

Subject: IDDC response to online Consultation towards a new European Strategy for Persons with Disabilities

Please find attached a submission to the consultation on the new European Strategy for Persons with Disabilities. The IDDC hopes this is the first of many official moments to engage with the process of developing a new Strategy and looks forward to participating in this process.

IDDC is a network of 23 international NGOs¹ supporting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development efforts in over 100 countries. The IDDC promotes **inclusive development**, i.e. respecting the full human rights of every person, acknowledging diversity, eradicating poverty and ensuring that all people are fully included and can actively participate in development processes.

In 2009 it was made clear on numerous occasions by the Commission's services that in line with the European signature of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities the new Strategy for Persons with Disabilities would include commitments and plans for the EU's external relations. The IDDC therefore welcomes this Consultation but is disappointed that it does not provide adequate opportunity to give indications of civil society's views on the EU's role as a global actor. IDDC has chosen not to complete the online questionnaire because the questions address almost exclusively the experiences and priorities of persons with disabilities living in Europe.

IDDC members expected that the online consultation would have been presented in such a way, and with relevant content, for partners in the South such as DPOs to participate in it in line with articles 4 and 32 of the Convention. However, very few members felt asking partners to participate in the consultation was appropriate given the clear orientation of the questionnaire to internal EU policies. Similarly, completing the questionnaire assuming that the questions also apply to the EU's role in the world, and stating such in the free text box is an inadequate way of responding to the consultation when the IDDC has engaged in a much more in depth manner with EU development cooperation.

The IDDC and its members have had ongoing dialogue and contact with the European Commission's relevant services about the attention given to persons with disabilities in European development cooperation over the past years including with the collaboration with EDF to develop the Guidance Note on

¹ Action on Disability and Development (ADD), Associazione Italiana Amici di Raoul Follereau (AIFO), CBM, Disabled Peoples Organisation - Denmark (DPOD), Dutch Coalition on Disability and Development (DCDD), EU-CORD, Finnish Disabled People's International Development Association (FIDIDA), Handicap International (HI), Healthlink Worldwide, International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP), Leonard Cheshire Disability, LIGHT FOR THE WORLD, Liliane Fonds, Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD), Organismo di Volontariato per la Cooperazione Internazionale la Nostra Famiglia (OVCI), Platform Disability and Development Cooperation (PHOS), Save the Children UK, Sense International, Sightsavers International, Swedish Organisation of Disabled Persons International Aid Association (SHIA), The Leprosy Mission International (TLMi), Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), World Vision UK

Disability and Development (published in 2005) and throughout the following years including under the “Make Development Inclusive - mainstreaming disability in development cooperation” project.

The attached response to the consultation is based on answers to questions regarding the EU’s Guidance Note and the ratification of the CRPD put to members and to partners in the South during 2009 and discussed first in a small joint EDF-IDDC workshop in July 2009 and later at an IDDC EU Task Group meeting in September 2009. The recommendations were designed as recommendations for implementing the CRPD commitments, and for following up on the Guidance Note which was identified as an inadequate policy commitment and an incomplete implementing tool. The recommendations provide some indication of milestones that the European Strategy could set itself to achieve over the coming decade.

The IDDC welcomes the planned cooperation between the external relations DGs with respect to this Strategy and also assumes that the outcomes and recommendations of the ongoing study commissioned by AidCo on the inclusion of disability in development cooperation which the IDDC is planning to feed into will be linked to the new Strategy. The Strategy can be devised in such a way that commits it to consider action on the recommendations of the study in its first years. The IDDC is also currently launching a new project “Making Development Inclusive” and hopes to be able to strengthen its dialogue with the European Union on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development cooperation as part of this project.

IDDC looks forward to continuing the dialogue to prepare this Strategy for Persons with Disabilities.

Yours sincerely,

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