

**ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH**

2 December 2016

**Statement of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe
on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 3 December 2016**

We, the Advisory Council on Youth,¹ representing young people in the decision-making processes of the Council of Europe youth sector, celebrate the [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#). This Day aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and to mobilise support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.

We take this opportunity to stress that youth and disability issues must be integrated into all policies at national and European level to ensure equality in societies. The pervasive obstacles faced by young people with disabilities, intertwined with negative attitudes and physical and structural barriers in society, require urgent policy responses. The general lack of awareness of many of the challenges faced by young people with disabilities remains problematic in many countries. Young people with disabilities continue to suffer from a lack of adequate support and opportunities that could ease their transition from youth to adulthood. Improving their economic situation and providing them with increased employment opportunities will, in turn, improve their life chances which are key to ensuring they can live independently in society.

To empower young people with disabilities and create an inclusive society, the effective implementation of the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) is vitally important.

We, the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe, are dedicated to:

- standing against all forms of discrimination, exclusion and hate speech towards people with disabilities;
- encouraging youth organisations to explore further the possibilities for making their structures and programmes more inclusive for all young people including those with disabilities;
- encouraging the member States of the Council of Europe to take an active part in the newly adopted [Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023](#) and to implement its provisions at national and local levels.

The Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe remains committed to supporting the full participation and inclusion of young people with disabilities in Council of Europe member States and beyond.

Marko Grdošić

Chair of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe

¹The Advisory Council on Youth is part of the co-management structure of the Council of Europe youth sector and is made up of representatives of youth NGOs and networks that provide opinions on all youth sector activities. Together with the government representatives responsible for youth matters, they come together in a co-decision-making body - the Joint Council on Youth - where the youth sector's priorities and objectives are established.