



OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Conference

Warsaw, 24 September – 5 October 2012

Working session 9: Tolerance and non-discrimination

Contribution of the Council of Europe

Protecting and promoting the rights of 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 recently 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.

Consequently, the Council of Europe set up a committee, consisting of experts from 11 Council of Europe member states and representatives of European disabled people’s organisations (DPOs), tasked with the elaboration of recommendations that would address this issue.

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.

Awareness-raising activities will take place in some Council of Europe member states during the next 2 years.

A report that will accompany the Recommendation and further explain or illustrate its provisions is currently being prepared for publication.