

EASPD REPORT ON THE UN CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS ON THE EU REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CRPD

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1. Introduction

How to read this report

This report aims at giving EASPD's inputs on the Concluding Observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to the EU report on the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities¹.

EASPD fully endorses all recommendations listed in the Concluding Observations, but the focus of this report is on the recommendations that are of particular relevance for the support services sector for persons with disabilities that EASPD represents.

The UN recommendations considered in section 2 are reported with the same coding of the UN Concluding Observations report² and are followed by EASPD's analysis and recommendations.

Who is EASPD

[EASPD](#) (European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities) is a European NGO network representing over 11,000 social and health support provider organisations across Europe and across disabilities. Its objective is to promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities through effective and high-quality service systems. We work towards ensuring the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) and we are accredited to the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD.

¹ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/226/55/PDF/G1522655.pdf?OpenElement>

² See footnote 1



Support service provision

Support service provision in the disability sector has been undergoing substantial changes over the past years, and many services that were set up according to the medical-based approach to disability are currently moving away from this model towards the social rights model introduced by the UN CRPD whereby needs and preferences of the individual are at the core of the attitude towards disability. These fundamental changes in the services' design and delivery are clearly yet to be fully accomplished in the policy and in the practice and they represent the challenge for the service provision of tomorrow as well as for policy makers at EU and national level.

Disability support services currently employ 8 million professionals who may represent a lever for change in the sector and are key players in the process of transition towards the human rights based model introduced by the Convention. Training of disability leaders and staff in support services is essential if we are to provide the correct support to persons with disabilities.

The role of the European Union

The role of the European Union in the implementation of the Convention is made complex by the share of legislative competences with its Member States. The provision of support services is not specifically a competence of the European Union; however, the European Union, having committed to implement the UN CRPD, can fulfil its obligations from three angles:

- The regulatory frameworks (e.g. the European Semester, Fiscal consolidation measures, the European Structural and Investment Funds, the Research and Innovation Agenda, the State Aid Regulation, Public Procurement Directive, etc.)
- The funding streams made available to attain the objectives of the European Union.
- The European institutions internal functioning.

Support services are often challenged in their facilitating role to promote the implementation of the Convention due to the multi-layered structure that governs their set up, development and funding both at national and European level.

The role of the European Semester

The European Semester is the leading instrument used by the European Commission and Member States to achieve the Europe 2020 strategy and the Stability and Growth Pact. Its overall objective is to coordinate Member State economic policies towards achieving the EU's targets in these areas. In response to criticisms over the too strong focus on fiscal consolidation policies harming the achievement of Europe 2020 targets, the European Commission claims to be rebalancing the Union's economic governance so that social considerations are equal to economic ones. Ms Thyssen, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, has recently reaffirmed this intention by stating that the Semester will aim to promote "investment in people" over the next few years. Implementing the UN CRPD is precisely about investing in people. By promoting policies touching issues such as employment and education support for disadvantaged groups and efficiency gains in public expenditure (often leading to cuts to social expenditure), the European Semester has already been affecting the implementation of the UN CRPD in Europe; sometimes positively, other times negatively.

Whereas it is true that disability specific policies alone will not lead to the implementation of the UN CRPD, to mainstream disability in general policies without also giving due consideration to the additional needs and specificities of many persons with disabilities will equally fail in implementing the Convention. The approach currently included in the European Semester fails to really bring in a disability perspective in most if not all documents; not only in the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs), but also in the more elaborate texts including the Country Reports and the National Reform Plan (NRPs). For other disadvantaged groups (Migrants, older workers, etc.), it is considered necessary to mention them explicitly, in addition to mainstreaming their perspective in all policy recommendations. This should also be the case for persons with disabilities.

The European Semester does have a stronger impact on the lives of persons with disabilities, their families and support providers than it may seem. When the European Commission recommends cuts to public expenditure or efforts towards more efficiency to Member States, it has been demonstrated³ that this often leads to cuts to welfare benefits and

³ [European Foundation Centre \(2012\): Assessing the impact of European governments' austerity plans on the rights of people with disabilities.](#)



support services for persons with disabilities; thus contributing to increasing numbers of people with disabilities losing their jobs, income support and access to fundamental services. Similarly, the European Semester does not only focus on economic issues, but also in other areas having a strong impact on the lives of disadvantaged groups, including persons with disabilities: employment, education, healthcare, care services. EASPD believes the European Semester to be a highly pertinent tool to implement the UN CRPD and in particular in recommending the development of high quality support systems in the areas of employment, education and independent living.

The specific role the European Semester can play in the implementation of the Convention is further developed in the pages below.

2. How can the European Union fulfil the recommendations received by the UN

A. General principles and obligations (arts. 1–4)

- 11. The Committee recommends that the European Union implement the mid-term assessment of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, and establish clear guidelines on the inclusion of these concluding observations with clear benchmarks and indicators, in close consultation with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.**

EASPD is concerned about the fact that no further implementation plan for the European Disability Strategy is foreseen for the second phase of the Strategy (2016-2020) and recommends the Commission to adopt a work-plan detailing the actions foreseen to fulfil the Strategy.

In addition as the current strategy does not embed a thorough support dimension which is indispensable for the enjoyment for rights, especially for persons with severe and profound disabilities, EASPD recommends to include in the policy-planning in the disability sector a stronger accent on the role support services play in the areas of employment, education and independent living. The current over-focus of the Strategy on the accessibility of mainstream services may indeed have a negative influence on national policy making in the disability field, by giving the wrong perception that support services may not be required.

Moreover, to ensure the strategy has a positive impact on the lives of persons with disabilities through the development of adequate support services, it is crucial for the Strategy to have a social investment dimension against fiscal consolidation measures.

B. Specific rights (arts. 5–30)

Accessibility (art. 9)

- 29. The Committee recommends that the European Union take efficient measures for prompt adoption of an amended European Accessibility Act that is aligned to the Convention, as elaborated in the Committee’s General comment No. 2 (2014) on accessibility, including effective and accessible enforcement and complaint mechanisms. It further recommends that the European Union ensure participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organisations, in the process of adoption of the Act.**

EASPD welcomes the “Proposal of the European Parliament and of the Council on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Members States as regards the accessibility requirements for products and services”, however it regrets the limited scope of action to goods and services in the ICT and mobile technology.

Additional actions that can promote the right to accessibility need to be taken by the European Union if Article 9 is to be implemented. Often indeed obstacles to full participation are not only



represented by the physical environment, transportation and ICT, but also by the inaccessibility of human support (services, facilities and adequate support) and technical aids, as well as the availability of alternative communication systems (e.g. easy-to-read language, Braille, sign language, etc.).

The role of social and health support services in working with persons with disabilities to overcome barriers should be stressed. The concept of accessibility should be holistic, covering all aspects of life – including human support – and not only access to goods and services. It must apply to all persons with disabilities, including persons with intellectual disabilities, mental health problems and persons with high support needs.

Accessibility legislation should take into account the fact that different types of disability can be related to different needs. To this end all dispositions included in accessibility legislation should be detailed enough to avoid misinterpretation against any category of persons with disabilities.

Equal recognition before the law (art. 12)

37. The Committee recommends that the European Union take appropriate measures to ensure that all persons with disabilities deprived of their legal capacity can exercise all the rights enshrined in European Union treaties and in European Union legislation such as on access to justice, to goods and services, including banking and employment, and to healthcare, as well as voting and consumer rights, in line with the Convention, as elaborated in the Committee’s general comment No. 1 (2014) on equal recognition before the law. It further recommends that the European Union step up efforts to foster research, data collection and exchange of good practices on supported decision-making in consultation with representative organisations of persons with disabilities.

The European Union does not have specific competence on Article 12, however, given its central relevance for the implementation of many other articles of the Convention, it is essential for the EU to use its means to support the Member States. The promotion of supported decision making mechanisms in line with the Convention requires the raise of awareness, the collection and the exchange of models of good practice and the provision of training to staff in the judiciary at European and national level.

Living independently and being included in the community (art. 19)

51. The Committee recommends that the European Union develop an approach to guide and foster deinstitutionalisation, to strengthen the monitoring of the use of ESI Funds - to ensure they are being used strictly for the development of support services for persons with disabilities in local communities and not the re-development or expansion of institutions. It further recommends that the European Union suspend, withdraw and recover payments if the obligation to respect fundamental rights is breached.

The European Union has strengthened the legal framework of the Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) for the 2014-2020 period by introducing ex ante conditionalities. Partnership Agreements between the European Union and Member States regulate the use and the implementation of the funds. It is essential for the EU to implement stronger monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to prevent misuse of funds and implement real opportunities for the enjoyment of human rights.

The EU could also strengthen its commitment on this issue by delivering a specific Communication on the transition from segregating-institutional settings to community-based ones and to mark the change required in the design and delivery of service provision and the engagement needed at all levels across sectors.



Role of the European Semester

Over the past few years, there have been some positive steps in the European Semester to strengthen the development of community-based settings and services. Nonetheless, the European Commission may even –at times- be harming the transition to community-based services when providing recommendations related to health, hospital and/or long-term/elderly care. As confirmed by the European federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU, 2015), most of the 19 Member States receiving recommendations in this area place emphasis on improving “cost-effectiveness” and “sustainability”; which if not accompanied with additional details could lead to the (re)development of institutions.

The European Semester should therefore better integrate in its mechanisms the key issues related to the implementation of Article 19 by, for example:

- including in the National Reform Programmes and in the Country Reports a specific section on the policies put in place to promote the transition to and the development of Community-based care with a view to implement article 19 of the UNCRPD. The Country Specific Recommendations should take this section into account when presenting recommendations having an impact in this area.
- involving relevant stakeholders representing the different actors of society – including the users in the assessment and monitoring of the situation at national level. This should happen both at European and national level.

Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information (art. 21)

55. The Committee recommends that the European Union take measures and enforce the implementation of its legislation on access to information and communication to facilitate access in accessible languages, formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities, including in sign languages, Braille, augmentative and alternative communication, and other accessible means, modes and formats of communication of their choice, including easy-to-read formats, for all persons with all types of disabilities and to promote official recognition of sign language and braille.

The European Commission has proposed various initiatives for the accessibility of e-communications and digital technologies. However, with regard to information and communication technologies, many institutional and public websites of the EU continue to be inaccessible in alternative formats. EU institutional, information and communication websites and tools, do not all yet comply with accessibility standards.

Respect for home and the family (art. 23)

59. The Committee recommends that the European Union ensure that people with disabilities and families of persons with disabilities be included in the newly announced roadmap "New start to address the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families".

Over 80% of people of professionals in the social support/care services sector are women. This is similar in informal care/support activities. This leads to unequal access to employment, education and training opportunities between men and women in Europe. To change this, several key issues must be tackled: poor flexibility in working hours, poor work-life balance, difficulties in returning to the workforce after childbirth due to difficulties in balancing work and family duties, a gender wage gap that exists in all Member States (and is higher than the average economy gender wage gap), important amount of part-time contracts, in-work poverty and the lack of attractiveness of care/support professions for the entire population. To improve working conditions in the sector, it is important to develop social dialogue structures in the social care and support services sector at both national and European level to adequately respond to developing challenges; including the gender



imbalance. Undeclared work in social and healthcare represents another important European employment issue. The single most important root cause for the increase in waiting lists for quality services is the cuts to social expenditure on social and health care activities. Any proposal must tackle this issue.

Education (art. 24)

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61. The Committee recommends that the European Union evaluate the current situation, and take measures to facilitate access to, and enjoyment of, inclusive quality education for all students with disabilities in line with the Convention, and include disability-specific indicators in the Europe 2020 Strategy when pursuing the target on education.

Persons with disabilities remain a disadvantaged group severely excluded from mainstream education systems; thus often resulting in further poverty and social exclusion. A good example of how disabled people are only too often ignored in the European Semester's work on developing education systems is the European Commission's thematic fiche on early leavers from education and training⁴. This fiche does not even mention the fact that many persons with disabilities are not in mainstream education settings and that they are amongst those who leave school at the earliest stage and at the highest rates.

The exclusion of persons with disabilities from any discussion on inclusive education settings is detrimental to the achievement of Europe's long-term strategies.

Role of the European Semester

The European Semester has – at times – recognised the importance of creating inclusive education systems. Nonetheless, throughout nearly all if not most Country Specific Recommendations, Country Reports and National Reform Plans, the disability perspective in developing inclusive education systems was not brought up. Although the European Commission and Member States are right to take more steps to further the inclusion of disadvantaged groups such as migrants and Roma people, people with disabilities remain a disadvantaged group severely excluded from mainstream education systems; thus often resulting in further poverty and social exclusion. A good example of how disabled people are only too often ignored in the European Semester's work on developing education systems is the European Commission's thematic fiche on early leavers from education and training. This fiche does not even mention the fact that many persons with disabilities are not in mainstream education settings and that they are amongst those who leave school at the earliest stage and at the highest rates.

The exclusion of persons with disabilities from any discussion on inclusive education settings is detrimental to the achievement of Europe's long-term strategies.

The National Reform Programmes and Country Reports should include a section on the policies put in place to promote inclusive education, with specific segment on access to education for persons with disabilities, in line with the recommendation to the European Union made by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Country Specific Recommendations should reflect the outcome of these segments.

The sections should reflect what is done at national level in the following areas:

- Development of a clear policy framework and legislation promoting inclusive education, in co-operation with person with special needs, families, education providers and other stakeholders
- Allocation of sufficient financial support for mainstream education settings to provide inclusive environments
- Adaptation of national standards to allow the development of curricula with a universal design
- Support for the transition of students with special educational needs towards the labour market

⁴ [European Commission : Thematic Fiche on Early Leavers from Education and Training. \(2015\)](#)



- Data collection on the incidence, effectiveness and comparative costs of inclusive and segregated education

- Insertion of inclusive education training in the teacher training system

Both the European Commission and Member States must involve relevant stakeholders to assess the situation at national level. At European level, in addition to education stakeholders, the European Disabled People's Organisations and EASPD should be included in the development of segments on inclusive education. The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education should be an important stakeholder in this process.

It is also essential that the sections include a specific analysis on issues related to staff working in the education support sector. This includes: looking at staff shortages, valorization of staff, improving the attractiveness of the sector, training and retraining of staff.

Health (art. 25)

63. The Committee recommends that the European Union explicitly prohibit disability-based discrimination in the field of health care and take measures to ensure access to quality health care for all persons with all types of disabilities. It further recommends that the European Union evaluate the impact of its Cross-Border Healthcare Directive with regard to gaps in access for persons with disabilities, including accessible information, reasonable accommodation and training of professionals.

Access to healthcare services by persons with disabilities is often jeopardised by inaccessibility of services and lack of skills to deal with persons with disabilities. The EU can play a role in raising awareness and promoting training opportunities for health care professionals across countries to improve the delivery of services in the healthcare sector according to a human rights framework.

Work and employment (art. 27)

65. The Committee recommends that the European Union take effective actions to measure the employment of persons with disabilities and to increase their employment rate in open labour market, including by providing training for Member States on reasonable accommodation and accessibility in the context of employment.

According to Eurostat⁵, the employment rate of people with "basic activity difficulties" in the EU 28 in 2011 was 47.3%, almost 20% below that of people without such additional support needs. EASPD remarks that the rate of people with disabilities employed is far lower than what is presented by Eurostat due to the fact that it does not include those considered as "unable to work". Disabled people are two to three times more likely to be unemployed for longer periods and face higher risks of losing their jobs than non-disabled people. EASPD views the employment rates of persons with disabilities as close to 20%, a number also presented by the European Disability Forum. Whilst there is very little data on the employment rates of persons with disabilities since then, it is assumed by the International Labour Organisation that the rates have been disproportionately affected since the onset of the crisis.

The possibilities for work and employment for persons with disabilities, especially persons with severe disabilities, often depend on the amount of (specialised) support available to them (i.e. human support, vocational education and training and technical adaptations, such as reasonable accommodation) and on the existence of support available for employers too (i.e. compensation measures against the potential loss in productivity and/or guidance on how to deal with technical and human support issues linked to persons with disabilities).

⁵ Eurostat : Disability Statistics – labour market access (July 2014)



Role of the European Semester

The European Semester is already quite active in aiming to address labour market exclusion with the European Commission recommending to several Member States earlier this year to develop additional support measures for the unemployed.

The European Commission's thematic fiche for Active labour Market Policies⁶ also rather adequately covers several issues related to barriers to the labour market for disadvantaged groups; including several references to persons with disabilities. The thematic fiche on Employment incentives⁷ also includes several references to disadvantaged groups although nothing specifically for persons with disabilities.

Yet, similarly to with education, the European Semester does not prioritise tackling the unemployment rates of persons with disabilities; even when doing so is so essential to achieving Europe's long-term strategies. Whereas other disadvantaged groups such as women, migrants and roma are often directly referred to within the Semester documents (CSRs, NRPs, Country Reports), this is not the case for persons with disabilities. As mentioned earlier, mainstreaming disability into general policies should not mean that they are no longer a disadvantaged group severely hit by unemployment.

The European Commission has taken a commendable first approach at European level towards tackling long-term unemployment with a solid holistic Recommendation⁸. EASPD recommends that the European Commission and Member States include an assessment of how the measures put forward in the Recommendation are implemented in the National Reform Plans and in the Country Reports. Each assessment should look into the following areas of employment support:

- Stakeholder cooperation. Levels of participation and commitment of all relevant stakeholders as well as localized social service provision.
- Targeted actions. Extent of individualised approach, decent working conditions and career paths.
- Availability of support. Development of coherent legislation and funding systems and promotion of supported employment agencies throughout Europe.
- Research. Support research to better understand the reasons of unemployment, develop detailed unemployment statistics and analysis for disadvantaged groups.

It is also essential to carry out a specific analysis on issues related to staff working in the work and employment related support services sector. This includes: looking at staff shortages, valorization of staff, improving the attractiveness of the sector, training and retraining of staff.

In particular, EASPD wishes to recommend the European Commission to integrate its assessment on the employment support structures at national level into the European Semester process. In the assessment, the European Commission believes the following support structures should be strengthened at national level.

The European Union should therefore approach the employment issues faced by persons with disabilities by proposing a holistic approach that looks at inclusive and supportive environments. Too often, indeed, only single instruments such as the Youth Guarantee are provided, which do not look at the specificity of the needs of persons with disabilities and which do not serve the end objective of realising inclusive communities where the right to work is implemented and enjoyed by persons with disabilities.

⁶ [European Commission : Thematic Fiche on Active Labour Market Policies](#)

⁷ [European Commission : Thematic Fiche on Employment Incentives](#)



Adequate standard of living and social protection (art. 28)

- 67. The Committee recommends that the European Union take urgent measures, in cooperation with its Member States and representative organisations of persons with disabilities, to prevent further adverse and retrogressive effect of austerity measures on the adequate standard of living of persons with disabilities, including by the provision of a minimum social protection floor.**

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Role of the European Semester

It is clear that the European Semester has not prioritized the implementation of the UN CRPD. Too little attention is given to disability issues within the European Semester documents; be it the Annual Growth Survey, the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs), the Country Reports and the National Reform Programmes (NRPs).

It could be argued that the European Semester does not focus on disability because it focuses primarily on macro-economic issues and therefore has very little impact on the lives of Persons with Disabilities, their families and support providers. This is clearly a misunderstanding. When the European Commission recommends cuts to public expenditure or efforts towards more efficiency to Member States, it has been demonstrated that this often leads to cuts to welfare benefits and support services for persons with disabilities; thus contributing to increasing numbers of people with disabilities losing their jobs, income support and access to fundamental services. Similarly, the European Semester does not only focus on economic issues, but also in other areas having a strong impact on the lives of disadvantaged groups, including persons with disabilities: employment, education, healthcare, care services. EASPD believes the European Semester to be a highly pertinent tool to implement the UN CRPD and in particular in recommending the development of high quality support systems in the areas of employment, education and independent living.

C. Specific obligations (arts. 31–33)

Statistics and data collection (art. 31)

- 73 The Committee recommends that the European Union develop a human rights–based indicators system in cooperation with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, as well as a comparable comprehensive data collection system, with data disaggregated by gender, age, rural/urban population and impairment type.**

Despite relevant initiatives such as ANED and cooperation with EU agencies such as FRA and Eurobarometer, there is still a major gap on data statistics and collection to identify the situation of persons with disabilities within the EU. In order to best tackle this issue, EASPD recommends the following:

- Use CRPD terminology when it comes to definitions and carry out research wherever definitions are not concordant across Member States.
- Use accessible tools and methodologies in the collection of data so as to reach out also to people that are traditionally excluded such as persons with disabilities living in institutions, persons with intellectual disabilities, and persons who do not communicate through verbal speech.

National implementation and monitoring (art. 33)

- 77. The Committee recommends that the European Union take measures to decouple the European Commission’s roles - by its removal from the independent monitoring framework - to ensure full compliance with the Paris principles, and that the latter**



has adequate resources to perform its functions. It further recommends that the European Union consider the establishment of an inter-institutional coordination mechanism and designation of focal points in each EU institution, agency and body.

EASPD welcomes the withdrawal of the European Commission from the independent monitoring framework; however we regret that the current composition of the Framework still does not reflect a pluralistic participation of different civil society organisations as according to the Paris Principles.

The Paris Principles provide that the composition of NHRIs should ensure “the pluralist representation of the social forces (of civilian society) involved in the promotion and protection of human rights”. They also mention a series of categories who should be involved in the work of NHRIs:

- a) Non-governmental organisations responsible for human rights and efforts to combat racial discrimination, trade unions, concerned social and professional organisations;
- b) Trends in philosophical or religious thought;
- c) Universities and qualified experts;
- d) Parliament;
- e) Government departments (if these are included, their representatives should participate in the deliberations only in an advisory capacity).

D. EU Institutions compliance with the Convention (as public administrations)

Equality and non-discrimination (art. 5)

79. The Committee recommends that the European Union take necessary measures to ensure that all employees of the European Union who are persons with disabilities, or have family members with disabilities, receive the reasonable accommodation they need to enjoy their rights from the labour and related relationships on an equal basis with others.

EASPD recommends the European Union to raise awareness and to put in place a stronger monitoring mechanism of the implementation of Directive 2000/78/EC for both employers and employees.

Education (art. 24)

85. The Committee recommends that the European Union take necessary measures to ensure that all students with disabilities receive the reasonable accommodation they need to enjoy their right to inclusive quality education in European Schools. It recommends European Schools to implement a no-rejection policy based on disability and ensure quality inclusive education for all students with disabilities.

EASPD believes the European Union should strengthen its potential leading role in paving the way to inclusive education systems. In this regard there are 2 main actions that the EU could take:

- the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education should further align its mandate to the principles enshrined in the UN CRPD and ensure implementation of the findings as currently the Agency provides policy recommendations without giving clear inputs and commitments on how to implement them.
- the EU should work towards ensuring fully inclusive education systems for family members of EU civil servants attending European schools within its services, regardless of the type of disability and support needed.



Work and employment (Art.27)

89. The Committee recommends that the European Union increase employment of persons with disabilities across all European Union institutions.

The EU institutions lack sufficient support structures for staff members who have a disability and for their family members. Only a very small percentage of persons with disabilities are employed within the EU institutions, with an over representation within that group of persons with physical disabilities. The European Union currently does not have a specialised service for the employment of persons with disabilities, nor any specific policy addressing this issue within its bodies.

Stronger leadership should be taken by European institutions to trigger positive developments across the Member States, therefore we recommend the set-up of a supported employment agency within its institutions to provide the needed supported to potential employees with disabilities applying for a career in the EU as well as to provide guidance to all Member States.

References

- EASPD Alternative Report on the implementation of the UN CRPD by the European Union: http://www.easpd.eu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/easpd_alternative_report_en_final_1.pdf
- EASPD report: "[How the European Semester can help to implement the UN CRPD](#)"
- EASPD Position Paper "[Service Provision to Tackle Long-Term Unemployment](#)"

Note to editors

The European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities is a non-profit European umbrella organization, established in 1996, and currently representing over 11.000 social and health services for persons with disabilities. EASPD advocates effective and high-quality disability-related services in the field of education, employment and individualised support, in line with the UN CRPD principles, which could bring benefits not only to persons with disabilities, but to society as a whole. EASPD is accredited to the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD.

Contacts

Luk Zelderloo

Secretary General

T. +32 2 282 46 10

luk.zelderloo@easpd.eu

www.easpd.eu



Sabrina Ferraina

Policy Manager

T. +32 2 282 46 15

sabrina.ferraina@easpd.eu

www.easpd.eu

