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**Ad Hoc Committee on the Rights of Persons with
Disabilities
(CAHDPH)**

**6TH MEETING, 27-29 SEPTEMBER 2017
STRASBOURG, COUNCIL OF EUROPE - AGORA BUILDING, MEETING ROOM G03**

**Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Implementation of the
Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023: Human
Rights a Reality for All**

Discussion document prepared by the Secretariat

1. Background

Human rights: a reality for all - the Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023 was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 30 November 2016¹. The Ad-hoc Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CAHDPH) is tasked by the Committee of Ministers to oversee the implementation of the Strategy.

2. Stock-taking of activities in 2017

As of to date, the following activities have taken place in 2017 contributing towards the implementation of the Council of Europe Disability Strategy:

- i. "Human rights: a reality for all" the launching Conference of the Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023 (Nicosia, 27-28 March 2017)

The Council of Europe launched its new Disability Strategy 2017-2023 at a two-day conference in Nicosia (Cyprus). The strategy focuses on five rights-based priority areas which are anchored in the European Convention on Human Rights and other Council of Europe and UN standards: equality and non-discrimination, awareness raising, accessibility, equal recognition before the law and protection from exploitation, violence and abuse.

The feedback from participants at the conference and from those who followed it through social media has been overwhelmingly positive. The Conference in Nicosia with its wealth of discussions, debates and good practice was an important contribution towards the implementation of the new Council of Disability Strategy.

The experience from the panel discussions on five priority areas of the Strategy, along with public-private partnerships, organised in the framework of the Nicosia Conference, provided a unique contribution towards raising awareness of the Strategy and its importance as a vehicle through which to facilitate participation, co-operation and co-ordination and support the member States to achieve the Strategy objectives and ultimately the implementation in practice of the CRPD. In addition to the priority areas and cross-cutting themes, the Conference identified and discussed emerging themes such as human rights of children with disabilities, including the importance of inclusive education with regard to the digital world of social media, or employment and the inadequacy of data. Furthermore, the Conference provided a platform to discuss how to mitigate and overcome risks towards the implementation of the Strategy and address the "implementation gap".

- ii. Side Events at the 10th session of the Conference of the States Parties (COSP) to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (New York, 13-15 June 2017).

"The Second Decade of the CRPD: Inclusion and full participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in the implementation of the Convention" was in the focus of the 10th session of the COSP. The Council of Europe co-sponsored two side events: "Reforming social services in Europe to embrace the human rights approach" and "A journey to strengthened co-operation between the international and regional human rights mechanisms: implementation of

¹ Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023 – Human rights: a reality for all, available at: www.coe.int/en/web/disability/strategy-2017-2023.

the UN CRPD and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). The Council of Europe was also a speaker at the event "private Sector Solutions for persons with Visual Disabilities – How to secure Web accessibility for all".

Council of Europe presence and contribution to the different events at the COSP provided an opportunity to promote the Organisation's standards, work and activities in the area of disability in particular the Strategy. Council of Europe partners and other stakeholders are very interested in the studies on the five priority areas prepared in the framework of activities towards the implementation of the Strategy.

iii. Meetings to promote the new Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023:

- Zero Project Conference 2017 (Vienna, 22-23 February 2017): this event provides one of the most important platforms where the most innovative and effective solutions to problems that persons with disabilities face, are shared. In 2017, this large scale international event hosted some 500+ participants from 70 countries. The Council of Europe was invited to speak during the International Policymaker Forum, followed by questions and answers session.
- 17th Session of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Geneva, 20 March 2017): the Committee is a body of 18 independent experts which monitors implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Council of Europe was invited to speak under the agenda item on "Co-operation with other United Nations bodies, specialised agencies, organisations of persons with disabilities and other competent bodies" to present the Council of Europe Disability Strategy.

3. Other activities planned in 2017

6th plenary meeting of CAHDPH

The 6th plenary session of CAHDPH (Strasbourg, 27-29 September 2017): the meeting will take stock of the launching Conference of the Disability Strategy and will concentrate on specific measures to implement the Strategy. Two roundtables during the plenary session will focus on one of the priority areas of the Strategy – Accessibility (i.e. universal design and access to justice, information, healthcare, banking services and sports for persons with disabilities), and will discuss good practices towards its implementation.

4. Prospects for new biennium (2018-2019) and beyond

In order to develop meaningful activities for the implementation of Strategy in the field of rights of persons with disabilities, it is important to use efficiently available human and financial resources, by concentrating on the comparative advantages of the Council of Europe as well as co-operation and synergies to avoid duplication with work and activities carried out by the member States and other international organisations.

The Council of Europe can support national stakeholders in member States in the process of implementing the Strategy and the UNCRPD by providing them with guidelines and other useful tools on the implementation of standards, peer-to-peer exchange (including on good practice), support for data collection, training or research and studies on disability related issues.

At the same time, the Council of Europe, within the means and resources available, will continue to promote mainstreaming of disability related issues internally and provide support to other intergovernmental committees, partial agreements and monitoring bodies including through training and awareness raising on disability issues.

Subject to the approval of the ordinary budget for 2017-2018 by the Committee of Ministers, the focus of activities to implement the CoE Disability Strategy will be on:

- i. Small-scale regional events/round-tables/training/peer-to-peer exchanges on empowering persons with disabilities;
- ii. Elaboration and dissemination of practical tools such as studies, research, factsheets, compilation of good practice;
- iii. Joint action with other sectors in the Council of Europe (Parliamentary Assembly, Children's Division, Violence against Women, etc.) as well as regional and international partners, equality and human rights bodies and NGOs.

In addition, the promotion of the standards, work and activities of the Council of Europe in the area of disability through cooperation and synergies with other national, regional and international partners should be continued.