



CDMSI representation in events or meetings

Report

Name of CDMSI member or participants	Elfa Yr Gylfadottir (Chair of CDMSI)
Date and place of event or meeting	27. – 28. March 2017, Nicosia, Cyprus
Organiser	Council of Europe
Title, aim and programme of event or meeting	<p>Title: Human Rights: A Reality for All. Conference to launch the Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023</p> <p>Aim: The Council of Europe promotes, protects and monitors the implementation of human rights for all, including persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are entitled to have access to and enjoy, on an equal basis with others, the full range of human rights safeguarded by the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other international treaties. The Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - <i>Human Rights: A Reality for All</i> outlines the Organisation's priorities in the period 2017-2023.</p> <p>The overall goal of the Strategy is to achieve equality, dignity and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in specific areas where the Council of Europe can make an input. This requires ensuring independence, freedom of choice, full and active participation in all areas of life and society.</p> <p>The Council of Europe Disability Strategy also has the aim of promoting respect, equality, capabilities and active participation, involvement and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the media, entertainment and cultural life as both active actors and as users.</p> <p>Access to information and the definitions of communication and language are considered important components of accessibility.</p>

	<p>Differences in individuals' capabilities to receive and impart information and to use information and communications technologies represent a knowledge divide that creates inequality. Accessibility can bridge the knowledge divide as a means to foster media and information literacy, inclusion and participation and eventually enables enjoyment of other human rights. Human rights cannot be enjoyed without information about them and access to them.</p>
<p>List of participants (please attach)</p>	<p>See Annex</p>
<p>Useful contacts for CDMSI/Council of Europe work (please attach a scanned copy of business cards which could be useful to colleagues or to the Secretariat)</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(see business cards in appendix)</p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Report (please describe main findings and results of the event or meeting; please specify implications for CDMSI work and added value for the CoE)</p>	<p>Findings:</p> <p>The conference brought together representatives of governments from the 47 Council of Europe member States, international organisations, parliamentarians, local and regional authorities, representatives of professional networks, non-governmental organisations, representatives from the media and academia, as well as persons with disabilities, specialised organisations and service providers. The aim of the conference was to identify how all actors in the Council of Europe member States and within the organisation can work together to realise the objectives of the Strategy over the years to come.</p> <p><i>Opening Session</i></p> <p>Ms. Zeta Emilianidou, Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, Cyprus emphasised in her opening speech that the Cypriot government the policy on disability and fighting discrimination to be a top priority in the country. Therefore, it was a real pleasure to launch the Disability Strategy of the Council of Europe in Cyprus.</p> <p>Marja Ruotanen, Director of Human Dignity and Equality, Council of Europe stressed the five anchor activities in the new strategy. They are all corresponding with different Articles in the European Convention of European Rights. These anchor activities are 1. Equality and non-discrimination; 2. Awareness raising; 3. Accessibility; 4. Equal recognition before the law; 5. Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse. These are the main areas that the CoE is going to emphasise during the period of the strategy. The implementation includes among other things special projects, campaigns, awareness raising, exchange of good practise and research.</p> <p>Keynote speech: Nils Muižnieks, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights said that the financial crisis has had negative impact on the health issues in the CoE member states and this has effected people with disabilities immensely. He stressed that human rights for</p>

people with disabilities is not just something that government can provide when the financial budget in a given country allows for it, but at all times. Standards are needed and there is still a big implementation gap. There needs to be a much better implementation among member states. One of the main areas that was mentioned is in education. Mr. Muižnieks stressed that children with disabilities are often separated in specialised schools and classes. Often with lesser standards and many children with disabilities drop out of school. This needs careful consideration.

There also needs to be a strategy in equal recognition before the law. There are still a lot of barriers that have to be abolished. Outdated legal frameworks also leads to outdated practises. Good practices are i.e. the Ombudsperson system in Sweden that could be taken up in other countries. Mr. Muižnieks mentioned that we as CoE member states need to be very ambitious in making progress, we should not settle for small step progress.

At the end of the opening session there was a high-level round table with participants discussing the standards and legal frameworks in their countries. Participants from Albania, Andorra, Cyprus, Greece, Montenegro, Portugal and Serbia took part in the discussion.

Panel 1

Dr. Andrea Broderick introduced a report written on the state of disability and discrimination as well as suggestions on how to monitor progress and collect data in member states. The structure of the report is in three sections. In section I there is an overview of the obligations contained in Article 2 of CRPD with respect to guarantying equality and non-discrimination. Section II deals with non-discrimination legislation in Member States and in Section III there is an overview of recommendations and a set of measures. There is also a discussion on good practices within the CoE member states. An interesting panel discussion followed about what a disability and discriminations is by definition, what is considered “normal” and how the society responds to people who are “different”. Certain programmes and research projects within member states were also discussed in the panel. A German member of Parliament (Social Democrats, SPD) introduced a strategy of the political party with regards to people with disabilities and how to take concrete action in a member state.

Panel 2

The second panel dealt with awareness raising. A very interesting project was introduced from Channel 4. Channel 4 announced that 2016, the year of the Paralympic Games in Rio, would be the broadcaster's Year of Disability. This project included new commitments to increase representation of disabled people within the broadcasting industry – both on and off-screen. It included doubling the number of disabled people appearing in 20 of Channel 4's biggest shows – with disabled contributors contributing to hit programmes. Another project introduced was an awareness raising project in Ukraine connected with Paralympic Games. An expert from Denmark

talked about the Danish Disability Strategy, including the Danish Disability Council. It is a Government-funded body made up of an equal number of representatives from disabled people (nominated by the Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People) and from public authorities. The Council's tasks are to monitor the situation of disabled people in society and to act as an advisory body to Government and Parliament on issues relating to disability policy. The Council can take initiatives and propose changes in areas affecting the life of disabled people and their living conditions, and all central authorities are expected to take the Council's advice in these matters. Finally, there was a presentation from the Down Syndrome International.

Many and various issues were discussed during this panel. A very interesting fact from the Onscreen diversity executive at Channel 4 was that there is a "no-brainer" to make disability in television programs more visible. The reason is that such programmes get more visibility in media, they get more "likes" in social media, they get more awards and higher ratings. Therefore, it should be easy to sell the idea to producers and media companies because it is not only better from a moral point a view but also from a financial point of view. He also added that it is important to have a diversity within the work place, and to ensure that disabled people get interesting work opportunities. Their experience at Channel 4 is that diversity increases creativity.

Panel 3

This panel discussed accessibility in a broad sense. This includes i.e. accessibility in education, health service and incorporating accessibility in legal frameworks. The discussion focused on the role and responsibilities of governments and other organisations. A key issue is embedding accessibility in legislation. It is also important to integrate licencing and inspection regimes. The issue of equality and non-discrimination must be embedded in the legal framework. A very good example mentioned was Norway's universal design law for non-discrimination.

Other issues mentioned were data gathering and research that must be in place for policy making. Other issues included training of ICT experts and awareness raising among teachers to make sure that the material they are providing is accessible for everyone.

Finally, the European Disability Act was very much discussed and questions raised about different aspects of the Act.

Panel 4

Professor Gerard Quinn introduced a CoE report and highlighted the key issues and trends. This was partly a historical overview on the interpretations by the European Court of Human Rights in their judgements on different issues relevant to people with disabilities. A key finding is that we are in the middle of a transition period going from one paradigm to the other and therefore it is important that the CoE in its strategy assist member states during this transition period. In the panel there was both discussions on International law, the ECHR case law as well as legal frameworks that could be seen as best practices in

member states. In some member states, i.e. Latvia, the legal framework has been changed in accordance to the ECHR decisions. During the discussion there was an extensive discussion about cognitive capacity and if and how that could be a pre-condition for certain rights, i.e. the right to vote.

Panel 5

In the introductory speech by Dr. Marianne Schulze an extensive overview was given of different types of exploitation, violence and abuse against disabled people. Furthermore, she explained how it is possible to prevent such situations. Dr. Schulze stressed the fact that people with disabilities are in a higher risk of violence and abuse, mainly in institutions but also elsewhere. Key issues that are important in order to prevent violence and abuse is increased participation, securing gender equality, take into account multiple discrimination against people and increased education and training. Dr. Agnes Kozma introduced research on violence in institutional living arrangements and explained that there are some well-documented forms of violence, such as seclusion and mechanical restraints, psychoactive medication as well as psychological and physical violence. There was also a discussion about how disabled women are an especially vulnerable group and measures have to be taken to prevent such gender-based violence. Furthermore, there was an introduction about mental disability and it was stressed that there is no data on how many people as suffering from mental disabilities in many member states. Furthermore, this group is in a great danger of social exclusion in society. The media very often stigmatizes mental illness and there is often a very negative media language associated with the group. Finally, there was an extensive discussion about risk factors for abuse.

Panel 6

This panel dealt with private sector initiatives. Initiatives from Apple and the law firm Reed Smith LLP were introduced. Apple technologies are trying to enhance pedagogical methods and create accessible educational and professional materials as well as giving customized support to parents, teachers and individual users. Furthermore, developers and experts evaluate different internet based platforms and mobile apps to make them more inclusive. In the legal firm Reed Smith a key aspect of diversity and inclusion programme focuses on attracting and recruiting candidates with disabilities. They believe that being a disability-smart organisation is a facilitator for increased productivity and effectiveness. Thus the firm wants to emphasise that jobs for disabled candidates are both available and achievable at the top of the legal profession. The Disability Task Force was created in the firms London office in 2012 with the objective of widening the recruitment outreach to a more diverse population and partnering with charities that assist those with disabilities in gaining skills and employment. While, the initial aim was to give disabled people a possibility of having a legal carrier, the firm also realised that there was an advantage in other parts of the firm as well. Thus disabled people were offered a carrier in the ICT services and other parts of the firm. In Johannes Kepler University in Linz in Austria, graduates with

disabilities are prepared for employment and it is considered an essential element of the Institute mandate. Furthermore, there are ongoing projects to provide education on accessible design in ICT.

Results:

There were more than 180 participants at the conference discussing the five main pillars that are to be found in the Strategy.

The main aim of the conference was to launch the Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023.

Implications for CDMSI work:

There are certain points in the Disability Strategy that are directly or indirectly connected to the CDMSI work. The part of the Strategy that is of most importance is linked to accessibility (3.3.)

It is stated in the Strategy that accessibility, as defined in UNCRPD (Article 9) is a precondition for persons with disabilities to be able to enjoy human rights actively, participate and contribute fully and equally in the society, be independent and make choices about all aspects of their lives. Accessibility is often viewed only as accessibility to the built environment. However, it is a much wider concept. It extends also to accessibility of products and services, including the channels in which services are delivered. Accessibility is connected to all the provisions of the UNCRPD and therefore needs to be seen from the perspective of equality and non-discrimination. It applies equally to public and private sectors. Accessibility is, in other words, an enabler for persons with disabilities in all areas of life. Here, however, special focus is given to access to information, information technologies and the communication sector.

In the Strategy awareness raising is stressed:

AWARENESS RAISING

Expected Impact: Public awareness on and visibility of disabilities and persons with disabilities is improved in society in general and in media in specific.

Risks:

- Stereotypes, discrimination and indifference prevail and are further reinforced by “hate speech” towards persons with disabilities.
- Lack of media coverage, negative stereotypes and negative portrayal of disability related issues or persons with disabilities. Also sensational reporting.
- Lack of knowledge of prevalence of disabilities in society.

Mitigating actions:

- Awareness raising and media campaigns on the skills and capabilities of persons with disabilities. Human rights training programs for persons with disabilities, their family members and persons working with them.
- Awareness raising, training on disability aimed at representatives of the media.
- Partnerships with media. (both traditional and new media)
- Dissemination of good practices on improving statistics with

	<p>regard types and frequency of disabilities and persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human Rights knowledge. Persons with disabilities, their family members and persons working with them are aware of and respect the human rights, human value and dignity of persons with disabilities. - Visibility of PWD. Persons with disabilities are included in the media as active actors and users, including being aware of dangers on the internet. - Data collection. Accurate and age- and sex disaggregated statistical data should be available on disabilities and persons with disabilities. <p>Furthermore, the Strategy also mentions that access to information, as defined in the UNCRPD (Article 21) and the definitions of communication and language (Article 2) are important components of accessibility. Differences in individuals' capabilities to receive and impart information and to use information and communications technologies represent a knowledge divide that creates inequality. Accessibility can bridge the knowledge divide as a means to foster media and information literacy, inclusion and participation and eventually enables enjoyment of other human rights. It is furthermore stated that human rights cannot be enjoyed without information about them and access to them. The fast changing and continuously ongoing developments in the information technology and communication sectors are re-shaping the way in which people interact with each other, conduct business, access goods, services and information and communicate in general. It is considered important that all persons benefit from technological advancements and that no-one is left behind, including persons with multiple disabilities and complex needs. Unfortunately, information and communication continues to be largely inaccessible for many persons with disabilities and therefore attention needs to be paid to appropriate and alternative communication modes, means and formats, access to printed word and copyright issues. This includes the need for accessible political campaigns to promote full participation in public and political life.</p> <p>Therefore, the Strategy wants to promote debate on quality access to information, communications and digital environment for persons with disabilities. Debate should also include media and information literacy as well as inclusion and participation in shaping public policies on the information society. The Strategy also promotes information, learning opportunities and protection measures for persons with disabilities in accessible means, modes and formats of communication to enable safe and responsible use of the new information and communication technologies (ICT) and to avoid their harmful side effects. Such side effects include, among others, cyber-bullying, fraud and sexual abuse or exploitation through the social network sites, especially with regard to children and young persons with disabilities.</p>
<p>Recommended follow up for CDMSI (please specify points to be</p>	<p>No specific follow-up for CDMSI foreseen.</p>

addressed by CDMSI)	
Any other information	On the conference website you can find all the presentations and speeches, as well as photos.
Signature of CDMSI member or participant	Elfa Ýr Gylfadóttir