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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Concept Note

Seminar on awareness raising for persons with disabilities

13-14 December 2017, Copenhagen, Denmark

Achieving equality, dignity and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, is at the core of the Council of Europe work to tackle discrimination and ensure the enjoyment of human rights for all.

Persons with disabilities do not always enjoy rights on an equal basis with others and are side-lined in the rights debate. They are often at risk of multiple discrimination and violence. There are problems with people with disabilities' access to the general education system, to be employed, to live independently in the community, to move freely, to vote, to participate in sport and cultural activities, to enjoy social protection and access to justice, to choose medical treatment and to enter freely into legal commitments such as buying and selling property.

In 2017, the Council of Europe launched the Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Strategy) "Human Rights - A reality for all". The Strategy places strong emphasis on the implementation of existing human rights standards. It is anchored in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the European Convention on Human Rights and other Council of Europe standards protecting the human rights. The Strategy identifies specific policies and actions to improve the equality of and access to rights by persons with disabilities over the coming years.

One of the five rights-based priority areas of the Strategy is awareness raising. Raising public awareness on disability is an integral part of the fight against prejudice and negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities. Both education and awareness raising are powerful tools to change mindsets, combat discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for all.

The Strategy highlights the role of all relevant stakeholders in raising awareness on disability.

Focus:

The seminar will focus on possibilities of effectively countering prejudice and negative attitudes towards people with disabilities by means of co-operation between authorities, civil society, and other stakeholders. The seminar will present examples of good practice of awareness raising in the media, in sports, in the employment sector, and in schools. These examples will be the starting point of group work intended to have all participants take part in discussions about aspects such as strategies and policies on awareness raising, and how to overcome challenges concerning designing and implementing such strategies and policies, in order for persons with disabilities to enjoy their full and equal rights.

Aim:

Support member states to employ partnerships and co-operation with civil society and other stakeholders in order to effectively raise awareness and counter prejudice and negative attitudes towards people with disabilities. This will be done through:

1. Exchange of experience, expertise and practical examples of effective awareness raising strategies from the member States, civil society and the employment sector;
2. Discussing challenges and difficulties in designing and implementing awareness raising strategies and strategies to overcome them;
3. Exchange of information on research, policies and strategies on awareness raising in areas under discussion: media, sports, employment and changing attitudes of children in schools;
4. Preparation of a factsheet on awareness raising based on the findings, recommendations and good practice from the seminar.

Structure:

The seminar will consist of 4 thematic sessions and group work. Thematic sessions will be interactive, with brief interventions to present good practice from member States and other stakeholders, followed by an interaction with the participants. Group work will focus on coming up with key findings and recommendations for each session.

Targeted participants:

- Representatives from the member States;
- Persons with disabilities and/or their organisations;

Date: 13-14 December 2017.

Venue: Eigtved Pakhus, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Working languages: English and French.