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Contribution of the Council of Europe

RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Council of Europe work in the disability field lies within the anti-discrimination and human rights framework and seeks to enhance independence, freedom of choice and the quality of life of people with disabilities, and to raise awareness of disability as a part of human diversity.

In 2013, two Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers were adopted targeting the priority areas selected by the Committee of Experts on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CS-RPD), i.e. the Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)2 on ensuring full inclusion of children and young persons with disabilities into society, and Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)3 on ensuring full, equal and effective participation of persons with disabilities in culture, sports, tourism and leisure activities.

The subjects, dealt with in these Recommendations are also considered in the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015 (Recommendation Rec(2006)5) – Organisation's comprehensive legal instrument on the rights of people with disabilities, covering all areas of life of people concerned.

The new Recommendations elaborate further on the issues and present political frameworks for the national stakeholders, supporting and underpinning the member States in developing initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life of people with disabilities.

The first document is accompanied by a Report "Social inclusion of children and young people with disabilities" drafted by a Council of Europe Consultant, Mr. Helmut HEINEN (Belgium), already published and available in English and French. German and Russian versions will follow soon.

Mr. Damjan TATIC (Serbia), Council of Europe Consultant, who is also a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, has prepared a draft study on access for persons with disabilities to culture,

tourism, sports and leisure activities: towards meaningful and enriching participation, it will be issued in the nearest future.

Currently, the newly established Committee of Experts on the Rights of People with Disabilities (DECS-RPD) is working on the post-2015 Council of Europe strategy, with a view to give a follow-up to the Disability Action Plan 2006-2015, after the end of its term. The important part of this work is in assessing the progress achieved during the Plan's implementation period and identifying gaps and biggest challenges to be addressed by 2020 to keep up with the times in the rapidly changing European societies.

Apart from the work on development of legal instruments and publications the Council of Europe promotes the rights of people with disabilities by carrying out assistance activities in its members States based on the principles of the Disability Action Plan and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) with a view to raise awareness of the national stakeholders of the human rights-based approach to disability and to increase their capacity to implement international legal documents. It is also proposing to member States willing to introduce into every day practice a training course, which is aimed at the front row social workers and professional carers, starting out in the sector of social and health care. The training course uses the social model and human-rights based approach to disability advocated by the CoE Disability Action Plan 2006-2015 and UN CRPD.

Women and girls with disabilities

Within the frame of the Council of Europe programme "Promoting Human Rights – Equality and Diversity" and following on the findings of the 2010 Mid-term review report on the national implementation of the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015 , the Council of Europe has worked in more detail on the Plan's cross-cutting aspect concerning women and girls with disabilities.

Despite the fact that in most European countries the principles of equality of all citizens before the law and non-discrimination on the grounds of gender and/or disability in all aspects of life are clearly stated in national constitutions, women and girls with disabilities still remain at considerably higher risk of multiple discrimination or disadvantage than men with disabilities or non-disabled women or girls. They can and often face multiple obstacles to participation in society due to twofold discrimination, namely on combined grounds of both gender and disability.

On 13 June 2012, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted its Recommendation to member states on the protection and promotion of the rights of women and girls with disabilities (Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)6).

The Recommendation tackles the issue in the following 11 chapters:

1) Equality and non-discrimination legislation; 2) Research, data, statistics; 3) Participation in political and public life as well as decision-making; 4) Education and training; 5) Employment and economic situation; 6) Health care and rehabilitation; 7) Access to social protection and community-based social services; 8) Sexual and reproductive rights, motherhood, and family life; 9) Access to justice and protection from violence and abuse; 10) Participation in culture, sport, leisure and tourism; 11) Raising awareness and changing attitudes.

All member States should implement the provisions contained therein, taking account of the special situation and requirements of women and girls with disabilities, not only when elaborating disability legislation and policies but also when generally promoting and fostering gender equality.