

**New European Strategy
for Persons with
Disabilities:
Implementation of the UN
CRPD across all areas of
EU policy**



- **Focus on Articles 32 and 11**

Introduction

Inclusive Development, an obligation under the UN CRPD is not currently a reality in EU International Cooperation.

While the EC did take the step of developing a Guidance Note on Disability and Development in 2003/2004, this Guidance Note marked a starting point of where the EC should begin to ensure that disability issues were effectively addressed in EC Delegations and services.

Having informally surveyed our member organisations and also had discussions with staff of the EC Delegations, it is clear that the Guidance Note never went any further than giving a few pointers on how and why a Delegation might begin to think about this issue. However, the Guidance Note was not accompanied by political or technical or financial support which would lead to implementation. The Guidance Note has not, therefore, offered the kind of policy direction or practical guidance required to ensure persons with disabilities are included in EU international cooperation. The European Parliamentary Resolution on Disability and Development P6 TA(2006) 0033 already outlined many steps that should be taken to include persons with disabilities fully in EC international cooperation, these recommendations for the most part are still valid, have not been implemented, but require updating in relation to the CRPD.

With the coming into force of the CRPD, to which the EU intends to be a party, there now exists an internationally agreed standard- all persons with disabilities have the right to be included in International Cooperation on an equal basis with other people, and all parties have the obligation to remove barriers and support the inclusion of persons with disabilities. This obligation applies to the RELEX family, including

EU Delegations, in their internal functioning as well as their international cooperation work.

Now that the CRPD is in force, and implementation has started, Parties to the CRPD are in the process of outlining how the rights of persons with disabilities to International Cooperation will be realised. A new European Strategy and follow-up to the Guidance Note on Disability and Development provide an excellent opportunity for the EU to address the policy gap which presently exists. IDDC identifies this policy gap as an obstacle to the inclusion of people with disabilities in development cooperation.

The following should be put in place by the EU in order to implement the general obligations of the CRPD with a particular focus on Articles 32 and 11 and should be mapped out in the new European Strategy:

1. The monitoring mechanism which will be put in place under Article 33.3 will include representative organisations of persons with disabilities; civil society expertise on international cooperation, including both development cooperation and crises and emergency situations should also be included in this monitoring mechanism.
2. The designated focal point for the CRPD will be nominated to tackle difficulties in implementation. The mandate of the focal point should come with strong institutional backing and support, making clear that the implementation of the CRPD is a cross cutting issue in all areas of EU activity. The mandate should specify that the focal point has authority to work on internal as well as external policy and implementation issues.
3. Each DG, including the RELEX family, and Budgets should make a contribution to the periodic reporting process outlined in Article 35.
4. Indicators should be put in place which facilitate measuring and reporting on the actions (programmes and projects) and resources (including people and budgets) undertaken to implement the CRPD and in particular Articles 32 and 11.
5. In order to meet the obligations under the CRPD the present policy gap should be addressed by developing and adopting, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, a new reference document for all the different activities of the EU in its external

- relations which takes into account the CRPD. Relevant stakeholders include DPOs, NGOs and government and international organisations should be included in the process to elaborate this.
6. This should be accompanied by an action plan for implementation of Articles 32 and 11. The action plan should aim to provide the EU with guidance on how to implement the CRPD in the work which it implements or contracts directly, but also guidance on how to implement the CRPD in policy dialogue with third countries.
 7. EU Delegations require the following support to ensure that they neither breach the CRPD in their internal functioning, and also positively support the implementation of the CRPD in third countries:
 - a. Accessibility of Delegation infrastructures and communication
 - b. Assurance that accessibility standards will be applied to all infrastructure development supported by the EU
 8. Disability focal persons are nominated and are provided with support and training, and are also required to regularly report on their progress in inclusion of persons with disabilities. Many international donors have in recent years adopted a strategy of providing specific support to DPOs to strengthen their voice in development policy dialogue (USA, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, UK) in tandem with including the rights of persons with disabilities across all spheres of international cooperation (twin track approach). The RELEX family should engage with other major international donors for mutual learning and alignment purposes, on implementation of the CRPD, in line with the Paris Principles and MDG 8.
 9. Article 4.3 calls for the active involvement of Disabled Peoples Organisation in all consultations to develop policy and legislation in relation to the CRPD. The EIDHR provides an excellent basis for supporting DPOs in this respect; additional resources through the EIDHR could be identified and channelled to provide the necessary support to the disability movement in third countries.

The upcoming Disability Strategy is the ideal opportunity for these first steps to be outlined and committed to in a time bound fashion.

The EU should adopt a comprehensive Inclusive Development Policy in cooperation with DPOs. Such a policy would outline the plan of action to be followed to meet the obligations of the EU under the CRPD in its external relations and provide for indicators that measure progress in this area.