



Welcome.

A Union of Equality
- Disability Rights and Strategies
Seminar

27 JUNE 2023, Brussels

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Swedish Presidency
of the Council of the
European Union





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of the Council of the
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A Union of Equality Disability Rights and Strategies

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Dear colleague,

Welcome to this seminar which is arranged during the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2023. One of four priorities of the Swedish Presidency is democratic values and the rule of law. In the Presidency Programme it is stated that Sweden intends to use the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a springboard for highlighting disability policy issues to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of human rights for people with disabilities.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Maria Montefusco at the Swedish Agency for Participation at maria.montefusco@mfd.se

Programme

Opening session

9:00-9:30

Moderator: Katarina Ivanković Knežević, Director for Social Rights and Inclusion at the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Helena Dalli, European Commissioner for Equality (video)

Minna Ljunggren, State Secretary to the Minister of Social Services in Sweden

Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the European Disability Forum

Key-note session

9:30-10:15

**The human rights model on disability and inclusion in practise:
Mainstreaming accessibility, gender equality and child rights' perspectives**

How can strategies and action plans contribute to ensure the full and equal enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities? What do we know about success factors? How are actions successfully operationalized with regard to gender equality and the rights of the child?

Moderator: Minna Ljunggren, State Secretary to the Minister of Social Services

Ana Peláez Narváez, Chair of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Break

10:15-10:30

Equality gaps and the response needed

10:30-10:50

Where do we still find equality gaps, how do we make the best use of European and national strategies and action plans?

Moderator: Ola Balke, Analyst, Swedish Agency for Participation

Catherine Naughton, Director, European Disability Forum

Jonathan Elebjörk Wahlström, European Disability Forum's Youth committee

Policy response: the European Union's Strategy

10:50-11:15

Introduction to and status of key actions in the EU Strategy for the rights of persons with disability 2021-2030.

Moderator: Marina Carlsson, Board member, Swedish Disability Rights Federation

Katarina Ivanković Knežević, Director for Social Rights and Inclusion at the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Policy response and experiences: National examples

11:15-12:00

Moderator: Maria Montefusco, Analyst, Swedish Agency for Participation

Examples of national disability policy and practice for mainstreaming disability rights, accessibility and the connection to international policy framework

Panel of Member State members of the Disability Platform and representatives from civil society in each country speak of experiences working with disability strategies on national level.

Gunta Anca, Latvian Umbrella Body for disability organisations SUSTENTO

Elīna Celmiņa, Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Welfare of the Republic of Latvia

Mia Ahlgren, International Policy Director, Swedish Disability Rights Federation

Minna Ljunggren, State Secretary, Ministry for Health and Social Affairs, Sweden

Pilar Villarino, Director, The Spanish Committee of Representatives of People with Disabilities, CERMI

Verónica Balmaseda, Head of Area in the Directorate General for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Lunch break

12:00 – 13:30

Policy response and experiences: more national examples

13:30-14:15

Moderator: Nina Pineau, Attaché, Belgian Ministry of Social Security

Examples of national disability policy and practise for mainstreaming disability rights, accessibility and the connection to international policy frame work.

Pirkko Mahlamäki, Finnish Disability Forum

Tea Hoffrén, Senior specialist, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland

Marthese Mugliette, President, Malta Federation of Organisations Persons with Disability

Alistair De Gaetano, Administrator, Directorate for Disability Issues, Ministry for Inclusion, Voluntary Organisations and Consumer Rights

Break

14:15-14:30

Session on inclusive elections and political participation

14:30-15:30

Moderator: Krzysztof Pater, Vice president of the European Economic and Social Committee

**One year left to the European elections. What are the major challenges?
What can be done to reach equality in political participation?**

Marie-Helene Boulanger, Head of Unit Democracy, Union Citizenship and Free Movement and Acting Director Directorate C: Rule of Law, Fundamental Rights and Democracy in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers

Alejandro Moledo, Deputy Director, European Disability Forum

Armin Rabitsch, Chairperson, Election Watch EU

Pirkko Mahlamäki, Finnish Disability Forum

Domenec Ruis Devesa, EU-Parliamentarian and Rapporteur of the new EU electoral law

Feed forward session

15:30-16:00

What are the next steps to reach a European Union of Equality?

Moderator: Malin Ekman Aldén, Director General, Swedish Agency for Participation

Ana Peláez Narváez, Chair of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Gunta Anca, Vice President of the European Disability Forum

Katarina Ivanković Knežević, Director for Social Rights and Inclusion at the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

End of seminar

16:00

Background

Every person has the right to be included in the society. For this to become a reality, the European Union and all member states need to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities. To promote respect for the inherent dignity of all, national strategies can be used to break the still existing barriers for persons with disabilities to participate fully in society and the labour market on an equal basis with others. There are promising examples on how to succeed.

The EU and its member states are parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Parties to the CRPD, use regional and national strategies and action plans to implement and monitor the progress.

In this seminar, examples of policy frameworks as well as practical solutions on how to improve equality through the strategic use of accessibility will be presented and discussed. Methods for including persons with disability in the development processes of all matters that concern them will also be highlighted.

Our aim is to contribute to the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with a specific focus on EU Member State experience. The program will include presentations and interaction around experiences and examples that inspire and increase knowledge. As a contribution to the knowledge and experience exchange, the Swedish Agency for Participation has drafted a report with an overview and examples of national disability strategies in Europe. The report was drafted through interaction with the secretariat and members of the European Disability Platform and will serve as a background material to the seminar.

Link to the report: [Disability rights, strategies and cross-sectoral governance in Europe - MFD](#)
