clarke is Chief Executive of Down Syndrome Ireland and past President of Down Syndrome International. His son, aged 34 years old, has Down syndrome. J. Patrick Clarke is Chair of the Disability Federation of Ireland and has served on the boards of the Children Rights Alliance Ireland and on the governing body of the International Disability Alliance. At a European level, he is Treasurer of the European Disability Forum where he chairs its Committee on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. He was a member of the Council of Europe Committee which investigated the involvement of persons with disabilities in political and public life. He has presented papers at the United Nation in New York and Geneva on the right to vote for persons with disabilities, as well as on issues such as employment, community living, accessible tourism and education. He has been a long-time advocate for the full inclusion, in society and at every level, of people with Down syndrome in particular, and of all persons with disabilities in general.

Panel 3 – Accessibility



Brigitte Plumet (moderator) is the Director of international relations at AViQ (Walloon Agency for a Quality Life in Belgium) where she is in charge of multilateral relations with communities and regions of Belgium as well as internationally. Brigitte graduated in law and holds a master's degree and aggregation in criminology from the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium. She spent her entire career in the field of disability. After her studies, she held executive positions in the private sector, including the Belgian Multiple Sclerosis League. At the end of 1991, Brigitte Plumet joined the public service within the Integration Fund for

Persons with Disabilities, which since 2016 has been included in AViQ. Brigitte Plumet is currently representing Belgium in the Ad Hoc Committee of experts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CAHDPH) of the Council of Europe, and is an elected member of its Bureau for two years. Brigitte Plumet stands in particular for the participation of persons with disabilities in decisions-making processes and for the implementation of the principle of accessibility.



Anna Lawson is a professor of law at the University of Leeds where she is also the director of its interdisciplinary Centre for Disability Studies. She also co-ordinates the newly established Disability Law Hub which sits within the Law School's Centre for Law and Social Justice. Her research focuses on disability equality and human rights at international, European and national levels. She is a longstanding member of the co-ordinating team of the European Union's Academic Network of Experts on Disability and a regular advisor to national and international organisations and governments. She is a member of the

Disability Committee of the Equality and Human Rights Commission for Great Britain. Anna Lawson (herself blind) is an active member of the movement of persons with disabilities and has occupied a range of trustee, chair and advisory roles for disability and human rights organisations. In 2016, she was awarded the Bob Hepple Equality Award by the Equal Rights Trust for her contribution to equality.



Emily Rose Yates works as an accessibility consultant, travel writer and TV presenter, having most recently written the Lonely Planet guide to Accessible Rio de Janeiro for the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games and presented two documentaries for BBC Three. She is also studying for a PhD in disability and gender at the University of York, and works for Enhance the UK, a charity aiming to reduce the fear factor surrounding disability and communication whilst promoting the sexual rights of persons with disabilities.



Inmaculada Placencia-Porrero is Senior Expert in the Unit Disability and Inclusion within the European Commission's Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. The Unit is in charge of the co-ordination of the European policies for persons with disabilities and responsible for the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, and the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at EU level. She is a graduate in Physics and Computer Science and worked in research and technological development activities in industry. She joined the European Commission in 1991 and worked in several

research programmes addressing accessibility and applications for older persons and persons with disabilities. The focus of her work in the "e-Inclusion" unit of the Directorate General Information Society and Media addressed policy-related

activities in the area of accessibility at European and international level, as well as eAccessibility and eInclusion, and work related to Design for All and Assistive technologies. During her work in the Directorate General for Justice she also contributed to the development of disability-related antidiscrimination legislation and other legislative files related to accessibility. She is responsible for the European Accessibility Act file, a proposal for a Directive aiming at harmonising accessibility in the EU.



Gerison Lansdown was the founder director from 1992 to 2000 of the Children's Rights Alliance for England. She has since worked as an international consultant publishing and lecturing widely on the subject of children's rights, including on children with disabilities, as well as working with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the General Comment on the right to inclusive education. She has an Honorary Doctorate from the Open University, and was for nine years Vice Chair of UNICEF-UK. She is currently on the editorial advisory board of the Canadian Journal of Children's Rights, a trustee for the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, and Chair of Child to Child.

Panel 4 – Equal recognition before the law



Marie José Schmitt (moderator) is the Vice-president of the European Action of Persons with Disabilities ('Action Européenne des Handicapés') which is an international NGO with participative status at the Council of Europe and member of the Conference of INGOs. She is active in the Human Rights Committee and represents the Conference at the European Committee of Social Rights. She participated in 1980 in the drafting of the UN World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons where the word "persons" stressed people's

human rights. She was involved in the drafting process of the Council of Europe Action Plan 1982 and, later on, participated in the revision of the European Social Charter Article 15. She was a member of the French Collaborating Centre for the revision of the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). She is presently representing the Conference of INGOs at the Ad Hoc Committee of experts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CAHDPH) of the Council of Europe and was involved in the drafting of the Council of Europe Disability Strategy, especially on the right to equal recognition before the law.



Gerard Quinn is a professor of law at the National University of Ireland. He holds degrees in political science and law from the National University. He is a qualified barrister-at-law (Kings' Inns) and a graduate of Harvard Law School (LL.M., S.J.D.). He has had a varied career in public service and has held visiting chairs and research positions at Harvard, the University of New South Wales (Australia), Haifa University (Israel) and NALSAR University (India). He has won lifetime achievement awards from the United States International Council on Disability, Rehabilitation International and the European Association of

Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD). He is currently a Presidential appointee to the Council of State which provides constitutional law advice to the President of Ireland. He currently sits on the scientific committee of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. He has directed large studies for the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on disability topics and led the delegation of Rehabilitation International during the drafting of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. His current research interests are on the link between legal capacity reform and community living as well as the individualisation of services. Gerard Quinn is also starting a major project on the military conduct of conflicts (e.g. interventions in civil wars) and disability.



Leda Koursoumba was appointed as the first Commissioner for Children's Rights in August 2007 following the enactment by the House of Representatives of the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights Law in June 2007 (Law 74(I)/2007). She was reappointed in 2014. Leda Koursoumba studied law in England and she is a registered advocate in Cyprus. She has specialised in the fields of Constitutional Law, Administrative Law and Human Rights Law, in particular Children's Rights Law. She has dealt extensively with issues relating to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and generally issues relating to children. She has been appointed as the Law Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus since 2002. She was a member of the Committee of Experts on the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (DECS-ENF) and she is a member of the Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF) which has the responsibility to oversee the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021). Leda Koursoumba is also the Vice President of the Cyprus Red Cross Society since 2004.



Luk Zelderloo has been professionally active in the disability sector for more than 32 years. He holds a Master's degree in Management, Social science and Philosophy. For more than 13 years, he was active as manager of a social service for persons with disabilities in Flanders. For the last 19 years, he has been working at European level. He is one of the founding fathers of the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) where he is currently Secretary General. Luk Zelderloo is also President of Job-Link, a service providing vocational training and job coaching for persons with disabilities; President and Board member of Social Services Europe as well as Vice President of the European Federation for Family Employment (EFFE). Luk Zelderloo has extensive knowledge of managing EU funded projects. He has acted as a speaker and organiser of conferences on topics such as education and employment of persons with disabilities, staff training, State aid, poverty reduction, combating sexual abuse, social policies, capacity-building in European Economic Community and stakeholder co-operation.



Ieva Leimane-Veldmeijere is the director of the Resource Centre for People with Mental Disability ('ZELDA') since June 2007. ZELDA promotes de-institutionalisation and the development of community-based services for persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities through research, monitoring of observance of human rights, legal advocacy and activities of informing and educating the public. Ieva Leimane-Veldmeijere holds a MA in Philosophy (University of Latvia) and an International Diploma in Mental Health Law and Human Rights (Indian Law Society's Law College, Pune, India).



Boglárka Benkó is a Hungarian lawyer at the European Court of Human Rights. She previously worked as a human rights officer at the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina; as a desk officer for International Organisations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hungary; as a lawyer at a non-governmental organisation representing persons with disabilities; and as an election observer for a number of EU/OSCE election observation missions. Boglárka Benkó holds a master from the Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest), a Human Rights Master from Strasbourg University and a LLM from the College of Europe (Bruges).

Panel 5 – Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse



Dimitris Nikolsky (moderator) is a graduate of the Department of Sociology at Panteion University of Athens and holds a Postgraduate degree in International Relations and in particular on the European Union's Relations with developing countries, and a Master of Arts in Applied Social and Market Research from the University of Westminster. He has worked for multinational companies in London and Athens in the advertising and market research industry. Since 2008, he has been working in the Greek Public Sector, at the Ministry of Health and currently at the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity in matters of welfare policy, and in particular those relating to the protection of people with disabilities. He is a former Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee of experts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the Council of Europe, and he is also the national representative at the High Level Group on Disability of the European Commission. He is a regular columnist in newspapers and online press for disability issues.



Dr Marianne Schulze is an Australian-Austrian human rights consultant with a LLM who works as a free-lance consultant on a variety of human rights issues. She studied law at the University of Sydney (Australia) and the University of Vienna (Austria). She also studies international human rights at the Center for Civil and Human Rights, University of Notre Dame, Indiana. Currently she is a member of the Advisory Panel of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights Platform. She served as inaugural Chair of the Austrian Federal Monitoring Committee.



Dr Ágnes Kozma (Turnpenny) currently works as a researcher at the Tizard Centre of the University of Kent (United Kingdom). Her main research areas include quality of life and quality of care, deinstitutionalisation and the transition to community-based support. Ágnes Kozma has extensive experience in evaluating the outcomes of institutional and community-based care for people with intellectual disabilities. Prior to becoming a researcher, she was a civil servant in the Ministry of Labour and Employment in Hungary, responsible for strategic planning of EU-funded programmes for vulnerable groups. She also worked with persons with intellectual disabilities in a variety of roles.



Iris Luarasi is a member of the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). She has extensive work experience as a civil society leader in the fields of gender issues, women's rights, advocacy, strategic development and public education. Iris Luarasi was one among the leading group of civil society activists that took actions that led to some of the key laws and creation of non-governmental programs that remain leaders in efforts to advance gender equality. She has strong expertise and work experience to effectively empowering civil rights groups on the creation of

referral mechanism system in Albania.



Dr **Błażej** Kmieciak works at the Department of Medical Law of the Medical University of Łódź (Poland). **Błażej** Kmieciak has been working with persons with disabilities for twenty years. In high school, he was a volunteer at a centre for children with disabilities. His interests led him to the selection of his studies. He graduated in specialised education. During his studies, he worked with persons with addictions and became interested in the problem of human

rights protection. His PhD concerned to the sociological context of protection of patients' rights, and more specifically, the rights of patients with mental disabilities. For almost ten years, he served as Ombudsperson for Psychiatric Patients. Currently, he is working as a university teacher of law and ethics at the Medical University. He also works as a mediator and helps families who report to the Psychosocial Support Foundation. **Błażej** Kmieciak is a person with disabilities who, from birth and for almost five years, was blind.



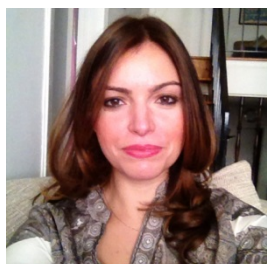
Dr Marios Constantinou joined the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities as a senior officer. He graduated from the University at Albany (State of New York) in 2004 with a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology and specialisation in Clinical Child and Forensic Neuropsychology. He is a published author, experienced professor and researcher. His last position was as the Dean of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Law at the University of Nicosia, Cyprus. He has been a member of numerous research projects, committees, and

evaluation panels on social sciences issues internationally, in the EU, and nationally. He has extensive experience in cognitive rehabilitation, psychological interventions, and cognitive assessment of individuals with disabilities, especially children and adolescents.

Panel 6 – Public Private Partnerships



Arvid Linden (moderator) represents Sweden in the Ad Hoc Committee of experts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CAHDPH) of the Council of Europe. He is a Senior Expert in disability policy at the Swedish Agency for Participation. Since ten years, Arvid Linden is Head of Division of national Knowledge and Guidelines of Accessibility and Universal Design and Head of Division of Analysis. He also has fifteen years of experience in work safety, social policy and statistics areas of different national and international businesses. From 1995 to 1997, Arvid Linden worked at the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) on guidelines for measuring the prevalence and living conditions for persons with disabilities. He graduated in sociology and statistics from Stockholm University in 1984.



Elena Bombis is Manager on Social Sustainability, Legal and Integrity at the UN Global Compact Office. In this role, she managed a number of supply chain and social sustainability projects, including the development of a guide for businesses on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Additionally, she manages the implementation and review of the UN Global Compact's Integrity Measures. Prior to joining the UN Global Compact, Elena Bombis worked as a criminal law practitioner in Milan (Italy), with global experience in both the private sector and international organisations. Her practice focused on white collar crimes and corporate criminal responsibility. She holds an LLM from the University of Pennsylvania Law School with a focus on international human rights and criminal law. She is admitted to the New York State Bar.



Daniela Rubio participates in the development and implantation of different projects regarding inclusive education and job integration for people with special needs. She works particularly with Apple technologies in order to enhance pedagogical methods and help in creating accessible educational and professional materials, by giving customised support to parents, teachers and individual users. Daniela Rubio works closely with developers and evaluates different kinds of internet-based platforms and mobile apps in order to make them inclusive. Since 2013, she is part of the Apple Distinguished Educators global team, and since 2014, she belongs to the EMEIA Apple Distinguished Educators Advisory board. In 2015, she founded Macneticos group in synergy with other qualified consultants; and together, they carry out different projects in relation with socially sustainable

digital accessibility, web, contents and apps accessibility and communication and marketing strategies among others. Since 2016, she participates in the Barcelona Singular entrepreneurs' community, which is composed of accessibility consultants who evaluate digital and physical accessibility situation of places like hotels, restaurants, universities from the perspective of functional and cultural diversity. In 2017, Daniela Rubio was appointed as a member of Leading Cities' Barcelona Local Advisory Board.



David Boutcher is a corporate partner at the Global Law Firm Reed Smith with wide experience in all areas of mergers and acquisitions, corporate finance and joint ventures. He also has a strong background representing overseas clients on a variety of inward investments to the United Kingdom and cross border corporate work. Previously, David Boutcher was the Global Chair of Reed Smith's Business and Finance Department. He plays an active role in Reed Smith's affinity group for lawyers with disabilities. He is also a trustee and secretary of the charity Theirworld, which supports projects to improve opportunities for children and young people, and a director of the Global Business Coalition for Education which helps to deliver quality education for children and young people around the world.



Klaus Miesenberger is a Doctor and Professor for Computer Science at Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria. He is Head of Institute 'Integriert Studieren' and Director of the Centre for Students with Disabilities which sits within the Institute. He has a background in computer science and economics. Klaus Miesenberger is responsible for research and development and teaching at the Institute. In 2000, he was guest professor at the Université Claude Bernard, Lyon II (France). He gives lectures at different Austrian universities and teacher-training academies. His research and teaching is related to Assistive Technologies, eAccessibility and Design for All. Klaus Miesenberger is Founder and Chair of icchp.org, ki-i.at. and bookaccess.at, as well as Founder of icc-camp.info and uniability.org. He is also on the Board of ocg.at and is Past-President/Office Director of aaate.net.

Closing Session



Dr Sally Witcher OBE (General Rapporteur) is the Chief Executive of Inclusion Scotland, a national membership organisation led by persons with disabilities aiming to promote their full inclusion into all aspects of society; ensuring that decisions affecting their lives are informed by their own voices and reflect their own choices. Her understanding of disability equality is derived from experience of associated senior leadership roles in the public and third sectors, as a consultant, researcher, and former advisor to United Kingdom Government Ministers and, most importantly, as a person with disabilities herself.



Christina Flourentzou-Kakouri has 27 years of experience in the Cypriot Public Service. She served for 6 years at the Public Administration and Personnel Department, 9 years at the Treasury of the Republic, 2 years at the Cyprus Academy for Public Administration and from 2006 at the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance. In 2007, the Minister and the Director General assigned to her the establishment of a Unit on Disability Issues at Ministerial level and, from 2009, the establishment of the new Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities as a distinct department under the Ministry. Christina Flourentzou-Kakouri is the Director of the Department since 2010. Her vision is to achieve, together with her colleagues and in co-operation with all interested parties, such reforms that will open new prospects and add value to the life of persons with disabilities. She holds a degree in Business Administration and a Master in Public Management. Christina Flourentzou-Kakouri was born in Famagusta, Cyprus.



Liri Kopaçi-Di Michele has over 20 years of international management experience at organisations including the Council of Europe, the European Union and the World Bank. She is currently Head of the Equality Division at the Council of Europe in charge of promoting and implementing Council of Europe standards and activities in the area of gender equality, rights of persons with disabilities and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. Since joining the Council of Europe in 1997, she has worked in a variety of positions including Deputy Head of the Private Office of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly and Adviser in the Private Office of the Secretary General. Liri Kopaçi-Di Michele graduated with a MSc. in Management from the University of Surrey in England, and a BA in English Language from the University of Tirana in Albania.