



17 December 2015

Brief Report
**on the Conference on “Promoting Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities:
Ambitions, Impact and Challenges Ahead”**

Dublin, Ireland on 5-6 November 2015, Dublin Royal Hospital Kilmainham

The Conference on “Promoting Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Ambitions, Impact and Challenges Ahead” was organised by the Council of Europe in cooperation with the Department of Justice and Equality of Ireland, on 5-6 November 2015, in Dublin, Ireland. Around 120 participants attended the event from all Council of Europe member States, including intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations. The programme of the Conference is included in the appendix to this report.

In 2014 and 2015 the Council of Europe carried out the evaluation of the implementation of the Council of Europe Action Plan to promote the rights and full participation of people with disabilities in society: improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe 2006-2015. The evaluation report highlighted progress and results achieved over the ten years of its implementation such as changes in legislation, service provision, physical environment and attitudes. The evaluation also pointed towards remaining challenges including persistent discrimination and barriers to participation as well as divergence between the standards and practice at national level in all the 47 member States, with the implementation gap remaining a great challenge.

Against this background, the Dublin Conference primarily dealt with the following topics:

- Took stock of the implementation of the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan including impact on policy and legislative developments;
- Presented good practices identified in the framework of the implementation of the Council of Europe Action Plan;
- Presented challenges faced with its implementation;
- Set out the priorities and main lines of action for the future Council of Europe Disability Strategy (post-2015), focused at enhancing/supporting the implementation of the UN CRPD;
- Facilitated and promoted partnerships and networks among stakeholders including government officials, specialised agencies and institutions, persons with disabilities, civil society, regional and international organisations (notably, the UN).

During the discussions, the issues highlighted by the participants include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The need for continued political commitment to create the necessary conditions and enabling factors to allow people with disabilities to fully enjoy equal human rights.
- The importance and added value of Council of Europe standards, work and activities to protect and promote human rights of persons with disabilities;
- Challenges faced and steps taken to sign, ratify and/or effectively implement, as the case may be, the UN CRPD;
- The development and implementation of national disabilities strategies;
- The role of persons with disabilities as a resource group;
- The importance of the five goals in the 2030 agenda making specific reference to people with disabilities in the areas of education, economic growth, employment, inequality, accessibility of human settlements and data collection;
- The importance of inclusive education, mainstreaming disability issues across all policies and sectors, the importance of funding and access to finance, employment policies, making better use of the potential and possibilities offered by the new technologies to tackle the technological divide;
- The need to strengthen legal capacities (including through training), build partnerships, change minds and hearts, challenge mind sets and behaviours, prevent and combat violence and abuse of persons with disabilities;
- The need to develop indicators and collect desegregated data to design efficient policies;
- The importance to work together with all stakeholders, policy makers, service providers, public authorities, at local, national and international level, reaching out to trade unions and the private sector, lawmakers and persons with disabilities in order to ensure synergies and co-ordination and to increase the impact.

The discussions at the Dublin Conference will be instrumental to shaping the post-2015 Council of Europe's strategy in the area of the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. The Council of Europe expressed its appreciation to the Irish authorities for the hospitality and their generosity in hosting and co-organising the Conference.

Appendix – Programme of the Conference

5 November 2015

8.30 – 9.30 am Coffee and registration

Opening Session

Opening remarks and moderator: **Dimitrios Nikolsky, Chair of the Council of Europe Committee of experts on the rights of people with disabilities (DECS-RPD) (Greece)**

9.30 – 10.00 am Welcome Address

- ▶ **Aodhán Ó Ríordáin TD**, Minister of State with special responsibility for Equality, New Communities and Culture and Drugs Strategy (Ireland)
- ▶ **Marja Ruotanen**, Director of Human Dignity and Equality, Council of Europe

10.00 – 10.20 am Dignity: from disability to ability

- ▶ **Phillippe Croizon**, Extreme swimmer, columnist and lecturer in the field of persons with disabilities

10.20 – 10.50 am Coffee break

Session 1 – Implementing standards to promote human rights of people with disabilities

10.50 – 11.10 am The Council of Europe Disability Action Plan: results, lessons learnt and challenges ahead

- ▶ **Alfredo Ferrante**, member of the Council of Europe Committee of experts on the rights of people with disabilities (DECS-RPD) (Italy)

11.10 – 11.20 am Social Inclusion and Development through the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- ▶ **Daniela Bas**, Director, Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)

11.20 – 11.30 am European Disability Strategy 2010-2020

- ▶ **Inmaculada Placencia-Porrero**, Deputy Head of Unit for Rights of Persons with Disabilities, European Commission

11.30 – 11.50 am Discussion

Session 2 – Empowerment and participation: Persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities

Moderator: **Carole Sullivan, Senior Human Rights and Equality Officer, Human Rights and Equality Commission (Ireland)**

11.50 – 12.05 pm Legal empowerment: legislative standards to support decision-making

- ▶ **Gerard Quinn**, Professor, Centre for Disability Law and Policy, National University of Ireland, Galway (Ireland)

12.05 – 12.20 pm Engaging effectively with people with disabilities to ensure access to and participation in consultation processes

- ▶ **Rannveig Traustadóttir**, Professor and Director, Centre for Disability Studies, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, University of Iceland (Iceland)

12.20 – 12.35 pm Preventing and combating violence and abuse against people with disabilities

- ▶ **Terje Olsen**, Senior Researcher, Nordland Research Institute, Bodø (Norway)

12.35 – 1.00 pm Discussion

1.00 – 2.30 pm Lunch

Session 3 – Commitment, dialogue and co-operation: the stakeholders perspective

Moderator: **Brigitte Plumet**, member DECS-RPD (Belgium)

- 2.30 – 2.45 pm Individualised/Personalised services and support – challenges and perspectives
▶ **Luk Zelderloo**, Secretary General, European Association of Service Providers for People with Disabilities (EASPD)
- 2.45 – 3.00 pm Bringing your voices and views to the decision-makers/takers: structures and methods of consultation at national and European level
▶ **J. Patrick Clarke**, Chief Executive, Down Syndrome Ireland, Representative of the European Disability Forum (EDF)
- 3.00 – 3.15 pm Public/NGO partnerships: progress and challenges
▶ **Anna Rurka**, President of the Conference of the INGOs of the Council of Europe
- 3.15 – 3.45 pm Discussion
- 3.45 – 4.15 pm Coffee break

Session 4 – Achieving independence and active citizenship: from disability to ability

Moderator: **Marie-José Schmitt**, member, Conference of the INGOs of the Council of Europe

- 4.15 – 4.30 pm Employment strategies: the importance and potential of partnerships
▶ **Mark Priestley**, Professor of Disability Policy, University of Leeds (United Kingdom)
- 4.30 – 4.45 pm From childhood to adult life: supporting the successful transition
▶ **Marc Dessy**, Project Manager, Centre of Coordination and Management of European programmes (Belgium)
- 4.45 – 5.05 pm From Rhetoric to Action: implementing the UN Convention
▶ **Eilleanóir Flynn**, acting Director of the Centre for Disability Law and Policy, National University of Ireland, Galway (Ireland)
- 5.05 – 5.25 pm Action Plan of the Council of Europe for persons with disabilities: a commitment towards progress and challenges
▶ **Marc Maudinet**, Independent Consultant, Pedagogical Director of the Executive Master “management and disability policy” Science Po Executive Education, National Foundation of Political Science, Paris (France)
- 5.25 – 6.00 pm Discussion
- 7.30 pm Dinner and cultural evening

6 November 2015

Session 5 – Inclusion policies for all

Moderator: **Arvid Linden**, member DECS-RPD (Sweden)

- 9.00 – 9.20 am Preparing an Action Plan for Autism
▶ **Adam Harrils**, Autism Spectrum Information and Meeting Point (AsIAM.ie) (Ireland)
- 9.20 – 9.40 am Advancing practical measures to facilitate use of sign language
▶ **Humberto Insolera**, Vice President, European Union of the Deaf (EUD)
- 9.40 – 10.00 am From barrier free to universal design: Theory to practical implementation
▶ **Gerald Craddock**, Chief Officer, Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, National Disability Authority (Ireland)
- 10.00 – 10.45 am Discussion
- 10.45 – 11.00 am Coffee break

Closing session

Moderator: **Eveliina Pöyhönen**, member DECS-RPD (Finland)

- 11.00 – 11.20 am** Youth engaging in the future
- ▶ **Julle O’Leary**, Communications professional working with people with intellectual disabilities, Self-advocate as a person with a physical disability
- 11.20 – 11.40 am** The challenges and opportunities ahead: the Council of Europe strategy for the protection and promotion of human rights of persons with disabilities
- ▶ **Dimitrios Nikolsky**, Chair of the Council of Europe Committee of experts on the rights of people with disabilities (DECS-RPD) (Greece)
- 11.40 – 12.00 pm** Closing address
- ▶ **Helen Gulnan**, Chairperson of the National Disability Authority of Ireland
 - ▶ **Liri Kopaç-Di Michele**, Head, Equality Division, Directorate of Human Dignity and Equality, Council of Europe