



**The Future of Disability-
Inclusive International
Cooperation and Humanitarian
Action Across Europe and
Central Asia**

**Regional Pre-Summit Outcome Document:
Advancing Disability Inclusion Worldwide**

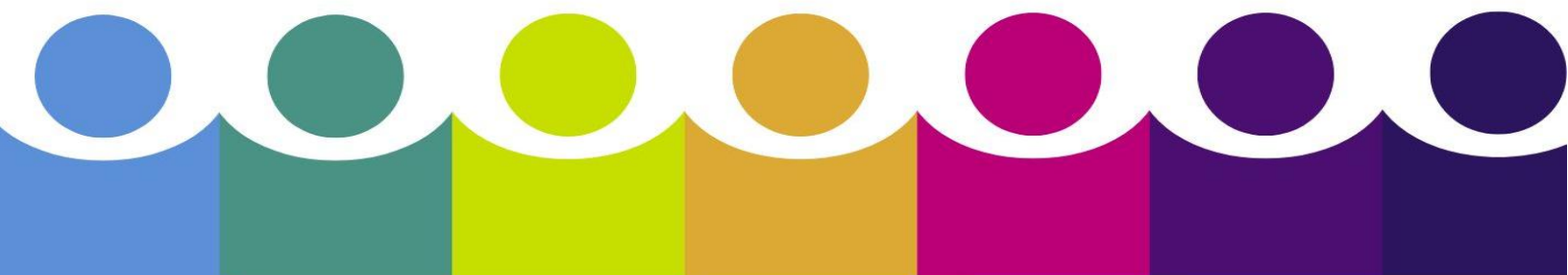


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More Information

For more information about the European Regional Disability Summit 2024, including the full programme, please view the [pre-summit's website](#).

For more information about the Global Disability Summit 2025, please view the [GDS2025 website](#).

For any questions, please contact the European Disability Forum International Cooperation team at international.cooperation@edf-feeph.org.

Executive Summary

The co-hosts of the Global Disability Summit 2025 (GDS2025) recommended the organisation of regional pre-summits. These gatherings aimed to stimulate international collaboration and place emphasis on region-specific dialogues on international cooperation and humanitarian action that would ultimately enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of these efforts worldwide.

In response, the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the European Disability Forum, and the German Disability Council convened a High-Level European Regional Disability Summit on 6th December 2024. This pre-summit aimed to raise awareness about the importance of inclusive international cooperation and humanitarian action, bringing together partners from greater Europe and Central Asia in collaboration with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). It focused on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) to drive progress in disability rights.

The summit united over 800 participants, both in-person and online, including government representatives, OPDs, civil society organisations, and private sector leaders. It served as a platform to discuss the future of disability-inclusive international cooperation and humanitarian action, while highlighting systemic ableism, meaningful engagement with OPDs, and developing inclusive policies to respond to global crises such as climate change and conflicts.

Central to discussions were Articles 11 and 32 of the UNCRPD, which stress equitable inclusion during emergencies and in international cooperation. The summit also explored sustainable development, official development assistance, inclusive education, decent work, independent living, gender equality, and accessibility, highlighting successful initiatives while addressing persistent gaps in disability inclusion.

By fostering high-level engagement, the summit reinforced the need for collaborative action to ensure disability inclusion remains a priority in addressing global and regional challenges.

Outcome Document Purpose

The European Regional Disability Summit Outcome Document serves as a comprehensive resource, shedding light on the priorities and recommendations for disability-inclusive international cooperation and humanitarian action, as articulated by the disability rights movement in the region before, during and after the pre-summit. It offers critical insights into the current state of disability inclusion, highlighting both significant achievements and

persistent challenges within existing practices, policies, programmes and projects in the context of international cooperation and humanitarian action.

At its heart, the Outcome Document amplifies the voices of the disability rights movement, presenting the region's most pressing priorities for advancing disability inclusion. These priorities and recommendations are drawn from a series of consultation meetings, key insights from the pre-summit, and continuous feedback throughout the drafting process of the document itself.

Importantly, the Outcome Document is designed to guide stakeholders in international cooperation and humanitarian action—including governments, NGOs, OPDs, and development partners—on the critical areas requiring focus and commitment. The hope is that it serves as a strategic tool, driving meaningful pledges and actions ahead of the Global Disability Summit 2025.

The key outcomes of all the pre-summits will be presented at the Global Disability Summit 2025 in Berlin, Germany, on the 1st-2nd April. This will set the stage for transformative change in disability-inclusive international cooperation and humanitarian action.

Outcome Document Preparations

This Outcome Document, including its key priorities and recommendations, were informed by several main processes:

- [Online consultations meetings](#) with OPDs organised prior to the summit in English and Russian, with interpretation in French, German, Russian, French and International Sign.
- [A comprehensive survey](#) in English, Easy-to-read, French, German, Russian and Spanish.
- Insights gathered during the European Regional Disability Summit itself.
- Direct feedback on the draft Outcome Document, which was collected both before and after the summit.

These processes ensured a wide range of voices and perspectives were included in shaping the final recommendations and priorities.

Key Outcomes

Key priorities raised as a part of the pre-summit include:

- Addressing inconsistencies and hypocrisy in European CRPD implementation and cultural change
- Inclusive development cooperation and humanitarian action

- Sustainable development and environmental resilience
- Meaningful participation, with more than a seat at the table
- Deinstitutionalisation and independent living
- Poverty reduction
- Promoting accessibility
- Data collection and evidence-based policy
- Advocacy and capacity building
- Gender and intersectionality

Key recommendations outlined include:

1. Advocate for consistency in disability rights implementation
2. Mainstream disability inclusion in development cooperation
3. Promote local leadership and OPD participation
4. Increase funding for OPDs and disability rights movements
5. Strengthen protection mechanisms for persons with disabilities in conflict zones and humanitarian crises including climate action
6. Support deinstitutionalisation and independent living
7. Advance inclusive education
8. Enhance data collection for evidence-based policy
9. Promote accessibility, safety and acceptance in all sectors
10. Implement gender and intersectionality approaches

Call to Action

The European Regional Disability Summit 2024 issued a compelling call to national governments, NGOs, and development partners across Europe and Central Asia to take decisive action and make tangible commitments at the Global Disability Summit 2025.

Governments, NGOs, and Development Partners

This Outcome Document provides a comprehensive list of recommendations to guide stakeholders in making meaningful pledges that address the urgent priorities for disability - inclusive international cooperation and humanitarian action.

Seize the moment—[make commitments today!](#)

Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs)

This Outcome Document serves as a powerful advocacy tool for OPDs. It can be used to elevate the voices of persons with disabilities, influence policymakers, and push for accountability. OPDs can leverage these recommendations from the disability rights

movement to advocate for GDS commitments aligned with the needs of persons with disabilities and to advocate for an inclusive and equitable future.

Advocate for change— [learn more today!](#)

Background

Persons with disabilities represent [16 percent](#) of the world’s population. It is estimated that [80 percent](#) of persons with disabilities live in low- and middle-income countries (sometimes also referred as the Global South). Unfortunately, persons with disabilities across the world continue to face barriers and challenges. These barriers include discrimination and stigma on the grounds of disability; lack of accessibility to physical and virtual environments including transportation, education, health care, political participation and decent work; lack of access to assistive technology and information including insufficient sign language interpreters; lack of access to essential services and rehabilitation such as social protection, mental health and independent living; lack of meaningful engagement opportunities; lack of funding, and additional costs resulting from disability. Additionally, shifting political climates increasingly place pressure on communities most at risk of harm, including the disability movement, further restricting opportunities for political participation, advocacy and protest.

Yet, persons with disabilities ironically remain overlooked from initiatives, such as international cooperation and humanitarian action, often aimed at targeting those most at risk of harm in society. Efforts by various development cooperation actors, such as UN agencies, government agencies, and non-profit organisations (NGOs) whose goals often aim to reduce poverty, protect human rights, and increase access to services like healthcare and social protection, too often forget to include and protect persons with disabilities in their actions.

The Global Disability Summit (GDS), [its systems of commitments](#), and its pre-regional summits are powerful platforms to mobilise efforts and promote inclusive **international cooperation, development and humanitarian action** worldwide. By convening a diverse array of stakeholders—governments, multilateral agencies, the private sector, academia, civil society organisations, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), and foundations—these summits foster collaboration, meaningful engagement, and accountability to advance the global disability inclusion agenda. The summits emphasise the implementation and monitoring of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), particularly Articles 11 (**Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies**) and 32 (**International Cooperation**), to drive meaningful

progress in disability rights worldwide. It is also crucial to emphasise that **all UNCRPD articles** are interconnected and must be considered, reinforcing a human rights-based approach to disability rights in discussions-related to international cooperation and humanitarian action.

For instance, international cooperation extends beyond development policy and encompass a wide range of activities, including sports competitions, cultural and educational exchanges, mentorship programmes, and more—activities that also foster mutual exchange, build relationships, and promote inclusion across many different sectors. As such, to ensure the implementation of UNCRPD Article 32 it is crucial to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate in international activities, fostering inclusion and empowering individuals on a global scale. By meaningfully participating in these activities, individuals with disabilities can contribute their unique perspectives, enrich dialogues, and promote innovative solutions to global challenges.

The European pre-summit connected to GDS2025, known as the “European Regional Disability Summit 2024,” brought together participants from Western, Northern, Eastern, and Southern Europe, as well as the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. In this vast region, approximately [135 million persons with disabilities](#) live in the Europe and Central Asia region. A convergence of recent challenges—including the COVID-19 pandemic, the conflict in Ukraine, climate crises, natural disasters, armed conflicts, and complex migration patterns—has intensified the barriers faced by persons with disabilities within the region while also highlighting the need to prioritise disability-inclusive international cooperation and humanitarian action.

Europe and Central Asia have made significant strides in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities, both within the region and globally, through inclusive international cooperation and humanitarian action. Notable examples of effective practices include:

- The United Kingdom’s comprehensive [Strategy for Disability Inclusion \(2022–2030\)](#), which provides a clear framework for action.
- The adoption of the [Disability Policy Marker](#) by countries such as Ireland, Italy, and Finland to assess and enhance disability inclusion in development projects.
- The European Union’s launch of [guidance for its staff worldwide](#), aimed at integrating disability inclusion across all areas of its work.
- Montenegro’s distinction as the first country in the European Region to implement the [WHO Disability: Action Plan](#) framework.

- Moldova's implementation of the [Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities: Guide for Action](#), which led to a detailed situation report and the development of a comprehensive action plan.
- Liechtenstein and Uzbekistan recently ratified the UNCRPD.

While these positive examples mark progress in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in Europe and Central Asia, as well as in partner countries, significant challenges persist. Many UNCRPD articles, including Articles 11 and 32, remain only partially implemented. Additionally, chronic underfunding continues to discriminate against persons with disabilities both within the broader Europe and Central Asia region and in international development efforts. Addressing these issues requires stronger collaboration among governments, NGOs, and OPDs, alongside enhanced engagement from donors, the private sector, and foundations. Their support is vital to drive innovative disability-inclusive projects, fund critical research, and advocate for systemic change.

GDS and its pre-summits, including the European Regional Disability Summit, aim to bridge these gaps and pave the way toward a future that is truly inclusive of persons with disabilities.

European Regional Disability Summit 2024

The German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the European Disability Forum, and the German Disability Council organised the [High-Level European Regional Disability Summit](#) in Berlin, Germany and online on the 6th December 2024. The Summit focused on international cooperation and humanitarian action. The event was also endorsed by the EU and the Global Disability Fund (previously called the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - PRPD), both of which provided valuable input during the preparation phase.

Pre-Summit Participants

The European Regional Disability Summit saw over 1,000 registrations, underscoring the strong interest in this critical event. Approximately 350 participants attended in person, representing the entire European continent, including EU Member States, Eastern and Central European countries outside the EU, the Caucasus, and Central Asian nations bridging Europe and Central Asia. Additionally, the summit welcomed and engaged an online audience of 500 participants, further broadening its reach and impact.

Pre-Summit Objectives

The objectives of European Regional Disability Summit 2024 included:

1. Introduce the GDS2025 and explain its relevance for European international cooperation and humanitarian action (including disaster risk reduction)
2. Present findings from the European OPDs consultation
3. Discuss the key challenges and opportunities related to inclusive development for the greater European region
4. Use the Summit to discuss how global organisations and greater European region Member States can support implementation of global commitments on disability-inclusive development (across health, education, employment, humanitarian situations and civil society strengthening, including women's and girls' rights, etc.)
5. Rally for submission of joint pledges and commitments

Pre-Summit Outcomes

In the lead-up to GDS2025 and as part of the regional pre-summit, the broader disability rights movement in Europe and Central Asia calls on all partners—including national governments, NGOs, foundations, development agencies, and others—to consider the following priorities and recommendations on disability-inclusive international cooperation and humanitarian action as outlined by the disability rights movement in the region. **These priorities and recommendations should serve as a guide when preparing GDS2025 commitments.**

Priorities: Inclusive International Cooperation & Humanitarian Action

European international cooperation and humanitarian action face several urgent priorities, particularly in relation to external action (i.e. involvement in international affairs and relationship with foreign countries and international organisations) including engagement with neighbouring countries, and partnerships in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Ahead of the European Regional Disability Summit and during the summit itself, persons with disabilities, OPDs and inclusive-development partners within the region highlighted several **key priorities**. These priorities are listed below.

Addressing Inconsistencies and Hypocrisy in European UNCRPD Implementation and Cultural Change

- **Consistency in UNCRPD Implementation:** Europe must lead by example by fully implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) including the Optional Protocol within its own borders. Hypocrisy in Europe's promotion of disability rights abroad while failing to fully implement these rights at home undermines its credibility and effectiveness. For example, a

comprehensive EU internal **human rights strategy** should ensure human rights, including disability rights are prioritised in all EU's policies and actions.

- **Ableism:** While pushing for equal rights in other parts of the world, Europe must end ableism, the discrimination against persons with disabilities, at home and abroad.

Inclusive Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Action

- **Inclusive Development:** European international cooperation and humanitarian action must ensure disability-inclusive development principles and a human rights-based approach to disability. Official Development Assistance (ODA) and aid programmes must address the rights of persons with disabilities, not least through the greater resourcing of OPDs and disability leaders. This includes designing programmes from start to finish that are driven by the priorities of OPDs and persons with disabilities themselves and are accessible and inclusive of persons with disabilities in all their diversity. Investments in disability inclusive development programmes must be more carefully tracked, including the allocation of long-term funds to OPDs.
- **Promoting Disability Rights via a Twin-Track Approach:** Disability needs to become an integral part of all thematic issues across all sectors of development from design to implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes (mainstreaming). In addition, historical discrimination and exclusive structures in society requires **targeted interventions** with a primary focus on disability and the empowerment of persons with disabilities (second part of the Twin-Track Approach). Furthermore, the rights of persons with disabilities should be an integral part of political human rights and development dialogues among governments.

Sustainable Development and Environmental Resilience

- **Climate Change and Economic Diversification:** In Europe and partner countries alike, fostering sustainable development is crucial. This includes enhancing resilience to climate change, promoting economic diversification, and ensuring that development efforts are inclusive and equitable to all, including persons with disabilities. Any European international cooperation and humanitarian action activity related to addressing climate action must include the voices and rights of persons with disabilities and their OPDs.
- **Protection from Disasters:** Emergency preparedness and response plans must be inclusive of persons with disabilities, with specific protection protocols during conflicts, war and disasters including crises related to climate change. These plans

need to be developed with the active participation of persons with disabilities and their organisations.

Meaningful Participation, with More than a Seat at the Table

- **Local Leadership and OPD Engagement:** European international cooperation and humanitarian action policies and processes must promote local leadership by persons with disabilities and OPDs. OPDs from both **urban and rural** contexts including OPDs based in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia must be able to meaningfully participate and have a seat at decision-making tables. OPDs should also hold leadership roles in decision-making fora to ensure their rights are represented and addressed and that decisions are driven by the priorities of local people with disabilities and their OPDs. This also includes groups within the disability movement that are often underrepresented including youth and children, women, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons within institutionalised settings (that are at greater risk for (sexual) violence and abuse), members of the LGBTIQ+ community, older persons, persons with migration backgrounds and refugees. Providing comprehensive accessibility of information, processes, digital and physical environment is a key requirement for OPD engagement and participation.
- **Full Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities:** Implement measures to ensure persons with disabilities hold decision-making roles in all aspects of funding, programme development, and policy design related to European international cooperation and humanitarian action. This should cover all stages of the project cycle, from planning to evaluation. Persons with disabilities and their OPDs should have more direct involvement in funding decisions that put local priorities at the heart of resource allocation through mechanisms such as participatory grant making.

Deinstitutionalisation and Independent Living

- **Community-based Living:** Investing in community-based support services is essential to promote the right to independent living for persons with disabilities. European external action initiatives must avoid funding segregated settings like institutions, which would be in contradiction to the UNCRPD. Funding for services that support the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community and daily life, such as personal assistance, accessible health services, access to technical aids, accessible transportation, adapted housing, and sign language interpretation must be of the highest priority to support independent living.
- **Supported Decision-making:** Persons with disabilities have the right to make one's own decisions in life, including where and with whom to live. Support in the

community, such as supported decision-making mechanisms will allow the person to be fully included in society and to exercise their legal capacity.

- **Deinstitutionalisation as an Accession Requirement:** During the EU accession processes, particularly in countries like Ukraine, deinstitutionalisation should be a key reform area. This involves transitioning from institutional care to community-based services, including family support, ensuring that all individuals with disabilities, regardless of gender, age and disability type, can live independently.

Poverty Reduction

- **Inclusive Education:** European international cooperation must prioritise inclusive education strategies that actively support students and learners with disabilities. All education-related policies, programmes, and projects should be designed to ensure the meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities. Achieving this requires adopting learner-centred and individualised approaches, fostering a well-trained and inclusive teacher and administrative workforce, and implementing a multisectoral approach to education. These measures will help create equitable and accessible learning environments for all. Adequate funding for schools must also be provided to ensure students and learners with disabilities have access to accommodations and resources, such as braille printers.
- **Equal Employment Opportunities:** European international cooperation activities must support meaningful employment opportunities and decent work for persons with disabilities and must abstain from funding segregated employment of persons with disabilities such as sheltered workshops.
- **Disability-Inclusive Social Protection:** Social protection is crucial for persons with disabilities to address the systemic and persistent barriers that affect their lives and lead to higher levels of poverty. All international cooperation initiatives must be inclusive of persons with disabilities to reduce inequality and ensure the well-being of persons with disabilities across different income levels and in various challenging circumstances.
- **Stigma and Discrimination:** To reduce poverty and to ensure equal education and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, international cooperation activities must work in partnership with OPDs and local communities, to eliminate negative stigmas and end discrimination that often prevent persons with disabilities from enrolling in mainstream schools or obtaining employment in the open labour market.

Promoting Accessibility

- **Infrastructure, Technology and Information:** European international cooperation must continuously promote accessibility in all areas of life, including education,

health care, employment, technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI), communications (including media), information and public infrastructure. This includes providing financial resources and technical support for creating accessible environments and services, and the provision of reasonable accommodation.

- **Health Care Access:** Facilitate access to mainstream health care services that are tailored to meet the requirements of persons with disabilities, including the training of healthcare professionals to uphold the right to respectful care for persons with disabilities living with stigmatised or poorly understood long-term health conditions, and promote access to assistive devices.
- **Public Infrastructure:** Appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas is essential. European international cooperation must invest in accessible transportation, public spaces (including voting facilities), information and communication tools to eliminate barriers to mobility and participation in society.

Data Collection and Evidence-Based Policy

- **Improved Data Collection:** The collection of disaggregated data by disability, age and gender is crucial. Accurate and comprehensive data enables better understanding of the challenges faced by persons with disabilities, leading to more effective budgeting and resource allocation, ensuring that interventions are targeted and impactful.
- **The Washington Group Set of Questions:** To improve data collection, stakeholders should utilise the Washington Group Set of Questions in national surveys and data-gathering initiatives. This set of questions is designed to capture information on disability prevalence and the barriers persons with disabilities face, allowing for more reliable and consistent data that informs policy and resource allocation.
- **The OECD DAC Disability Policy Marker:** Encourage the use of the **OECD DAC** (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee) **Disability Policy Marker** in monitoring and evaluation processes to assess and track disability inclusion in European international cooperation and humanitarian action projects. Explore the creation of a new Purpose Marker specifically for tracking the allocation to, and use of funds by, OPDs.

Advocacy and Capacity Building

- **Support for and Resourcing of OPDs:** Increasing capacity-building and funding opportunities for OPDs is vital. OPDs play a crucial role in advocating for and advancing the rights of persons with disabilities and ensuring that policies and legislation are rights-based and inclusive. Funding for OPDs must increase and should be more accessible, longer-term, and more flexible so that it can be used in response to OPDs' own priorities, including for strengthening the capacity and sustainability of organisations and disability movements. Official Development Assistance to **projects targeting persons with disabilities**, particularly those led by or in genuine partnership with OPDs, **must be increased**.
- **Best Practices:** European international cooperation should prioritise the sharing of best practices and experiences in advancing disability rights. This includes mentorship, study visits, and other forms of knowledge exchange that can empower disability rights leaders in neighbouring countries, the Caucasus, Central Asia and other partner countries.
- **Legal Capacity and Representation:** Ensuring that persons with disabilities across the globe have legal capacity, can make decisions about their own lives and have opportunities to participate in political and advocacy processes is essential. This includes ensuring accessibility to voting and other forms of civic participation, as well as supporting persons with disabilities in advocacy efforts.
- **Participation by Youth and Children:** Prioritising youth involvement in the disability movement is essential for fostering future leaders. Increased, and more flexible, funding for youth-led OPDs is critical to the success of this strategy. Building the capacity of young advocates, particularly those with disabilities, based on their expressed capacity-building needs, is necessary to improve their understanding of issues like governance structures, effective advocacy strategies, and the UNCRPD.

Gender and Intersectionality

- **Marginalised Groups:** European international cooperation should prioritise the rights of the most marginalised groups, including women and girls with disabilities, deafblind persons, persons with disabilities living in rural communities, persons with psychosocial disabilities, refugees and migrants with disabilities, indigenous persons, members of the LGBTIQ+ community, older persons and linguistic minorities. Intersectional approaches that consider multiple forms of discrimination are necessary to ensure inclusive development, which is also why development cooperation must include a **targeted approach**, including greater resourcing of OPDs who represent and work directly with marginalised groups.

- **Gender-Based Violence and Reproductive Rights:** Addressing gender-based violence and ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights for persons with disabilities are urgent priorities. This includes creating safe spaces, access to justice, and comprehensive support services. European international cooperation cannot overlook women and girls with disabilities in these discussions.
- **Deaf Communities:** Deaf individuals often face significant barriers due to language and accessibility issues. International efforts should focus on promoting Sign Language acquisition for all, early intervention for deaf children and their families, and the recognition of national sign languages. For example, to promote the inclusion of Deaf communities States should: mandate the teaching of national sign languages (e.g., LSM) as a compulsory subject in all primary and secondary schools; provide free and accessible sign language courses for adults who did not learn it in school, utilising a variety of learning modalities (online, in-person, etc.); ensure all educational materials and assessments are available in sign language and invest in the training and certification of qualified sign language interpreters.

Recommendations: Inclusive International Cooperation & Humanitarian Action

Based on the above-mentioned urgent priorities related to disability-inclusive development, international cooperation and humanitarian action, persons with disabilities and OPDs, wish to highlight the following 10 recommendations to ensure the **future of Disability-Inclusive European International Cooperation and Humanitarian Action:**

- 1. Advocate for Consistency in Disability Rights Implementation:** Address the inconsistency and hypocrisy in Europe's promotion of human rights abroad by ensuring human rights for all, including disability rights and full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities within the region by adopting an EU internal human rights strategy. Lead by example in ending ableism, disability discrimination, and promoting equal rights both domestically and internationally.
- 2. Mainstream Disability Inclusion in Development Cooperation:** Fully incorporate inclusive development practices and a rights-based approach across all European international cooperation and humanitarian action activities. This includes ensuring that disability rights are embedded from the design to the implementation and evaluation of all programmes, policies and projects.
- 3. Promote Local Leadership and OPD Participation:** Strengthen the participation and leadership of OPDs from both urban and rural areas in decision-making processes. Ensure that OPDs have meaningful involvement in decision-making

about planning, implementation, and monitoring of development cooperation and humanitarian initiatives.

- 4. Increase Funding for OPDs and Disability Rights Movements:** Increase funding for OPDs and ensure it is more accessible, long-term, and more flexible so that it can be used in response to **OPDs' own priorities**, including financial, administrative and human resources capacities of OPDs and for strengthening the capacity and sustainability of organisations and disability movements. Further, persons with disabilities and their OPDs should have more direct involvement in funding decisions that put local priorities at the heart of resource allocation through mechanisms such as participatory grant-making.
- 5. Strengthen Protection Mechanisms for Persons with Disabilities in Conflict Zones and Humanitarian Crises including Climate Action:** Increase funding for programmes that prioritise the safety and rights of persons with disabilities in conflict zones, humanitarian crises and natural disasters including climate action. Ensure OPDs are actively involved in the design and implementation of these programmes, particularly in creating accessible early warning systems, emergency response strategies, disaster risk reduction, support services (including mental health services) and climate action strategies.
- 6. Support Deinstitutionalisation and Independent Living:** Allocate resources to promote community-based services and family support over institutional care, particularly in the context of EU accession processes. Prioritise deinstitutionalisation as a key reform area, focusing community-based living, having the right to make one's own decision and being support in making these decisions, including deciding where and with whom to live.
- 7. Advance Inclusive Education and Employment:** Ensure that all education and employment initiatives funded by European international cooperation are fully inclusive of persons with disabilities, and that no EU funding is used to build segregated education facilities. This includes supporting inclusive mainstream education systems, including training teachers and all relevant professionals regarding disability rights and promoting equal employment opportunities through accessible workplaces in the open labour market, while also guaranteeing non-discrimination against persons with disabilities.
- 8. Promote Accessibility, Safety and Acceptance in All Sectors:** Fund and implement initiatives that ensure accessibility in transportation, education, health care including mental health, employment, technology, public infrastructure, climate action and other critical areas. This includes both physical accessibility and digital inclusion. Ensure State guarantees for the safety of accessible spaces

created for persons with disabilities during the implementation of programmes, policies, and projects.

- 9. Enhance Data Collection for Evidence-Based Policy:** Improve the collection and use of disaggregated data by disability, gender, and age. This data is essential for informed policymaking, effective resource allocation, and the monitoring of progress toward disability inclusion. To ensure efficient and comparable data collection on disability, States should consider developing harmonised data collection protocols and guidelines based on the Washington Group Set of Questions to ensure consistency across data collection methods, establish a central repository for standardised disability data across all States, and invest in data management training for data collectors and analysts.
- 10. Implement Gender and Intersectionality Approaches:** Prioritise the rights of marginalised groups by incorporating intersectional approaches in all policies and programmes. Address gender-based violence, coercion, reproductive rights, and promote the recognition of national sign languages.