

Monday, 3 December 2018

On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Advisory Council on Youth calls upon Council of Europe member states to intensify efforts to include young people in decision-making processes.

We, the Advisory Council on Youth, bringing young European's voice to the decision-making processes of the Council of Europe youth sector, celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This Day aims to raise awareness of disability issues and to encourage action on the implementation of the rights and freedoms of people with disabilities.

Young people with disabilities still face barriers to being fully included in society. There are still difficulties in accessing rights to inclusive education, employment and independent living as well as obstacles to accessing the built environment. This year's theme is "Empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality." This focuses on empowering people with disabilities to be included and equal within the process of sustainable development.

The Advisory Council on Youth believes that young people should play a key role in shaping an inclusive, sustainable, barrier-free society for people with disabilities. We are committed to mainstreaming disability into our work and will take active steps to implement the Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023.

As part of this agenda, at the last meeting of the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) – the youth sector's co-decision-making body – in October 2018, the Advisory Council on Youth proposed the creation of a Rapporteur on Mainstreaming Disability Issues, which was adopted unanimously. Rebecca Farren from the Advisory Council on Youth was appointed to the role. During her mandate, Rebecca is aiming to significantly impact on the Joint Council's work by monitoring and promoting disability issues, informing the CMJ of key developments relating to the human rights of young people with disabilities and taking the lead on actions to mainstream disability within the Council of Europe Youth Department's programme of activities. She will work closely with the Gender Equality Rapporteur and the Rapporteur on Roma Issues¹ on considerations of intersectionality, with a focus on the topic of protection from abuse.

We in the Advisory Council believe that the creation of the Rapporteur on Mainstreaming Disability Issues is an important step for protecting and advancing the rights of young people with disabilities in Council of Europe member states and beyond to which we remain fully committed.

The opinions expressed in this statement are those of the Advisory Council on Youth and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Council of Europe or its member states.

¹ The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "*Gens du voyage*", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.