

FIRST DISABILITY HIGH LEVEL GROUP REPORT
ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN CONVENTION
ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



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The information enclosed in this Report is prepared on the basis of replies to the questionnaire received from all Member States¹ and various non governmental stakeholders².

The first three chapters summarise the information received on the state of play of the process of ratification and implementation of the UN Convention, including explanation of various procedures, mechanisms that have been set up, pointing out responsible authorities and giving an overview of various actions undertaken on different levels. These chapters can help to identify good practices. For this purpose the relevant Member State/stakeholder's name at the beginning of each paragraph is underlined.

These chapters are complemented by three annexes with practical, detailed information. Annex 1 presents in a table a state of signatures and ratifications/conclusion of the UN Convention and the Optional Protocol by the Member States and the Community. Annex 2 lists details of identified responsible authorities, focal points, coordination mechanisms and contact points. Annex 3 provides links to websites where more information on the UN Convention can be found, including national translations of the text of the UN Convention and the Optional Protocol.

The fourth chapter is also based on all replies received and presents common challenges and provides ideas for solutions that might be considered at various stages of the implementation of the UN Convention.

¹ AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT,LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK, SI, UK

² BDF, CERMI, CSNPH, EASPD, EDF, EPR, Estonian National Council of People with Disabilities, Malta Federation of Organisations of People with Disability (MFOPD), NDA

1. State of play on signature and ratification of the Convention and Optional Protocol in Member States

On 30 March 2007, the day of opening for signature, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was signed by the European Community and twenty two Member States. Fifteen of those Member States also signed the Optional Protocol. As of February 2008 the UN Convention had been signed by the European Community and twenty six of its Member States. Latvia, which has not yet signed the Convention, has confirmed that it will do so and that there are no problems of substance. Three Member States, Hungary, Spain and Slovenia have already ratified the Convention and its Optional Protocol.

Only Cyprus and Romania expressed their intention to ratify the Convention and its Optional Protocol before May 2008 and the United Kingdom plans ratifying the UN Convention before the end of 2008. For detailed information, please refer to the Annex 1.

The ratification procedures are in most cases complicated and provide for various stages involving several institutions.

In Belgium the statement of the reasons (Exposé des Motifs) was finalised on 21 March 2008. It is to be presented to the meeting of the Council of Ministers (Conseil des Ministres) by mid 2008. The Council of Ministers addresses it to the State Council (Conseil d'Etat) before presenting the file to the Parliament for a vote. The same procedure will be followed at eight various levels of competent authority (federal state, the Communities and the Regions).

Bulgaria is in the process of ratifying the Convention. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has been preparing documents which will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval. Under Bulgarian legislation the parliament has the power to ratify the Convention.

In Cyprus, the first step is to translate the text and then to adapt it to the Cypriot context after consulting with the Disabled Organisations. Then, it is to be put for approval to the Council of Ministers and following that it is to be forwarded to the House of Representatives for ratification, through new legislation. The translation process has proved to be lengthier than expected; moreover there are doubts if it will be addressed promptly at the parliamentary proceedings.

In the Czech Republic a detailed analysis of obligations provided for both in the Convention and the Optional Protocol has to be done. For each obligation, this means that: its compliance with Constitutional order of the Czech Republic must be examined; corresponding provisions in national legislation are identified together with any relevant actions/programmes/activities pursued in this regard, these are subsequently assessed for determining whether full implementation of a particular obligation is already ensured or not. In the latter case, no further steps in the ratification process can be made before removing any obstacle identified, regardless of whether it is of legislative, financial, institutional or practical nature. Subsequently, the proposal is formally discussed with other Ministries and Central bodies of the Government, submitted to the Cabinet for approval and then submitted to the Parliament. Both chambers of the Parliament have to approve the proposal for ratification. If Parliament gives its assent to the proposal, it is finally submitted to the president, who has discretion in deciding whether or not to sign the instrument of ratification.

Denmark has identified a three step procedure: 1st. Step: Translation and consultation with civil society; 2nd. Step: screening of Danish legislation in relation to the requirements of the Convention (all ministries/sectors) and 3rd. Step: Possible legal changes and political ratification. The responsibility of the procedure of ratification of the UN Convention was transferred to the newly established Ministry of Social Welfare on November 23rd 2007. The Ministry of Social Welfare will continue the work towards a ratification of the Convention. A first draft translation was sent to the sector ministries in 2007. The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People (Danske Handicaporganisationer) received a second draft in March 2008. The Ministry of Social Welfare is expecting to start Step 2 of the procedure in May 2008. At present, ratification is expected to take place by the end of 2008 or early 2009, depending on the outcome of the screening process (step 2).

Estonia: Signing and ratification of international agreements or conventions (including the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities) is initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Concerning the current convention, the responsible Ministry is the Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia. The Ministry of Social Affairs prepares the needed documents and presents the documents to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. All international agreements will be approved by the Government and ratified by the Parliament. During the preparations of ratification the Ministry of Social Affairs has asked expert opinions from other involved Ministries (Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Finance) and non-governmental organizations (Estonian Chamber of Disabled People, Estonian Union of People with Visual Impairment, Estonian Association of Hard Hearing, Estonian Union of Persons with Mobility Impairment, Association of Estonian Cities, Association of Municipalities of Estonia). All our partners considered the Convention an important international document and the need for ratification was emphasized. The time schedule for signing the Optional Protocol and ratification of the Convention and Optional Protocol will be decided during the ratification process. At the beginning of 2008, the legal analysis of the internal legislation and its accordance to the Convention was initiated. The analysis was initiated with the purpose of clarifying the need for legislative amendments in Estonian internal legislation. Also, the analysis of policies for persons with disabilities is planned to be launched with abovementioned analysis. After the legal analyses the Convention and its Optional Protocol will be submitted to the Parliament for ratification.

In Finland, before the ratification, it is necessary to amend the Finnish legislation concerning the right of persons with disabilities in need of institutional or residential care to move from one municipality to another. The legislative revision should be completed during spring 2008. Also, legislation concerning the restriction of constitutional rights is revised with regard to provisions on the use of involuntary measures in connection with care of persons with intellectual disabilities. This drafting is also in process.

In France a legal impact file is being prepared with consultation of technical ministers. Once the file is ready, a project of law on ratification of the Convention and the Optional Protocol will be submitted.

Germany: Before starting the domestic process of ratification the German speaking countries Austria, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Germany were obliged to harmonise the German translation of the Convention and the Protocol. Germany will take the necessary steps to provide the Convention and the Protocol in accessible formats. The Convention and the Protocol will be ratified by legal approval of the German Bundestag

(German Parliament). With regard to this procedure, it is necessary to draft a law. The law consists of two parts. The first part contains the English, French and German version of the Convention and its Protocol. The second part will comment on the requirements of the Convention and will explain whether and how Germany already fulfills or intends to fulfill them. All sixteen Länders have to approve the law before the German Bundestag can do so. The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is currently drafting the law.

In Greece the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs is responsible for the translation of the UN Convention. It is supported by the National Confederation of People with Disabilities and other competent authorities working on the translation. Once the Convention is translated, it will be submitted to competent ministers for approval. Later the text in form of law will be submitted to the Parliament for adoption.

Hungary has ratified the Convention and the Optional Protocol on the 20th July 2007 by the Act No 92 of 2007.

Ireland: A high-level, cross-departmental group, the Interdepartmental Committee to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, was established by the Irish Government in 2007 to monitor the implementation by Departments of the legislative and administrative changes that are necessary to allow the State to ratify the Convention. This Committee is advising on any changes to the Government's National Disability Strategy that may be required to enable Ireland to ratify the Convention and has developed a Work Programme to address matters that need to be aligned with the Convention. While the National Disability Strategy in may respects comprehends many of the provisions of the UN Convention, the Work Programme has been developed to (i) address any elements of the National Disability Strategy that require alignment with the Convention and (ii) address any matters that fall outside the National Disability Strategy to enable Ireland to ratify the Convention. The Committee will maintain contact and consult with people with disabilities through their representative organisations during the implementation of the UN Convention; is reviewing the options for preparation of accessible formats of the UN Convention; will prepare a report to submit to Government in 2008 on implementation progress in the year since Ireland signed the Convention and will closely examine the Optional Protocol to the Convention in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the Attorney General. The Optional Protocol will be addressed by the Government at the time of consideration of ratification of the Convention.

On 28 December 2007, the Italian Government approved the ratification proposal for the UN Convention and Optional Protocol, which will have to be examined and adopted by Parliament. After the early elections of 13 and 14 April 2008, the new Parliament settled on the 29th of April and will have to plan the ratification process .

In Lithuania, given that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol are international agreements that need to be ratified, the Order No. A1-176 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour as of 27 June 2007 has initiated an interinstitutional taskforce to deliver the analysis of relevance and feasibility for ratification of these international documents. The taskforce involves representatives from the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of health, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Transport and Communication, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defence, Ministry of Environment, the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, the Department of Physical Education and Sports under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, and

representatives of NGOs. In a meeting of the taskforce—which took place on 23 November 2007 in the Ministry of Social Security and Labour—the draft analysis of relevance and feasibility of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was introduced. The issued draft investigates the conformity of the Lithuanian legal system to provisions of the Convention as well as looking into the possibility of ratifying all articles of the Convention and the Protocol. Taking into account the fact that the Convention covers most policy areas and touches upon various legal, social, educational, economic, and health care aspects, it was decided to analyse the prepared draft Convention analysis in more detail and to assess the real situation of persons with disability in Lithuania. It was suggested that round tables should be organised in order to discuss separate topical areas of the Convention, evaluate everything that has yet to be done, i.e. what law-making, administrative, informational, and other measures have to be undertaken in order to implement the rights of persons with disability acknowledged by the Convention. Upon revision of the aforementioned analysis of the Convention and taking into account opinions of various institutions regarding ratification possibilities—following the procedure set out in legislation—a draft Law on Convention Ratification shall be drafted and supplied to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

Latvia has not yet signed the Convention for procedural reasons. After translation of the Convention the process of drafting the Cabinet Decree on Convention has been initiated in summer 2007. All documents regarding the Cabinet Decree have been submitted to the meeting of state secretaries (on the 2nd of August, 2007) and subsequently to all responsible ministries for consideration. It has been planned that the Convention will be signed. Thereupon Latvia will take up evaluation on the compliance of legislation of the Republic of Latvia with Convention and adopt the Law on Ratification of Convention. After the lasting process of approval by the responsible ministries, the draft Cabinet Decree on Convention has been submitted to the Cabinet. On November 12, 2007, it was decided at the meeting of the Cabinet Committee that the general evaluation of the financial resources, necessary for the implementation of the Convention, has to be prepared before the last examination of the Cabinet Decree on Convention. The Ministry of Welfare of Latvia is responsible for aggregation of this information from all responsible ministries. The deadline for submission to the Cabinet is the 1st of April. The Ministry of Welfare has sent letters to all involved ministries with request for calculations and at the same time for information about identified national legislation that needs to be adjusted to comply with the UN Convention provisions. Depending on the processing of draft policy planning documents and legislative acts in the Government, delays in the signing of the Convention before May 2008 are possible. It mainly depends on the reaction of responsible ministries (how fast and accurately they will prepare calculations). However, all efforts will be directed towards submitting of information requested by the Cabinet as soon as possible.

Luxembourg intends to ratify the Convention but not before May 2008. As regards the ratification procedure, the Luxembourg Parliament has to pass a bill in order to ratify the Convention and the Optional Protocol. Before the end of the ongoing screening procedure, it is not possible to foresee if there will be any problem or not.

The Maltese Office of the Prime Minister intends to set up an inter-ministerial committee to study what steps are needed so that Malta will be in a position to ratify the Convention and the Optional Protocol. It is envisaged that new and/or amendments to existing legislations are needed and that administrative measures need to be undertaken. Once required amendments to legislation are enacted, it is expected that Government will proceed with ratification.

In The Netherlands four major procedural steps were identified. 1. Translation into Dutch; that has been finished; 2. Legal analysis of the content of the convention, based on the adopted text and the 'travaux préparatoires'. The last document is not available yet. This analysis is in progress. 3. Legal analysis of the Dutch legislation that is also in progress and 4. Preparation of the approval act and an introductory act; the last act contains all changes necessary in Dutch laws to actually implement the Convention. Parallel to steps 3 and 4, gradual introduction of the provisions of the Convention into Dutch policy and into new legislation.

Poland: It is to be noted that Polish policy as concerns the ratification of international agreements is that before opening the final stage of the ratification process (preparing the ratification act and submitting it to the Council of Ministers and the Parliament) amendments to the legal acts must be adopted (or at least well advanced), especially as concerns important ones or those with financial implications. The decision on ratification of the Convention will be taken on the basis of a detailed analysis of its provisions and of the Polish legislation, policy and practice in the area covered by the Convention. This analysis will be opened soon. The outcome of the work will be presented to the Council of Ministers (the form of this presentation will be decided according to results of the analysis). If the Council of Ministers decides to open the ratification process Poland will follow the procedure described in detail in the Act on international agreements (it means adoption of a draft Act on ratification, submitting it to the Parliament, adoption by the Parliament, decision by the President). The elaboration of documents and consultation process will take time taking into consideration complicated nature of the Convention. The draft decision will be discussed with social partners. Furthermore, in case of international agreements concerning human rights the Constitution requires "a major ratification process", which means asking Parliament for an approval. Only on this basis the President may ratify an international agreement. The practice shows that it takes at least 6 months from opening of the interministerial consultations to the signing of the decision by the President.

Portugal: The Convention has been translated into Portuguese. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will make a second revision of the all text and then it will be sent to the Parliament for discussion and then it will be ratified by a President of the Republic decree. The Convention has an important impact in many relevant subjects of the Portuguese legislation therefore it will be necessary to make an assessment study in the Parliament and to define the legal adaptations needed.

In Romania, the official translation by the National Authority for Persons with Handicap is in progress. The preparing of the law project is the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The promulgation of the law will be done in the Parliament

Slovak Republic: The Government at its meeting on 5 September 2007 dealt with the issues relating to the Convention and, by Government Resolution, assigned the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities and the selected sectoral ministers (e.g. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance of the SR) to conduct an analysis of the concord of legal regulations of the SR with the obligations arising for the SR from the Convention and following the analysis submit to the Government of the SR draft measures for the implementation of the tasks arising from the Convention and submit to the Government for debate the proposal for ratification of the Convention. The Slovak Republic through its particular sectors is currently in the process of assessing concordance of the legal regulations with the obligations resulting from the Convention and the need to adopt legislative and non-

legislative measures to ensure compliance of the Slovak Republic's legislation with the obligations following from the Convention. Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family as the guarantor responsible for the Convention has set up a working group with the remit to coordinate activities relating to the analysis and the ratification process. The members of the working group include the representatives of relevant sectors, non-governmental organisations and representatives of self-government, i.e. the Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia, but also one member of the High Level Group on Disability.

Slovenia: The Act on Ratification of the Convention and the Protocol was adopted in the Parliament on April 2, 2008. After then, the Convention and the Protocol were published in the Official Journal of the Republic in Slovenia the President of the Republic of Slovenia signed them. Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent the documents to the UN Permanent Mission of Slovenia, which deposited documents at UN on 24 April 2008. Official translation of the UN Convention and the Protocol was finished in 2007, submitted to the UN and published on UN web page. It is planned, that UN Convention will be published in 2008 in accessible formats for persons with disabilities with mental, intellectual or sensory impairments (the easy to read version, etc).

Spain ratified the Convention and the optional protocol on December 3, 2007.

Sweden: An investigator within the Government's office has checked Swedish legislation in order to see if it is in harmony with the UN Convention's requirements and those of the Optional Protocol. This work has been published in a report and referred to stakeholders for consideration until the middle of June. After that the report will form the basis of a bill to the Parliament. The ratification of the convention requires a parliamentary resolution. The government's ambition is to have a parliamentary decision on ratification by the end of 2008.

United Kingdom: Has closed its formal exercise checking that its policies, practices and procedures are compatible with the provisions of the Convention and is now considering the findings of this exercise. Following this UK Parliamentary procedures will apply in order to achieve ratification.

The European Community accession to the UN Convention needs a Council Decision on the conclusion, adopted by unanimity and consulted with the European Parliament. The European Commission is preparing the proposal to be submitted to the Council, which first needs to be consulted with all Commission services and adopted by the College of Commissioners in the written procedure.

The majority of the Member States do not foresee any **reservation** as regards to the matter of application of the Convention or of the Optional Protocol. Even though the need for reservations after finalising the screening of the national legislation may arise, most countries express a strong political will to ratify the entire Convention and its Optional Protocol.

As exception, at the signing ceremony the Dutch Ambassador had a statement on several articles. It is not known now whether the need for new reservations or explanations will arise. The Maltese Government has also already made an interpretative statement regarding the phrase "sexual and reproductive health" in Article 25(a) to the effect that Malta understands that this phrase does not constitute recognition of any new international law obligation, does not create any abortion rights and cannot be interpreted to constitute support, endorsement, or promotion of abortion. Malta further understands

that the use of this phrase is intended exclusively to underline the point where health services are provided, they are provided without discrimination on the basis of disability. Malta has also made a reservation pursuant to Article 29(a)(i) and (iii) of the Convention. While declaring its full commitment to ensure the effective and full participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life, including the right to vote by secret ballot in elections and referenda, and to stand for elections, with regard to Article 29(a)(i), Malta reserved the right to continue to apply its current electoral legislation in so far as voting procedures, facilities and materials are concerned and with regard to (a)(iii) Malta reserved the right to continue to apply its current electoral legislation in so far as assistance to voting procedure is concerned. It is envisaged that both the above-mentioned interpretative statement and reservation will be confirmed on ratification. Also, at the moment of signing of the Convention in March 2007. At that stage, France does not foresee any reservation; however it neither excludes possibility to submit declarations interpreting certain provisions on the UN Convention. Poland submitted a reservation concerning article 23.1 (b) and 25 (a) (reproductive health). International law of treaties asks for the confirmation at the moment of submitting ratification documents. This point will be decided at the moment of ratifying the Convention.

2. Actions undertaken by the Member States to implement the UN Convention

Responsibilities

Given that the provisions of the Convention cover almost all policy fields, in most countries various governmental bodies (departments, ministries, councils) as well as regional and local authorities are responsible for the implementation of the UN Convention. Almost all countries have also identified a focal point for coordinating the work. For detailed information, please refer to the Annex 2.

Additionally, to improve coherence of work, some countries have established a coordination mechanism. Most countries also involve nongovernmental stakeholders in the consultation and coordination processes.

In Austria the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs and Consumer Protection is responsible for the implementation of the Convention. It is planned to install an independent monitoring committee on a legal basis. This Committee will include NGOs in the fields of Human Rights, People with Disabilities and Development Cooperation.

In order to facilitate the development and implementation of the national policy towards people with disabilities, the Bulgarian Council of Ministers has established a National Council on Integration of People with Disabilities. This consultative body includes representatives of the government and nongovernmental organizations of and for people with disabilities. All issues in the field of the integration of people with disabilities will be discussed by members of the National Council for Integration of People with Disabilities. The UN Convention has been presented to the members of the National Council on Integration of People with Disabilities for their attention.

In the Czech Republic, a special working group was established by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs that consists of the representatives of those ministries that are responsible for one or more areas covered by the Convention. This working group is used for co-ordination and exchange of information during the preparation of the ratification. There is also a special group of the Government Board for People with Disabilities,

which was set up during the negotiations of the Convention for purposes of the co-ordination of Czech national delegates within the Government as well as discussion with representatives of non-governmental organisations representing people with disabilities (i.e. Czech umbrella organisation of people with disabilities - Czech National Disability Council). Moreover whenever a bill of law concerning people of disabilities is proposed, the Czech National Disability Council is always consulted and its expert opinion is taken into consideration.

Estonia, after entering into force of the Convention, plans to establish the internal coordinating committee. Members of the committee will be the representatives of stakeholders (for example Estonian Chamber of Disabled People) and other Ministries. Already during the preparations that were made for signing of the Convention, the Ministry of Social Affairs has asked the opinion of main stakeholders (Estonian Chamber of the Disabled People, Association of Estonian Cities and Association of Municipalities of Estonia) on Convention, its necessity and applicability in Estonia. All Estonian main stakeholders are actively involved in the preparations of the ratification of the Convention.

In Germany, while drafting the relevant legislation a number of Federal government bodies and the Länder will be involved. They have to provide the information on how Germany meets the requirements of the Convention or whether there is a need for action. The involvement of civil society is guaranteed because of the domestic rules concerning the legislative process.

In Hungary a final decision has not yet been made regarding a focal point, however it is very likely that the National Council on Disability Issues will be appointed. Because this decision has not yet been reached, the final rules regarding coordination mechanism have not been settled yet. Nevertheless the relevant ministries and representatives of the NGOs and civil society are represented in the National Council on Disability Issues so it could be a solid ground of the coordination of implementation.

Slovenia, in accordance with the Act on ratification of CRPD and the Protocol, in accordance with Slovenian system of disability policy, designates Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs as the focal point within government for matters relating to the implementation of the Convention. Civil society, in particular persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, will be involved and participate fully in the monitoring process through consulting professional body - Government Council for persons with disabilities of the Republic of Slovenia, established in 1996 and which:

- gives opinions to legislative and other regulations,
- participates in development and gives recommendations to national programs' implementation,
- analyses co-operation among ministries, professional institutions and organisations of persons with disabilities and
- yearly reports to the government on disability policy.

The council consists of equal number of representatives from organisations of persons with disabilities, government and professional institutions.

In Spain there are two coordination mechanisms. The General Directorate for the Coordination of Policies on Disability - a government structure responsible for coordination with the different sectors of the Public Administration. The National Council on Disability serves as an inter-ministerial collegial body, of an advisory nature, attached to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The National Council on Disability

is responsible for the definition and coordination of a consistent policy which focuses comprehensive attention on people with disabilities as well as promoting equality of opportunities and non-discrimination for the disabled. The functions conferred on the National Council on Disability guarantee the participation of civil society and other stakeholders, with respect to the obligations of Article 4.3. The Council is made up of 15 members representing the General State Administration according to their competences in matters directly or indirectly related to the disabled, 15 members representing the most representative associations of common public interest, at a national level, that bring together the most representative organizations of the different types of disability and 4 expert advisors with recognized prestige and professional background in matters related to the disabled and their families (with voice but without vote).

In Finland the setting up of a coordination and follow-up body is being prepared at the moment in cooperation between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities is ensured by the attendance of representatives of disability organisations in the follow-up body. No decision has yet been reached on the form of the coordination mechanism. Possibly a working group will be set up to prepare the national implementation of the Convention. Finland has currently no government body that has been, or could as such be, designated to attend to the tasks referred to in Article 33(2). Thus, the ratification of the Convention would necessitate either the establishment of a new fundamental human rights body in Finland or the transformation of some existing authority into such a body. In this context, particular attention should be paid to the independence of this body, necessitated by the Convention, as well as to the need to ensure that organisations representing persons with disabilities are included in the monitoring work of the body. On 25 January 2007, the Ministry of Justice set up a committee to reform the Finnish non-discrimination legislation. According to its mandate, the committee shall, if necessary, also revise the status, duties and powers of the existing non-discrimination ombudsmen. The establishment of the body referred to in the Convention is closely connected with the work of the non-discrimination committee. The committee is expected to submit an interim report on the need for a reform and the options for the reform in January 2008. It will probably give a final proposal on the issue during 2009.

Ireland's Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR) is the focal point as provided for in Article 33(1) of the UN Convention. DJELR has overall responsibility for ensuring Ireland's implementation of the UN Convention. The aforementioned high-level, cross-departmental group, the Interdepartmental Committee to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, established by the Irish Government is the coordination mechanism created in accordance with Article 33(1) to monitor the implementation of the Convention. The Interdepartmental Committee is comprised of senior officials from eleven Irish Government Departments and one Government Office. It also maintains contact and consults with people with disabilities through their representative organisations regarding the implementation of the UN Convention.

In Italy, at present it is the Ministry of Social Solidarity that is the Ministry responsible, at national level, for the implementation and coordination of the policies in favour of people with disabilities. Naturally, one must consider that disability is a complex issue which falls within the competence of numerous Ministries (Employment, Health, Education, Transport, Culture, etc.). In parallel with the ratification process, the Italian Government has planned to set up a National Observatory on the Situation of People with Disabilities, to monitor the implementation of the principles of the UN Convention. The National Observatory will include representatives of all of the different

administrations (national, regional and local) involved in the implementation of the UN Convention. The National Observatory will include representatives of the organisations that are the most representative of people with disabilities, trade unions, employers' organisations and organisations operating in the voluntary sector. This method is expected to constantly ensure the involvement of representative organisations. When the Observatory is set up, its operating procedures will be laid down.

In Latvia, supposedly all ministries involved will be responsible for the implementation of the UN Convention with regards to their specific activities and according to their sphere of competence. The Ministry of Welfare will coordinate this process. In order to facilitate cooperation among institutions and involve non-governmental organizations in decision making processes related to the integration facilitation of disabled people, in 1997 Ministry of Welfare established the National Council of Disability Affairs (NCDA). NCDA is an advisory institution that takes part in the development and the implementation of the integration policy of disabled people. Furthermore, recognising the role of a civil society in sustainable development of the state and the nation, as well as the impact that cooperation between the state and non-governmental organizations (hereinafter - NGOs) has on the quality of adopted decisions, the Cabinet and NGOs concluded the Cooperation Memorandum on mutual cooperation. The Memorandum was signed on June 15, 2005 by the authorized representative of the Government – Prime Minister, and representatives of 57 NGOs. The document is still open for signing. The objective of the Memorandum is to facilitate operation of an efficient public administration system that meets the interests of the society by ensuring involvement of the civil society in the decision-making process at all levels and stages in public administration. The Parties undertake to continue the development, implementation and improvement of the necessary mechanisms, in order to ensure that NGOs are well-informed and able to effectively participate in decision-making processes, by ensuring that opinions provided by NGOs are reflected in protocols of coordination of issues : representatives of interested NGOs can participate in coordination sittings, advisory councils and working groups are established for developing particular projects. NGOs are informed on decisions adopted in relation to proposals submitted by them and have the opportunity to follow the development of draft legal acts and give opinions on them. NGOs undertake to promote effective exchange of opinions among NGOs and ensure constructive cooperation between NGOs, the society, and the Cabinet. The Ministry of Welfare has sent the Convention to all NGOs interested in disability issues requesting proposals for necessary amendments in the national legislation (from their standpoint). Answers should be received by mid of February 2008.

In Lithuania it is planned that the implementation of the ratified Convention shall be coordinated by the Department of Disabled Persons under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The aim of the Department is to ensure implementation of policy measures pertaining to the social integration of disabled people. It coordinates and implements the National Social Integration Programme for Persons with Disability as well as other programmes aimed at the issues related to persons with disability and delivers policy implementation measures pertaining to the social integration of disabled; collects information and statistical data from the state and municipal institutions, bodies, and associations of disabled regarding changes in social integration of disabled; systemizes and summarizes this data as well as informs the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and other state and municipal institutions, bodies, and associations of disabled. Article 3 of the Law on Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Lithuania sets out that the state and municipal institutions and bodies as per their competence should be *following the procedure defined by laws, support programmes of religious communities, societies and*

centres, other NGOs, public institutions, associations, and charities and assistance funds, which help implementing equal opportunities of persons despite their age, sexual orientation, disability, race, or ethnicity, religion or beliefs. Consequently, when making decisions, efforts are made to consider the opinion and the experience of people with disabilities. The drafted laws and other important legislation related to people with disabilities are coordinated with associations of persons with disabilities. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour and subordinated institutions organise regular meetings with NGOs for disabled in order to ensure closer cooperation, distribution of information as well as resolution of existing problems. Relevant problems related to the issues of the integration of disabled are discussed in organised meetings. The Council for Affairs of Disabled under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour analyses the most important issues pertaining to the social integration of disabled as well as supplies proposals to the Minister of Social Security and Labour regarding the implementation of the social integration policy pertaining to needs of disabled. The Council is formed on voluntary basis on the grounds of equal partnership rights from state institutions and representatives delegated from associations of disabled. The composition of the Council for Affairs of Disabled as well as its articles - upon submission of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour - are approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

In Luxemburg the Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration is responsible for the implementation of the UN Convention. Other government bodies are of course involved in the implementation of the UN Convention as far as disability issues tackled in the Convention fall under their responsibility (i.e. Public Health or labor/employment issues). There has not yet been established any coordination mechanism as foreseen in Article 33(1) of the Convention. The “Conseil supérieur des personnes handicapées” is a national council which has its legal basis in the law of September 12, 2003 about the income of disabled people. It is composed of 11 members, 5 disabled persons, 4 representatives of organisations for persons with disabilities, one representative of the “Centre national d’information et de rencontre du handicap” and one of the Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration. It has the right of initiative to give advice on specific disability related issues and it is bound to express its view on every single law or other disability-specific legal instrument and to advise the Minister on other disability related issues on the Ministers request. The Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration cooperates largely with Info-Handicap. Conseil National des Personnes Handicapées which represents Luxembourg in the European Disability Forum (EDF). It is a loose federation currently comprising more than 50 member organisations which are active in many different areas. Some members are major service providers, responsible for running large institutions, while others are very small self-help or support groups. One of Info-Handicap's main tasks is thus to identify shortcomings in these areas and seek solutions to them in cooperation with the authorities. It is also undertaking, on a regular basis, actions to raise awareness in the field of disability.

Malta: The National Commission Persons with Disability (NCPD) established by the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act will be the Maltese Government’s focal point to ensure the implementation of this Convention. The composition of the Commission is such that it includes representatives of the main Government Ministries and also the voluntary sector working in the field, namely seven members of the NCPD are appointed from amongst such persons appearing to the Prime Minister to best represent voluntary organization working in the field of disability; at least one half of the total number of the members of the Commission shall themselves be a person with a physical disability or family members of persons with a mental disability; the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman has to be a person with a disability or a family member of a

person with a mental disability. Hence the Maltese Government uses both the organisations of persons with disability and the individual persons with disability and family members in order to ensure that they contribute to the decision making process.

Netherlands: The ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) coordinates the process. However, it might be necessary later to install an independent body that monitors the process of implementation into daily life. Civil society will have the opportunity to advise on the proposed legislation, representative organizations will be asked advice during the process and all departments might ask representative organizations as a consultant to find solutions to the problems met.

Provided Poland ratifies the Convention, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy would be responsible for coordination of the implementation of the Convention. Given that it is at an early stage of examining the content of the Convention, Poland has not involved the civil society in the process yet. However, a discussion with social partners and the civil society organizations representing people with disabilities, especially as concerns introducing amendments to the Polish legislation or drafting strategies or programmes is expected. The principle of carrying dialogue and consulting social partners and civil society organizations on the draft laws and other documents prepared for approval by the Council of Ministers is ensured *inter alia* by a Tripartite Commission for Social and Economic Issues (composed of the representatives of social partners and the government; the task of this Commission is to agree, achieve and preserve social order and to reconcile interests of employees, employers and the public good; each of the parties to the Commission has the right to submit for discussion an issue of significant social or economic importance, as well as a right to adopt a position or to call any other party to submit a position on issues relating to social or economic policy;) and a Joint Commission of the Government and Territorial Self-Governments. The representatives of people with disabilities are consulted within the framework of decision-making processes conducted with the participation of the National Consultative Council for Disabled People (which is an advisory body of the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People and acts as a platform for cooperation to the benefit of people with disabilities between bodies of national administration, bodies of territorial self-government and non-governmental organisations) and the voluntary councils for people with disabilities, established on voivodship and poviast level (which are consultative and advisory bodies serving the marshals of voivodships or the starosts; their task is *inter alia* to inspire actions aimed at enabling people with disabilities to enjoy their rights).

Portugal: The National Institute for the Rehabilitation develops a mainstreamed rehabilitation policy involving all sectorial Ministries. The Convention was submitted to the National consultative body of the civil society about the rehabilitation policy for information and awareness raising purposes. This body will be involved in the ratification process.

Sweden: The coordination mechanism foreseen in article 33 (1) of the Convention has not yet been formally established. However, the Social Services Division of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs has already the responsibility of coordinating the Government's disability policy and is in charge of a working team consisting of civil servants representing all ministries dealing with disability policy. Furthermore, in January 2006 a new authority - Swedish Agency for Disability Policy Coordination - was established to support the sectorial authorities tasked with implementing the national plan for disability policy. Meetings with disability organizations are organized on a regular basis to discuss the issues related to implementation of the Convention. Sweden will chair the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in the period May–November

2008 and the Nordic Council of Ministers for the whole of 2008. One objective of the Swedish Chairs will be to strengthen the status of disability issues as human rights issues in the work of the Council of Europe and in Nordic cooperation. Disability issues have priority and will be given a prominent place in the programmes of the Swedish Chairs.

Slovak Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family as the guarantor responsible for the Convention has set up a working group with the remit to coordinate activities relating to the analysis and the ratification process. The members of the working group include the representatives of relevant sectors, non-governmental organisations and representatives of self-government, i.e. the Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia, but also one member of the High Level Group on Disability.

Slovenia: The Slovenian Constitution, since 2004, has included a prohibition on discrimination based on disability. In order to implement this constitutional provision Slovenia adopted a range of regulations and programmes in the fields of employment, education, health care, providing access to the built environment, information and communications, financial assistance and ensuring social security, stable financing of disabled organisations and so forth. In 2006 special mention was made of the adoption of a new law regulating employment rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons, and the Action Plan for the Disabled 2007 – 2013. The general principles and obligations of the Action Plan for the Disabled 2007-2013, which derive from international and Slovenian documents, could be condensed into the following:

- respect for difference and acceptance of disability as part of human diversity, and ensuring equal opportunities: the principle ensures positive measures for ensuring equal opportunities in all areas necessary for enjoying full citizenship;
- non-discrimination: the principle of non-discrimination ensures for the disabled the prevention of differentiation, exclusion or restrictions in the enjoyment of their rights as applicable for all other members of the community;
- on the level of society, ensuring full and effective cooperation and inclusion in society: disabled persons must have the same opportunities as other citizens to participate actively in the development of the community in which they live, on the local, regional and national levels, and should take responsibility for its development;
- on the level of the individual, ensuring respect of human rights – dignity and individual autonomy, which includes the freedom to choose for oneself and personal independence;
- an individual approach to ensuring and providing services and programmes aimed at disabled persons; and
- accessibility as a precondition for enjoying rights and social inclusion.

In the United Kingdom the Office for Disability Issues (ODI), part of the Department for Work and Pensions is the focal point provided for in Article 33(1) of the UN Convention. While individual Ministries will be responsible for the implementation of the Convention for their own areas the ODI will coordinate this process. The UK sees the setting up of its National Monitoring Frameworks as a priority. ODI officials are discussing the provisions of Article 33(2) with the British Equalities and Human Rights Commission and colleagues in Northern Ireland and Scotland in order to ensure that it takes into account the needs of the UK's devolved Governance arrangements. The UK is also considering its engagement strategy with wider Government and Civil Society.

Translation

All Member States translated the text of the Convention into their national languages. In some Member States the translation is still informal, but works toward an official text are ongoing. In Czech Republic an “official” translation will not be available before ratification and publication of the text and its translation in “Sbírka mezinárodních smluv” (i.e. official journal “Collection of international treaties”) – only such translation can be considered as “official” for the purposes of further dissemination through, i.e. the UN. The Portuguese Ministry of Foreigner Affairs will adopt formally the translation of the Convention. After the ratification of the Convention the national translation will be sent to the UN. Slovenia finished official translation into Slovenian language during the process of ratification, in 2007. Official translation was sent to UN and it is published on its web page. During the translation, persons with disabilities and Slovenian National Council of People with Disabilities were engaged in this process. So far, the UN Convention will be published in 2008 in accessible formats for persons with disabilities with mental, intellectual or sensory impairments (the easy to read version, etc).

Most countries that share a common language coordinate the translation process between themselves and provide to the UN a unified "National translation". Austria has come to an Agreement with Germany, Liechtenstein and Switzerland about the German text. This document is also being used in the German-speaking Community of Belgium Belgian Flemish version was adapted based on the translation done by the Netherlands. Cyprus that is still finalising its translation is currently in contact with the Greek government for a more or less unified “National Translation”, however, Cyprus will not use the exact same text as it first must consult the Organisations for the Disabled and some terminologies may have to be changed. Spain formed part of the Group of Latin American Countries (GRULAC) for the review of the UN proposal for the translation of the text of the Convention into Spanish and the adoption of a translation acceptable to these countries. Cooperation takes place between the Nordic countries mostly regarding the translation into Swedish. In Finland the translation into Swedish is being carried out in cooperation with the Swedish Government. The Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has issued (both in print and online) a plain language brochure on the UN Convention in Finnish and Swedish and the drawing up of a sign language brochure is being negotiated. There is no plan as of yet for translating the Convention into Lappish.

Some of the translations are available on the national websites. For more information, please refer to the Annex 3.

Screening of relevant national legislation

The great majority of the Member States are screening their national legislation. However there are countries that have not yet started the process. Several Member States have already identified national legislation that needs to be adjusted to comply with the UN Convention's provisions.

In Belgium in various domains, a series of problems appear as certain provisions of national law are contrary to the philosophy of the Convention. Therefore an intervention of the Parliament will be necessary. Each legislative text will need adaptation. This one will vary depending on each text.

In Finland it will be necessary to amend the legislation concerning the right of persons with disabilities in need of institutional or residential care to move from one municipality to another. The regulations will also affect the inter-municipal division of costs as disability services in Finland are funded by the municipalities. Also, legislation concerning the restriction of constitutional rights is being revised, with regard to the

provisions on the use of involuntary measures in connection with the care of persons with intellectual disabilities.

Germany has started the screening process. At this point it is not possible to say if there is national legislation that needs to be adjusted to comply with the Convention.

In Hungary an expert group was set up within the framework of the National Council on Disability Issues in order to analyse the national legislation in force in order to identify those pieces of legislation where adjustment is needed.

The Irish process of identifying the necessary legislative reforms is ongoing. A principal legislative reform concerns Article 12 of the Convention. The laws on legal capacity will be reformed and brought into line with the UN Convention and the necessary legislation - Mental Capacity Bill - is at an advanced stage of development. The Bill is on the Government's Legislative Programme and will be published in 2008.

In Italy the Ministry of Social Solidarity has financed research (by the National Research Council) to analyse the impact on national legislation following the ratification of the UN Convention. Once the research is completed, the national laws which could be amended after the ratification of the UN Convention will be identified. At present, it is not possible to determine which modification procedure will be used.

In Lithuania, particular attention is paid to control (monitoring) of the implementation of the requirements set out in the legal acts.

Luxembourg is screening its national legislation in order to make sure that all its policies, laws and administrative measures secure the rights recognized in the Convention and to abolish, if necessary, laws, regulations, customs and practices that may constitute discrimination.

Malta has identified several pieces of legislation that will need to be adapted, i.e. the Civil Code regarding Article 12 of the Convention "Equal recognition before the law"; the Electoral Law regarding Article 29 of the Convention "Participation in political and public life"; the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act in order to officially make the National Commission Persons with Disability responsible for the implementation of the Convention as envisaged in Article 33 "National implementation and monitoring". These changes will be implemented through the publication of Bills which will require the Parliament's approval.

Poland may have to introduce changes that will concern the following areas: access to information, protection and security of disabled persons in cases of natural disasters, war, humanitarian catastrophes, protection of disabled persons - victims of exploitation, abuse, neglect, assistance in living independently, social integration, preventing isolation, access to public buildings, spaces and means of transport, participation in the political and the civil life, including the right to vote, care over children, adoption, guardianship, assistance of all kinds to help to raise children (to the extent that may be in line with the Convention), equal treatment of disabled children as concerns family life, providing children and their families with comprehensive and early information, services and assistance, placing children in institutions (some issues), education (facilities to ensure full access, employing disabled persons as teachers), ensuring "multidisciplinary" assessment of needs and potential of a person with disability as concerns the habilitation and rehabilitation services, which should begin at the earliest possible stage, ensuring adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities and their families, financial

assistance to cover expenses related to disability (as concerns persons living in poverty). The whole issue of prohibition of discrimination and of equal treatment is to be carefully studied as new obligations may arise from the relevant provisions of the Convention. To introduce amendments to the Polish legislation an ordinary legislative procedure would apply. The issue of preparing a "horizontal" Act to deal with the issues of disability in an exhaustive and coherent way may be considered also thus setting out basis for ratification of the Convention.

Screening of Slovenian legislation and UN Convention was made in the ratification process in 2007 and 2008. All ministries had to check existing legislation, and report about the compliance with the UN Convention. It was identified, that Slovenian legislation (The Constitution, mainstreaming legislation and disability legislation) guarantees the necessary rights under the Convention.

Only a few Member States believe that their national legislation relevant to the UN Convention is linked to EC legislation. However, a link to European legislation exists where acts are based on European legislation and need to be adjusted. The EC legislation stipulates a similar direction concerning the employment and the labour market, the access to the health services and the social services, education, training, etc.

The UN Convention is a mixed agreement, what means that the matters covered by the Convention fall within the competence of the Community and within the competence of Member States. In order to define the extent of the community competence, the European Commission Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, in cooperation with all Commission services, has screened the community legislation. Identified secondary legislation indicates the competences transferred to the Community by the Member States under the Treaties. The list of relevant legal basis and secondary legislation will be annexed to the Council Decision on conclusion as required by article 44 (1) of the UN Convention.

Training

At this stage only some Member States³ plan to organise training on the UN Convention. This might be explained by the lengthy procedures of process leading to ratification, notably the screening national legislation. Furthermore, most of the countries that do plan such training have not yet decided what form this training will take.

However in Spain there was already some training actions carried out in 2007 and the organization of special days and seminars is expected to continue in 2008 at the different levels: state, autonomous and local. Trainings are targeted primarily at those responsible for the different sectors of the Public Administration at its different levels, directors, technicians, and professionals in the area of Justice, education professionals but also at representatives of the disabled and their families. Trainings cover analysis of the articles of the Convention and their interpretation, the study and the evaluation of the additional

³ CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LV, MT, NL, PT, RO, SI, UK

Protocol and its repercussions on the Spanish legal system and special analysis, interpretation and scope of Articles 6, 7, 12 and 16.

The Convention and its implementation will be discussed in Finland in seminars and conferences at national, regional and local levels. In addition, the Finnish Association of People with Mobility Disabilities (FDM) and the Threshold Association have established a Center for Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities (VIKE) in cooperation with the Institute for Human Rights at Åbo Akademi University. VIKE aims at, among other things, promoting the implementation of the Convention. The implementation of the Convention affects all actors in society and, therefore, as many stakeholders as possible should be aware of the Convention and its obligations, including the state and local administrative sectors and their representatives, enterprises and other actors providing disability services as well as disability organisations and the persons with disabilities themselves. The trainings will cover the existence, the contents and the significance of the Convention as well as its obligations.

In Germany information is provided about the UN Convention and the translation of the Convention on an official website (www.bmas.de). The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has already given, and will continue to give, lectures for the benefit of different stakeholders. Organisations of persons with disabilities are a particular focus and lectures are organised for these groups when asked to do so. In the course of the year a brochure will be developed. The training the ministry offers informs about the content and the requirements of the Convention because it is necessary that different stakeholders learn to handle the Convention at this point of the process.

Greece plans to organise trainings for competent Ministries to present and explain the article of the UN Convention.

In Ireland training is already in place to deal with various aspects of the Convention, e.g. accessibility training, and training with regard to the employment and recruitment of people with disabilities. Other programs of training are also envisaged to address key areas covered by the Convention, including the area of legal capacity and service-specific training (multi-sectoral). Target groups will include: public service providers; Disability Stakeholder Group (DSG); Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO); front-line staff; and public service employees.

In Italy, information and dissemination seminars on the principles of the UN Convention were organised following its signing in New York. Particularly, in *2007- European Year of Equal Opportunities for All*, four seminars on the principles of the UN Convention were organised, in cooperation with the Regions, the local administrations and the disability organisations. It is likely that other information and dissemination initiatives will be organised after its ratification. These initiatives were aimed at a very varied target group: regional and local administrators, representatives of disabled people's organisations, disability sector workers, families of people with disabilities etc. The information and dissemination initiatives hitherto organised at national, regional and local level analysed the general principles of the UN Convention and their impact on disabled people's living conditions and opportunities. In this respect, directly involving the regional and local authorities in the organisation and promotion of these initiatives, in order to reach more effectively all the people involved at local level, proved very positive.

Lithuania, in order to introduce provisions of the Convention and its Optional Protocol to representatives of state institutions and bodies as well as NGOs, plans to organize round

tables and seminars in order to discuss these international documents. Representatives of associations for disabled, county chief administration institutions (specialists and staff working with persons with disabilities), municipalities, and social partners will be invited to seminars to be organized in the main regions of Lithuania. These seminars shall be aimed at discussing the main provision of the Convention on legal, social, educational, economic, and health care aspects and introducing the participants of seminars with the main existing laws and other legal acts, statistical data, strategic, programmes, projects, and measures pertaining to the application of the Convention provisions. In order to implement the rights of persons with disabilities in the most appropriate way, it is planned to discuss possibilities pertaining to the protection of human rights, and the main legal measures, as well as the competence of the Committee for Disabled to deliver possible analysis of the Convention breaches.

Maltese training will cover primarily positive attitudes towards persons with disability and mainstreaming of disability issues and will be targeted at policy makers, both in the public and private sector, personnel working in the field and personnel working in sensitive areas such as health, education, employment, justice and the police.

In the Netherlands, a master class was developed to train policy advisors in mainstreaming disability issues into general policy. Two brochures are written: one with guidelines for equal treatment in policy (April 2006) and another with the unintentional consequences of policy making (to be published in april 2008). This master class will be broadened to cover the UN-Convention. On request this Master class will be given to policy-advisors on a national level. Soon a booklet will be available containing the basic principles of the convention to make the text of the convention accessible for policy advisors. Portuguese training will cover rights, obligations and judicial procedures and will be targeted at Public Authorities/administration (central and local), NGO's, jurists, Rehabilitation professionals, etc...

In Slovenia, training seminars and meetings on UN Convention were provided on the level of Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Slovenian Institute of the rehabilitation and organizations of persons with disabilities. Articles on UN Convention were published in the publications and medias. Targeted audience were people with disabilities and their organization, service providers, professionals.

The United Kingdom plans training on the impact of the Convention on UK policy making that will be aimed at civil servants and governmental lawyers.

Awareness raising activities and information on implementation

Awareness raising activities at various levels of governance are very important for proper implementation of the UN Convention. This part of the report, as well as the following one, should serve as a set of good practices and ideas that might be used in other Member States as well.

In Estonia the awareness raising activities have been planned and some of them already carried out on all levels. At the national level all the relevant ministries are informed about the forthcoming ratification of the Convention and Optional Protocol, and the future commitments deriving from the Convention. Our most intensive cooperation is with the Ministry of Education and Research and with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. Also, the Association of Estonian Cities and association of Municipalities of Estonia have been informed about the Convention and the Optional Protocol. The most important and intensive awareness raising activities are carried out

among the people with disabilities. The convention has been translated into Estonian and the Russian version of the Convention is also available. The principles of the Convention have been introduced and discussed on various conferences, seminars. Also, articles on the Convention have been published in professional magazines (for example “Sotsiaaltöö” (“Social Work”), “Sinuga” (“With You”). The convention has initiated discussions about the definition of “person with disability” at national level. The amended definition of “person with disability” is already introduced in our legislation, for example in the “Social Benefits for the Disabled Persons Act.” To introduce and implement the ideology of the universal design, two projects have been initiated. The first project focuses to introduce the ideology of the universal design; the second project focuses on the awareness raising and implementation of the universal design principles. Furthermore, Estonian Chamber of the Disabled People has actively started to organize different awareness raising activities with the purpose to introduce the Convention among its’ member organizations and among people with disabilities.

In Spain, at the state level, initiatives from different organizations and public and private Institutions, in the area of human rights and justice, have been promoted and supported in the autonomous and local territories. As an indication, an Awareness-Raising Day is reported, at the local level, as having been held in the Parla City Hall (Autonomous Community of Madrid), taking advantage of the annual celebration of the Open Door Week in this City Hall and with a focus on the overall participation of all assistance sectors in that city (health, educational, employment, leisure and cultural, and social service centres, etc.), as well as the different ones existing in the city.

In Finland seminars have been held for discussing measures to improve the implementation of the Convention and the execution of related awareness-raising activities. Government representatives took part in numerous meetings and seminars organised by various organisations where information on the Convention and the drafting process was provided. The public was informed of the adoption and signing of the Convention and its Optional Protocol both by the Government and organisations. Organisations have been notified in various contexts of the legislative amendments necessitated by the ratification of the Convention and both authorities and organisations have been consulted on the matter. As the Government programme on disability policy is being prepared, information on the contents and implementation of the Convention will be distributed to various stakeholders and disability organisations that in turn will inform their members.

In France, the documents on the UN Convention will be produced at moment of ratification, as required by project of law. Information for communities and services concerned might be also published.

In Germany the EU-Presidency conference helped to raise awareness among German stakeholders. As already mentioned, the www.bmas.de website and themed lectures are also being employed to this end.

In Hungary different NGOs (e.g. Hungarian Association for Persons with Intellectual Disability, Hungarian Association for Persons with Hearing Disability) organized conferences in 2007 with the support and active involvement of the governmental organizations. The official translation of the Convention is available on the following website: <http://www.szmm.gov.hu>. The Braille version was recently completed and it will be available on request. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour has will produce a easily understandable version in simple language which will be put on the above mentioned website. The sign language version is available on DVD.

The Irish Human Rights Commission organised a briefing session on the UN Convention in April 2007. The briefing provided information on the drafting process surrounding the UN Convention and an overview of the content/articles of the Convention. Topics dealt with by other speakers included the fit between the Convention and Ireland's National Disability Strategy. The National Disability Authority held a seminar on the 'UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan: Implications for Ireland' in October 2007. The seminar gave an overview of the Convention and its implications for people with disabilities, policy makers and public service providers. Inclusion Ireland, one of the representative disability bodies on the aforementioned Disability Stakeholder Group (DSG), also held a seminar for parents with children with intellectual disabilities on 'Decision Making Capacity' in November 2007. The speakers specifically discussed the implications of the provisions in Article 12 of the UN Convention. The National Disability Authority and the Health Service Executive have agreed to develop a Guidance Document aimed at improving the accessibility of health services in Ireland. It will specifically address disability awareness training which is required under the UN Convention. Government agencies will in due course be asked to develop national campaigns to raise awareness about the Convention among the general public.

This year, for the first time in Italy, the President of the Republic celebrated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December 2007), meeting a wide range of disabled people (approximately 500 people). On that occasion, the principles of the UN Convention were recalled and the Ministry of Social Solidarity's publication with the Italian translation was distributed to the people present. At present national reports are not planned. Public information on the signature of the UN Convention and on the ratification process is available online on the website of the Ministry of Social Solidarity..

Implementation of the Lithuanian drafted Convention Promotion and Public Awareness Plan commenced in the beginning of 2008. In order to inform the public regarding the main articles of the Convention and its Optional Protocol, ratification process steps of these international documents are planned to be introduced through media measures, to prepare and announce the information on the website of the Ministry, prepare visual aids (posters), booklets, and distribute them in stakeholder institutions, NGOs, and the entire public.

In Luxemburg Handicap International together with Info Handicap (2 NGO), in coordination with the Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration have organized a day-conference to present and explain the UN Convention to NGO and their representatives. Throughout the year 2006 the Ministry, in cooperation with Info Handicap and different other organizations active in the field of disability, has been organizing three trainings and a conference on subjects related to the implementation of the UN convention such as "accessible tourism", "jobs for disabled workers", "accessible municipalities" or "accessible transports and public spaces". Currently, the ministry of Family Affairs and Integration is planning an awareness raising campaign for 2009.

The Maltese National Commission Persons with Disability (NCPD) has organised a public activity to formally present the Convention (in Maltese and English) to the President of Malta and the Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity. NCPD publishes a bi-annual newsletter called INDAQS (Equal) that is sent to all registered disabled persons and other interested persons in the field. This newsletter is available in Maltese, English and on audio. Reports and information on the Convention were given in the last two issues of this newsletter.

In the Netherlands, the first focus is to influence policy advisors. Thereafter some activities to other levels of government and the general public might be planned. A Task force Disability and Society influences policy makers on a local level and civil society in general into mainstreaming during the last three years. Special focus on rescuing persons with a disability in case of calamities; awareness raising to the general population, accessibility etc... Its mandate will be modified and prolonged.

In Poland in May 2007 the International Conference “Europe in Action 2007: Citizen’s Rights for All – Full citizen’s rights and legal protection for persons with intellectual disabilities” was organized by the European Association of Societies of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and their Families in Warsaw. An important contribution to the Conference was made by the Director of the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled Persons presenting the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. 300 people from 31 countries participated in the Conference. In case of any questions submitted by the social partners, civil society organizations or individuals the Government (competent ministries) is under obligation to provide relevant written information. Members of the Parliament may address the competent Minister a written question or interpellation on the issue, to which he has to reply. In mid-2007 various authorities replied a number of such interpellations and questions, as well as answered two letters of the Polish Commissioner for Civil Rights Protection.

In Slovakia, various activities will be part of the proposed legislative and non-legislative measures to be adopted in order to ensure the implementation of tasks following out of the Convention. Proposals will be submitted to the Government together with the proposal for ratification of the Convention. However, despite the fact that the Convention has not been ratified to date, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a seminar in December 2007 for representatives of non-governmental organisations, and within it, an official from the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family - the member of the HLG on Disability informed about the content of the Convention and the intents of the Government of the SR for the forthcoming period (legal analysis, the working group). The Ministry’s of Labour official also actively participated in the seminar devoted to the Convention and organised by the National Council of Citizens with Disabilities.

In Slovenia, press conferences were organised in 2007 and 2008 to announce the signing and ratification of UN Convention and the Protocol. In 2008, Slovenia is planning to publish the publication about Convention. Also, cooperation is planned with Slovenian National Council of People with disabilities, to take targeted actions in the framework of Progress. Several activities are also planned to celebrate the 3 of December, International Day for Persons with Disabilities.

In Spain, editions on the contents of the UN Convention have been published to date in easily understandable formats, targeted at intellectually challenged people, and editions in other formats, such as in Braille and electronic versions, are in progress.

The Swedish Disability Federation has been granted 2,7 millions SEK from The Swedish Inheritance Fund to run a project with the purpose of raising awareness about the UN Convention amongst people with disabilities, authorities, politicians and stakeholders.

In the United Kingdom, several seminars were organised: already on 5 July 2005, a seminar for EU NGO representatives and delegations, to discuss progress and share views on the Convention text, in December 2006 a seminar for UK NGO representatives and delegations, to discuss progress and share views on the Convention text, on 4/5 December 2007, a National School of Government Conference raising Civil Service

awareness and on 6 December 2007 an Updating for civil society meeting, it was held in London but guests were invited from whole of UK.

The European Community is active in raising awareness on the UN Convention. In all relevant community documents, i.e. Communications, Resolutions⁴, parliamentary questions, letters to citizens, information and explanations of the provisions of the Convention are included. Furthermore the Commission cooperates with the Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED), which will focus part of its work on indicators that could be used to monitor practical implementation of the Convention in the EU and Member States. ANED will identify actions that the Commission could take to support Member States in their practical implementation of the Convention, as well as on the Community level, that would prove the European added value. The recommendations drawn by ANED will also focus on the implications of the Convention for policy development at the EU level, including priorities for development of the EU Disability Action Plan after 2010. Moreover, the Commission plans to launch the study on good practices and challenges in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which objective will be to analyse in detail the obligations set out by the UN Convention and gather information about the various practices in the implementation of the Convention, from a legal and practical point of view, identifying challenges and measures to facilitate the achievement of the UN Convention objectives. By doing so the purpose of the study is to provide help and long term guidance for Member States, the European Community and various stakeholders.

Furthermore, various Member States provide information related to the UN Convention, the process of its ratification and implementation in the media, through news agencies, press services, publications and websites. For a list of relevant internet links, please refer to the Annex 3.

Other actions undertaken to implement the UN Convention

In Estonia, it is planned to make the Convention available via alternative ways, for example in Braille and audio. To better introduce the principles of the Convention, a booklet is planned to be published both on paper and electronically. For the implementation of the Convention, a detailed action plan is planned to be elaborated. The action plan will concentrate on the priorities and activity areas of the Convention. For example, education is one of the most important areas – good inclusive education is the presumption for one's future success. Better implementation of the Convention could be achieved by, among other initiatives, exchanging the best practices. Therefore, Estonia is planning to hold an international conference on e-inclusion of people with disabilities in September 2008. The purpose of the conference is to raise awareness about e-inclusion possibilities not only amongst people with disabilities, but amongst the general public as well.

Finland has participated in the drafting of the Council of Europe Action Plan to promote the rights and full participation of people with disabilities in society (Rec (2006)5) and has committed herself to report on progress on the issue. The Council of Europe Action Plan on disability incorporates the contents of UN Convention and it can be seen as a pan-European strategy for the implementation of the Convention.

⁴ Most recently the Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 17 March 2008 on the situation of persons with disabilities in the European Union (2008/C 75/01)

In Hungry the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour is going to organize a working conference on the implementation of the Convention during the second half of 2008.

In Italy Ministry of Social Solidarity representatives participate in the information and discussion initiatives organised at national, regional and local level. The Ministry of Social Solidarity is in the process of developing an audio version of the UN Convention (on CD) so as it can be widely disseminated and known also among the visually handicapped.

In Luxemburg the Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration is projecting to write an outline law (loi cadre) on disability related issues and has prepared and introduced a bill on guide dog access to public places.

The Maltese Office of the Prime Minister intends to set up an inter-ministerial committee in order to report back on the measures needed so that Malta will be in a position to ratify the Convention and the Optional Protocol. The National Commission Persons with Disability intends to produce the Convention in Maltese in audio format, easy to read format and in Maltese Sign Language.

In Poland, there were already various non-governmental initiatives to raise awareness on the content of the Convention and the importance of implementing its provisions (with the aim to improve the situation of persons with disabilities in many areas of life). These initiatives were not centrally coordinated. Any conference concerning disability issues is being devoted at least in part to the implementation of the Convention. Representatives of the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled Persons often participate in such meetings. As an example, a conference organized by the Foundation Institute for Regional Development on 16 October 2007 in Warsaw may be listed. During this conference the Foundation's activities in the field of promoting the voting rights for persons with disabilities and eliminating barriers in the education were presented, and the Deputy Director of the above mentioned Office delivered a speech on the Convention.

In Spain, editions on the contents of the UN Convention have been published to date in easily understandable formats, targeted at intellectually challenged people, and editions in other formats, such as in Braille and electronic versions, are in progress

3. Actions undertaken by the <u>stakeholders</u> to support implementation of the UN Convention
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Involvement in the process of implementation of the UN Convention

Various stakeholders both in different Member States as well as on a European level are involved in the process of implementation of the UN Convention. In the short report below, these stakeholders are presented in alphabetical order, although many of them are also part of EDF and coordinate their activities at European level.

Belgian Disability Forum (BDF) and Conseil Supérieur National des Personnes Handicapées (CSNPH) involve themselves during the entire process of the elaboration of the Convention. BDF kept informed CSNPH as well as the Secretary of State for Persons with Disabilities (Conseil Supérieur National des Personnes Handicapées) about the debates. BDF and CSNPH called on the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Persons with Disabilities as well as ministers of federal entities for the signature of the UN Convention. Recognising these efforts the Belgian state assured the representation of each organisation in New York on 30 March 2007 during

the official signature. Since then, BDF and CSNPH have continued their efforts with a view of the ratification of the UN Convention by Belgian state (its eight level of governance) and establishment of a monitoring body guaranteeing a fair representation of persons with disabilities. Consequently, on 7 November 2007 BDF and CSNPH organised a conference which outcomes served as a base for the replies of the Foreign Affairs Minister to parliamentary questions asked in December 2007.

The Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities (CERMI) has collaborated at all times with those public institutions responsible for the Convention. At the moment CERMI is preparing a report analysing the legislation that is to be modified in accordance with the Convention. CERMI forms part of the National Council on Disability, the body in charge of monitoring the Convention.

The Estonian Chamber of Disabled People has been participating in the process of drafting and working with the UN convention via European Disability Movement. When the text was approved, the organization has been issuing articles in order to explain the UN Convention; there have also been presentations on the content of the Convention as well as on technical side of the ratification process already earlier before the approval of the text.

The European Disability Forum (EDF) is mainly active in the implementation process at EU level. It is also supporting its members through the process of implementation at national level. This happens through the provision of information and facilitating sharing of knowledge among EDF members. EDF also benefits from the network of contacts with national and international NGOs established mainly during the negotiations of the Convention at the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee, and which were organized through the International Disability Caucus. Currently EDF is becoming a member of the International Disability Alliance, which is opening itself to regional organizations like EDF. Within that framework, a reorganization of the International Disability Caucus is being developed. EDF has also developed a signature campaign 1million4disability launched in January 2007 which aims at furthering disability rights in Europe. The campaign calls on measures for the implementation of the UN Convention, as it is contained in the 'EDF ten years declaration'. The key message is the adoption of a disability specific legislation on non discrimination of disabled people at EU level, which would be one of the key steps in the implementation of the UN Convention (see: 1million4disability.eu). EDF is also promoting in its different advocacy activities on different policy areas at UN level the need to take into account provisions in various articles of the UN Convention. EDF, together with its national member in Slovenia, is also cooperating with the Slovenian Presidency for the organization of a Ministerial meeting on Disability, including through its national member. EDF members are also all active at various degrees in the implementation process, according to the development of the process in each Member State. For instance some members have been consulted for the translation: this is the case notably in Italy, Austria, and France. Some members have been invited in a working group established by the responsible Ministry, such as in Slovakia (to be established), in Italy where EDF national Council (CND) is member of the government focal point and is consulted on the preparation of the Government Decree for participation and in Denmark, currently working on the implementation of non discrimination provision. In the UK an annual information meeting is organized for NGOs, in Spain, the national council is also involved in the relevant focal point and a representative of the Spanish Disability movement has accompanied the Vice Prime Minister to the UN to deposit the instruments of ratification. In Hungary the National Council of Disabled People which is an advisory body of the Government in disability issues, to which disabled people's associations are part, has set up a working group to

analyse the compliance of Hungarian legislation to the UN Convention. The working Group is led by the President of FESZT (EDF member). One of the members of FESZT (MEOSZ) has prepared a document on independent living provisions within the Convention. In the UK, 21 organizations of disabled people have started a coalition, called 'Coalition 21' to promote a swift ratification of the Convention and optional protocol without reservations. The campaign is now joined by other 'civil society organizations. Several members of EDF have met key members of the national parliaments in order to inform them about the Convention, in view of its ratification. As a result question time sessions with the Government have been devoted to this issue. It is also worth noting that members of national federations of disabled people are also involved in the process through the work of European NGOs.

The European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR) as a network of service providers to people with disabilities aims to be actively involved in the implementation of the UN Convention.

The Malta Federation of Organisations Persons with Disability (MFOPD) nominates 5 representatives to sit on the National Commission Persons with Disability (NCPD). The Federation's nominations have always been accepted. MFOPD has been active in the Campaign 1Million4Disability organised by European Disability Forum with the aim of asking the EU to introduce a comprehensive legislation to outlaw discrimination against individuals on account of their disability.

The Irish National Disability Authority (NDA) is involved in the implementation of key principles in the UN Convention in the following ways:

- Congregated Setting Working Group - The Health Service Executive has set up a Working Group on Congregated Settings to develop a costed plan for closure of residential institutions for people with physical, sensory or intellectual disabilities and replacement with appropriate services in the community. This work is informed by the provisions of article 19 of the UN Convention. NDA is a member of the Working Group. The target date for delivery of the action plan is December 2008. (The Vision for Change report accepted by the Government outlines proposals to close residential institutions for people with mental health difficulties)

- Roundtable on Legal Capacity - Following the Law Reform Commission's work in this area, draft legislation on Legal Capacity is being prepared to give effect to the provisions of Article 12 of the UN Convention. It is intended to publish the Bill in 2008 and enact it at an early date. NDA and DJELR will co-sponsor an information and consultation event with key stakeholders on the draft legislation in Spring 2008.

- Protection against violence and abuse - This is addressed by Article 16 of the UN Convention. The Health Information and Quality Authority are working on statutory standards for residential care centres for people with disabilities, against which such homes will be inspected. The NDA is on the working group preparing these. These standards will cover protection against violence and abuse.

One of the representative disability bodies on the aforementioned Disability Stakeholder Group (DSG), People with Disabilities in Ireland Ltd., played a valuable role during the negotiation of the Convention, attending many of the negotiations over the five year period 2002 to 2006 with DJELR and the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Training

Stakeholders organise well targeted trainings covering various aspects of the UN Convention.

BDF and CSNPH have already prepared the regular information on advancement of the UN Convention file in January 2005, 2006 and 2007 for attention of BDF General Assembly and member of CSNPH, as well as an informative conference on 7 November 2007. Two organisations are planning some training targeted at associations (members and professionals) as well as politicians. The trainings would cover information on content and implications of the UN Convention, as well as concrete analysis how to put its articles in practice.

The Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities (CERMI) held several seminars focussing on the Convention and more are to be organized throughout 2008, many of them in collaboration with the Public Administration. These seminars were and will be targeted at Representatives of the grassroots disability movement, and of the public administration, and other stakeholders who work in areas of disability. They will cover the entire process that has led to the adoption of this International Treaty, as well as the analysis and interpretation of its articles, additional protocol, effects of its application on the Spanish legal system. CERMI also has a publication in Spanish that analyzes in detail each of the Convention's articles, as well as there being an explanatory guide for it in electronic format.

The European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) has produced a training module for managers on the UN Convention in order to make it easier for them to understand the content and the importance of implementing its content at national and respectively the organisation level. On the basis of this module, EASPD will organise training on the UN Convention and provide information to service providers. Equally, EASPD is providing constant information and working towards the implementation of the UN principles, values & articles through the organization of a series of conferences in Rome (14-15th February 2008: Bringing the UN Convention home to Europe: EU and national legal frameworks facilitating the implementation of the UN Convention) and Brussels (3-4th April 2008). The main target group of these trainings is the management of service provider organizations, but also middle management and first line workers.

The UN Convention is a regular item in EDF Board and General Assembly meetings, which are also the opportunity for enhanced exchange of good practice among EDF members. EDF will also be organizing training on the provisions more specifically relating to legal capacity, notably issues around equal recognition before the law and examples of legislation at national level that will need to be amended and identified solutions. This training will be targeted at delegates from all members from all countries and a variety of impairment groups which will attend EDF General Assembly.

Similarly to EDF, EDF members have all been very active in informing and consulting their members on the UN Convention throughout the negotiation process. All EDF positions to the Cohom were the result of consultations with a final position adopted by the Board or General Assembly and daily briefings were delivered to its members throughout the negotiations. In addition several 'members' of EDF were part of EU national delegations. EDF members have almost all organized general trainings on the Convention. They also do plan to organize follow up trainings. Some of them have difficulty in finding resources to do so, as national authorities have not yet foreseen possibilities in that respect.

In Belgium a training focusing mainly on the ratification process, the role of NGOs and of public authorities at all levels was organized on 7 November 2007 by the Belgian National Council. The conclusions of the meeting were also somehow endorsed by the Foreign affairs Ministry who referred to them when answering parliamentary questions in December. Further training sessions are being planned focusing on the role of organizations in the concrete implementation of the different provisions of the Convention.

The Slovakian national council organized an introductory national conference on 9 October 2007.

Italy was particularly active as the Consiglio Nazionale sulla Disabilità provided trainings to disability organizations, researchers and social workers through its module on human rights and disability held at the University of Padova every year. In addition, a similar module will be launched at the University of Cosenza in 2008. 30 trainings were organized for members in order to empower disabled people within the ratification process. CND also took part in the 4 interregional seminars on the Convention organized by the Ministry for Social Solidarity (Italy's focal point on the Convention) in Taranto, Milano, Roma, and Torino. The other disability platform in Italy, CIDUE will be organizing a first general training in 2008.

The UK Coalition will be organizing a training this year aimed at Trade Unionists and organizations of disabled people. Several of their members have or are organizing trainings. 'Disability Awareness in Action' has received funding for a 3 year programme in human rights training including on the Convention for disabled people's organizations.

In Luxembourg last December a seminar was organized by the national council of disabled people – Info Handicap and the Consultative Commission on human rights in order to establish a new form of cooperation based on the Convention. An awareness action is planned around the 60th anniversary of the Charter of human rights targeted at the general public.

In Hungary, several members of FESZT (EDF member) have organized seminars on the Convention involving both organizations of disabled people and decision-makers. Several actions are also foreseen for the future. In particular the Hungarian Autistic Society is planning to organize trainings for parents in the different regions of Hungary. The national Federation of disabled people's associations is currently raising funds in order to provide training for representatives of all its 90 member organizations.

In Latvia, pending the obtention of funds, organizations plan two series of trainings: one targeting decision makers and service providers on disability rights mainstreaming and on the social model of disability, and a second one for disabled people themselves on rights and access to rights.

In Denmark, Disabled People's Organisation Denmark organized a seminar in October 2007 on the aspects of the Convention provisions in several policy areas. Further trainings targeting disabled people, as well as civil servants and decision-makers are planned. They will cover an understanding of the concept of disability and rights based approach, as well as tools for practical implementation of the Convention to improve the living conditions and equal opportunities of persons with disabilities focusing on all different aspects of life. The organization would also like to organize awareness raising activities for the general population.

In France the organization of a training and subsequent fund raising is planned which would be targeted at around 100 leaders of disabled people's organizations all around the country covering a full analysis of the rights enshrined in the Convention.

The EPR plans to target its training mainly at directors, middle-managers and front line professionals working in service provider organisations. Other stakeholders will be invited when appropriate. The training will cover general information and practical exercises on the importance and the implications of the Convention. Special focus sessions will be held on the Articles of Education, Health, Rehabilitation and Work. EPR will organise a Learning Group on Empowerment as an important concept underpinning the rights-based approach of the Convention. Inclusion and participation are strongly stressed in the Convention but an essential precondition for participation is empowerment of the individual. This series of meetings will focus on empowerment in a new perspective. Empowerment will be addressed not only as a set of skills and attitudes of an individual but also as a concept requiring empowering qualities of the professional and his/her organisation and thus the creation of an empowering environment around the service-user.

Awareness raising activities and other actions to support implementation of the UN Convention

Various stakeholders are actively organising awareness raising activities and other actions to support the implementation of the UN Convention. These activities are undertaken at European, national, regional and local level.

One of the French National Council members, APF is invited to give lectures within a module on ethics at the University of Paris where students are introduced to disability rights and the Convention.

Portuguese national NGO, Associação para o Planeamento da Família, participates in the project with a main purpose to promote training about the Convention and a national campaign.

The Hungarian Autistic Society will devote special emphasis on the Convention during the European Day of Autism that will be organized by them in 2008. Other members have also published information on the Convention on their website. Furthermore, in Hungary the national federation of disabled people is using all its meetings and events at national and local level to provide information on the Convention, including in its contacts with decision-makers.

BDF and CSNPH emphasise the importance of being associated and give support to the implementation process, including time before the ratification, of the UN Convention. Consequently BDF participated in the meeting organised by EDF in 2006 in London under the British Presidency. Furthermore BDF made the ratification one of its priorities for the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All.

The Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities (CERMI) has collaborated during the entire process that has led to the approval of the text of the UN Convention with the European Disability Forum. In this framework, it has participated in all meetings, seminars, forums organized by the EDF concerning the Convention.

Furthermore, within its annual cermies prize-awarding ceremony, CERMI gave a prize to the Delegation of the UN present at the meetings held in New York. This ceremony has a large audience and welcomes many people.

Italian Consiglio Nazionale sulla Disabilità has undertaken work with two regions: Veneto and Liguria to take into account the Convention in their policy planning and programmes. In Veneto a monitoring assessment tool of disability policies on the basis of the UN Convention is being developed with the support of the University of Padova. In addition together with the city of Verona and its USSL (local health unit) a Charter on rescue of person with disabilities in case of disasters has been developed (an international conference was held as a result were also EDF participated).

Danish national stakeholders - Danske Handicaporganisationer (Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People) has held a conference on aspects of the UN Convention in relation to Denmark.

The Danish Organisation of Disabled People's has been active in contacting all Danish members of the European Parliament, and asking them to support the ratification process at national and European level. It has also set up a task force composed of representatives of the disability movement, in order to develop training activities targeted at disability activists. A manual with concepts and tools to use the UN Convention targeted for disability planning at local level

EASPD is organizing conferences on this theme in Italy, Rome, February 14 – 15 2008) and in Belgium, Brussels (April 3 – 4 2008). Some of our members have already organized training at national level (i.e. UK – HFT). EASPD intends to organise other seminars in September and October 2008 in Vienna, Austria and Bremen, Germany. Moreover, EASPD works towards the implementation of the principles of the Convention by focusing on quality of services, de-institutionalisation and community based services, capacity building in Eastern, Central and Southeastern countries, networking and facilitating employment opportunities of people with disabilities.

The EDF campaign '1million4disability' and the EDF 10 years Declaration is an awareness tool focused on disability rights and based on the rights contained in the UN Convention. It does target EDF members of members and also the general public. Several initiatives have been undertaken in many EU countries in the framework of the campaign, including collection of signatures at film festivals, fairs, radio and press information, etc. The Convention and its right is the red thread of EDF work programme for the next three years and EDF is using all its positions papers, and statements to decision-makers and a variety of stakeholders to inform about the Convention, and to highlight specific provisions. Also, EDF has up to now informed regularly its members on the ratification and signatures process and has also made public statements on problems arising such as some countries not signing the optional protocol. EDF has also organized a press conference on the day when the Convention was opened for signatures with disability and development NGOs, inviting the UN and European Commission. The press conference was the only one organized on that occasion in Brussels, and received very good media attention. Furthermore, EDF will be discussing at its next Board in March a strategy for the future steps: entry into force of the Convention, Conference of State Parties, and implementation. We plan to produce a report that review on the implementation at EU level, and would include also information for the national level. Moreover, EDF has prepared a Guidance Tool on the Convention signature and ratification process, available on its website, as well as a downloadable powerpoint presentation on the general rights contained in the Convention. Also, EDF is active in

supporting the written declaration of the European Parliament on the UN Convention. Most of its members have sent letters to their national members of the European Parliament asking them to sign it. EDF has also provided proposals to several member States on proposals for resolution on the UN Convention, within the Council resolution on the European Year of Equal Opportunities, and on the situation of disabled people in the European Union.

The Estonian National Council of People with Disabilities has been presenting the Convention at various occasions, as well as in the media. More information dissemination is needed and will take place in the course of 2008. During 2008, EPR staff will give several lectures on EU disability policies in various countries. Providing an overview of the UN Convention and facilitating Q&A sessions will be a key component of these lectures. Additionally, EPR will support any of its members that wish to organise awareness-raising activities on the UN Convention as required. EPR will issue for its members a detailed analysis paper on the UN Convention covering such questions as importance, status, implementation, definitions, special articles of interest, role of civil society, etc. Reports and articles from all relevant activities will be produced and the EPR Public Affairs e-bulletin will update members regularly on the state of play of the Convention. EPR will interlink its website with that of the UN Convention. Any relevant information will be posted in a special section on the website dedicated to the Convention. In terms of other actions in support of the implementation of the Convention, EPR will continue to contribute to the exchanges on Convention within the DHLG. EPR will participate in the Conference organised by the Slovenian Presidency of the EU and focusing on the implementation of the UN Convention. EPR's general Secretary will act as the rapporteur in the Workshop on Employment feeding in the conclusions from this exchange to the broader debates during the Conference. Cooperation with various actors will be pursued as needed and the EC will be kept duly informed on any relevant partnerships or joint actions forged.

Ireland's NDA organised a seminar in June 2006 on Capacity and the UN Convention and published a report of the proceedings. The NDA report was made available to the meeting of the UN Ad Hoc Committee on the draft UN Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, held on 14 -25 August 2006 in New York which finalised the Convention, as an aid to their discussions on Article 12. NDA also organised a seminar in October 2007 on 'The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities & the Council of Europe's Disability Action Plan: Implications for Ireland', opened by Ireland's Minister of State with responsibility for Disability and Mental Health. The invited audience was mainly smaller disability organisations who would be less familiar with the Convention's provisions. Topics covered were highlights of the Convention; how Ireland is proceeding to ensure ratification; links between the Convention and the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan; and the link between the Convention and Ireland's National Disability Strategy. Moreover, Ireland's Minister of State with responsibility for Disability and Mental Health launched a NDA booklet at the aforementioned October 2007 seminar containing both the UN Convention and the Council of Europe Action Plan. The booklet acts as a resource for disability organisations who attended the seminar and other organisations who can request copies from NDA. To date, copies of the booklet have been requested by disability organisations for distribution at their own events. The booklet is available on NDA's website in pdf and there are links to reading it online on the websites of the UN and Council of Europe.

A UK disability organization SCOPE held last 30 March (opening of the signature at the UN) an awareness day with live videos from the ceremony in New York, and with the

former prime minister's wife (a human rights lawyer) as guest speaker. The event will be repeated this year and will include workshops.

The Latvian organization of disabled people Sustento is mainly using its website to disseminate information on the Convention, but hopes to receive funding to be able to do more awareness raising activities.

Liaising with governments and other stakeholders

Various stakeholders liaise with governments and other European, national, regional and/or local organisations, while undertaking their action their actions.

BDF is organising awareness raising activities and trainings for all its members at regional level as well as for CSNPH. The organization has also direct contacts with decision-makers from the different regions. In January 2008, BDF will make a presentation for the Office of COCOF (Commission communautaire française) in Brussels and will propose such presentations to other consultative councils.

The Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities (CERMI) liaises with the European Disability Forum and the Disability Caucus.

Consiglio Nazionale sulla Disabilità is managing a national project to build 12 workshops in order to implement the Convention at local level.

In order to better understand and implement the UN Convention, EASPD is involving people with disabilities in all the projects. There is as well continuous structural cooperation between EASPD and people with disabilities and organizations representing the interests of people with disabilities such as the European Disability Forum (EDF) and Inclusion Europe.

EDF, as a network of national and European network organisations is active only at the European level. Some of its actions may reach lower levels through EDF members.

Estonian National Council of People with disabilities confirms that co-operation on the UN Convention is taking place within the disability movements around the Baltic Sea area.

MFOPD liaises continually with NCPD on all matters of policy including this issue, as well as it is strongly recommending the Government that it will be represented on the inter-ministerial committee that it intends to set up in order to give recommendations regarding the ratification and implementation of the Convention.

Ireland's NDA has attended meetings of the EU High Level Group on Disability. The NDA also invited a representative from the Council of Europe to address the information seminar on the UN Convention and the Council of European Disability Action Plan 2006-2015 in October 2007. The NDA's seminar focused on identifying linkages between both documents and broadening understanding of both among national, regional and local disability organisations. NDA continues, in liaison with Government Departments, together with national, regional and local agencies in its work to progress implementation of both the UN Convention and the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015.

4. Common challenges and solutions identified by <u>Member States and stakeholders</u> with regards to the implementation of the Convention
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Identification of common challenges

At this stage various Member States judged it too early to identify common challenges. However replies of those who did identify them, are in many ways similar. Therefore these issues are likely to be of concern to many Member States and stakeholders. This chapter lists the challenges that should be considered by each key player involved in the implementation of the UN Convention, not necessarily in order of importance:

- Process of ratification/conclusion is a challenge itself.
- Distribution of competences between various actors relevant for the implementation combined with efficient coordination at all levels. Administrative resources for the coordination might be difficult to find.
- Monitoring and reporting on various administrative levels. The monitoring system has to be based on common indicators. Statistical data are necessary in order to define harmonized indicators.
- Implementation of Article 12 (equal recognition before the law) and Article 13 (Access to Justice) of the Convention. Various difficulties are linked to legal capacity of persons with disability, which in certain Member States is restricted. The legal capacity is in some Member States related to mental illness, mental disability or other mental disorder that makes a person permanently unable to understand or direct his/her actions and therefore a guardian is appointed by a court. The Convention would imply changing such an approach, in particular it will provide for access for persons with disabilities to the support they may require in exercising their legal capacity. This is a complex area of law and requires consultation and reflection
- As regards the right to vote, there should be some legislative and practical efforts undertaken to enable full enjoyment of the right to vote by persons with severe disability, as this remains a challenge for the legislative and executive authorities, as well as for local self-governments.
- The Convention introduces the human rights approach in absolute terms. Therefore the policy needs to be shifted from a general notion of integration of people with disabilities to the formulation of new a integration policy for persons with disability that would provide for real mainstreaming of disability into all areas. Revision of legal framework would be also involved.
- Special attention must be given to the implementation of legal provisions not only *de jure* but also *de facto*: for example, in order to practically ensure implementation of provisions pertaining to accessibility of environment to people with disability, sufficiently adapting buildings of educational, public, and state as well as municipal, health care, culture and art, entertainment organizing institutions, information environment.
- Lack of knowledge about standardisation. Only a few companies know that products designed according to the rules of ‘design for all’ will not lead to sameness. The interaction between standards, designers, manufacturers, retail traders and consumers does not lead to self regulation; on the other hand the government hesitates to regulate designing.

- The issue of prohibition of discrimination and of equal treatment is to be carefully studied as far going new obligations may arise from the relevant provisions of the Convention. Difficulties may arise in identifying indirect discrimination and in finding ways to change these practices. Acceptance by all parties making up society and administration of the right of disabled persons to enjoy participation in the country's social life on equal terms with the rest of the citizens. To make progress in this process would mean having a means favourable to the execution of the obligations deriving from the Convention. In this regard, it would be important to have an overall strategy that included or programmed successful actions to intervene at the different levels and in sectors of interest (Administration, families, media, Training Centres and Schools, economic and social organizations, etc.), in order to improve the level of acceptance in the society towards equal rights of the disabled.
- Difficulties may arise also with ensuring persons with disabilities "assistance in living independently, social integration, preventing isolation" and "adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities and their families", that needs not only improvement of supportive social services, but also sufficient financial resources.
- Training and re-training of professionals working in the field is needed and required. The implementation of the Convention's principles in the service provision sector cannot be done without training and re-training of the staff working in this field. Only in this way we will be able to reach a high quality of services. Problems pertaining to persons with disability have to be included into decisions to be made in the future in cooperation with organizations for persons with disability.
- The identification and implementation of an efficient and effective engagement with civil society. Development of a strong stakeholder cooperation, which is closely related to the recognition of different roles and responsibilities in this process of making the UN Convention a reality. Shared responsibilities are a key element for this and only by working together we will be able to achieve what we aim at. However, a careful balance has to be struck and managed between the high expectations of civil society and the need for national governments to make changes to disability policy in order to ensure that they meet their international obligations under the Convention once it is in force and ratified at national level.
- In Member States with a Federal state structure, such as Austria, some of the regulation areas covered by the Convention fall within the competence of the Bundeslaender. A Federal law can – without the agreement of the Bundeslaender - only provide for the supervision mechanism for the scope of responsibility of the federation. One of the consequences of this is that the Bundeslaender must create similar supervision mechanisms for their respective area of competence. Such a supervision mechanism should be independent of the state administration, whose power to act is to be limited. The "Parisian principles", to be considered in this sense from international-law point of view, also provide for budgetary independence which is to be as extensive as possible.
- Implementation of the UN Convention provisions will require financial and human resources, as this political step is very comprehensive. Therefore implementation of the Convention would necessitate important financial efforts from the governmental and local administration.

Identification of solutions

To deal with the challenges listed above, various Member States are working on solutions related to the practical implementation of the UN Convention. Below are some first ideas coming from various stakeholders.

- Organisation of additional training courses to judges, police and other officials. The implementation of the European Qualification Framework is needed so that all training available for professionals can be used and recognised in all member states for the same category/at the same level of staff.
- Development of comprehensive national strategies dealing with human rights, discrimination prevention, gender policy, the social integration of disabled people in the public life. Such national strategy should be broad ranging, covering all the key realms of the lives of people with disabilities.
- Continuing awareness-raising activities, dialogue and incentives through various programmes and grants that are already available could ensure satisfactory outcomes.
- Creation of interdepartmental committee/inter ministerial committee as the coordination mechanism to draw up a report on the measures needed to ratify the Convention and the Optional Protocol, later on to monitor the implementation of the Convention and to work on solutions to any problems, difficulties or policy challenges related to the implementation of the UN Convention as they arise.
- Drafting a plan of measures for improvement of policy pertaining to disability issues as well as to paying particular attention to the control (monitoring) of implementation of requirements set out in legal acts.
- The adoption of comprehensive legislation fighting discrimination faced by disabled people in all areas of life both at EU and at national level
- In many domains data on persons with disabilities are collected. These data might be biased while these persons are selected on their disability rather than on the social group they belong to. It should be useful to collect also data on persons with disabilities in all surveys. It should be made possible to collect these data on disabilities together with data on sex, age etc. The number of persons with disabilities in surveys seems too small for reliable analysis. Work should be carried out at international and European level on the development of comparable statistical tools and indicators within the UN, Council of Europe and EC-Eurostat.
- The Dutch Normalization Institute (NEN) has installed a committee that tests standards against the CEN-guide 6 on design for all. While work on normalization is done at a European Level efforts are made to broaden the scope of the experiment to CEN too.
- Promotion of exchange of models of good practice and benchmarking at EU level
- Adoption of a European Quality Principles Framework instead of quality standards. This is a way to ensure high quality social service provision in Europe.

Various solutions are to be implemented by relevant bodies responsible for implementation of the UN Convention. For details please refer to the Annex 2.

Some of these solutions would be more effective if implemented by several Member States together as in many cases international cooperation is important to implement aims and objectives of the UN Convention in the most appropriate manner.

Exchange of experiences when drafting and implementing legal provisions as well as social integration policy for persons with disabilities, cooperation with organizations and the public is especially important in order to ensure as effective implementation of equal opportunities policy as possible. Generally accepted answers to the legal interpretations of some of the Convention articles would be desired. Also, in certain areas such as setting up of certain standards, research, statistics and data collection, collaboration between Member States is bound to produce better results. Furthermore, awareness-raising activities as envisaged by the Convention will gain greater significance if organised by more than one state. For example, the annual conference held by the EU Commission around the European Day of Persons with Disability (3rd December) could be held in different EU countries rather than always in Brussels, what could help the respective country to give a higher profile to disability issues and more disabled persons will have the opportunity to participate in such an event.

Annex 1: State of play

Dates of signatures and ratification				
Country	Signature		Ratification*	
	UN Convention	Optional Protocol	UN Convention	Optional Protocol
AT	30 March 2007	30 March 2007		
BE	30 March 2007	30 March 2007		
BG	27 September 2007			
CY	30 March 2007	30 March 2007		
CZ	30 March 2007	30 March 2007		
DE	30 March 2007	30 March 2007		
DK	30 March 2007			
EE	25 September 2007			
EL	30 March 2007			
ES	30 March 2007	30 March 2007	3 December 2007	3 December 2007
FI	30 March 2007	30 March 2007		
FR	30 March 2007			
HU	30 March 2007	30 March 2007	20 July 2007	20 July 2007
IE	30 March 2007			
IT	30 March 2007	30 March 2007		
LT	30 March 2007	30 March 2007		
LU	30 March 2007	30 March 2007		
LV				
MT	30 March 2007	30 March 2007		
NL	30 March 2007			
PL	30 March 2007			
PT	30 March 2007	30 March 2007		
RO	26 September 2007			
SE	30 March 2007	30 March 2007		
SI	30 March 2007	30 March 2007	24 April 2008	24 April 2008
SK	26 September 2007	26 September 2007		
UK	30 March 2007			
EC	30 March 2007			

* Ratification means the deposit of the instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Annex 2: Responsible Authorities and Contact Persons

This annex contains an overview of responsible authorities, focal points, coordination mechanisms and contact points. The data were provided by the Member States in reply to the following questions:

* Who is responsible for the implementation (putting into practice) of the UN Convention, i.e the focal point foreseen in article 33(1) of the Convention?

* Have you established a coordination mechanism foreseen in article 33(1) of the Convention?

1. Responsible Authorities:

Austria

Federal Ministry of Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (implementation)

Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs (ratification)

Coordination mechanism:

Federal Disability Advisory Board (Ministry of Social Affairs and Consumer Protection) with representatives from the Federal Government, the Länder, the Social Insurance Institutions, Stakeholders, Social Partners and the Disability Ombudsman

Focal Point: Federal Ministry of Social Affairs and Consumer Protection

Belgium

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Belgian Disability Forum asbl

Regional governments (Flemish and Walloon), Community governments (German speaking, Flemish and Walloon), Brussels region, CoCoF, Cocom.

Fédéral Administration SPF Sécurité sociale (DG Personnes handicapées)

State secretary for persons with disabilities

High National Council for Persons with disabilities

Focal Point: not decided yet.

Bulgaria

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Directorate for Social Protection and Social Inclusion

National Council on Integration of People with Disabilities.

Council of Ministers, regional governors, regional government in cooperation with civil society.

Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Regional Development and Republic Works, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Culture, National Statistical Institute and regional government.

Focal Point: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. National Council on Integration of People with Disabilities.

Cyprus

Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance

Council of Ministers

House of Representatives

Service for the Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled (Department of Labour)

Rehabilitation Council

Disabled Organizations

Focal Point: not at the moment

Czech Republic

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
Government Board for People with Disabilities
Czech National Disability Council

Focal Point: The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Germany

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Denmark

Ministry of Social Welfare

Civil society: involvement through representative organizations (“Danske Handicaporganisationer”/Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People, “Center for Menneskerettigheder” etc.)

Each sector Ministry is responsible of implementing necessary changes etc. in their area (the principle of sector responsibility)

Coordination: The Ministry of Social Welfare

Focal Point: The Ministry of Social Welfare

Estonia

Ministry of Social Affairs

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministries (Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Finance) and non-governmental organizations (Estonian Chamber of Disabled People, Estonian Union of People with Visual Impairment, Estonian Association of Hard Hearing, Estonian Union of Persons with Mobility Impairment, Association of Estonian Cities, Association of Municipalities of Estonia

Estonian National Council of People with Disabilities

Focal Point: Ministry of Social Affairs

Greece

Ministère des Affaires Etrangères
Zalokosta 3, Athènes

Finland

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Focal Point: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

France

No data available

Hungary

Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour

Focal Point: National Council on Disability Issues

Ireland

Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform

Department of Foreign Affairs

High level interdepartmental committee chaired by Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform with senior officials from the following eleven Irish Government Departments and one Government Office: (Arts, Sport and Tourism; Communications, Energy and Natural Resources; Defence; Education and Science; Environment, Heritage and Local Government; Enterprise, Trade and Employment; Foreign Affairs; Health and Children; Justice, Equality and Law Reform; Social and Family Affairs; Department of Transport; and Office of Public Works.)

Office of the Attorney General

Disability Stakeholder Group. The DSG comprises the following six representative disability bodies: People with Disabilities in Ireland Ltd.; Disability Federation of Ireland; National Federation of Voluntary Bodies; Mental Health Ireland; Not for Profit Organisation; Inclusion Ireland.

Focal Point: Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform

Italy

Ministry for Social Solidarity

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Focal Point: Ministry for Social Solidarity

Lithuania

Minister of Social Security and Labour (Department of Disabled Persons)

Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Transport and Communication, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defence, Ministry of Environment, the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, the Department of Physical Education and Sports under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, and the Lithuanian Disability Forum.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour and subordinated institutions: the Department of Disabled Persons under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Service for Establishing Disability and Capacity for Work under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Dispute Commission under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Centre for Technical Assistance for Disabled under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour

Associations of people with disabilities : Association for the Physically Disabled of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Blind and Visually Impaired People, Lithuanian Association of the Deaf, the Lithuanian Association of Intellectually Challenged People Viltis, the Lithuanian Association of Persons with Disability, Association for Application of Environment to Needs of Persons with Disability, the Lithuanian Special Creativity Association Guboja, the Lithuanian Association for Mentally Challenged Persons, the Lithuanian Association of Persons with Hearing Difficulties, and other.

Focal Point: Minister of Social Security and Labour (Department of Disabled Persons)

Luxembourg

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Family Affairs & Integration

Latvia

Ministry of Welfare

National Council of Disability Affairs (NCDA): There are involved seven field ministers, Chairperson of the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, Ombudsman, Chairman of Public Utilities Commission, Director of Society Integration Foundation, President of Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia and also

representatives from non-governmental organizations (“Apeirons”, Organization for people with disabilities and their friends; Latvian Association of the Deaf; Latvian Society of the Blind; "Rūpju bērns", Latvian organization of disabled children; Latvian Association of Disabled People; Latvian Association of Rehabilitators; Latvian Association of Ergotherapists; “Sustento”, Latvian Umbrella Body for Disability Organizations, ..)

Focal Point: Ministry of Welfare

Malta

The National Commission Persons with Disability (NCPD) established by the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (includes representatives of the main Government Ministries and also the voluntary sector working in the field.

The Malta Federation of Organizations Persons with Disability (MFOPD)

Focal Point: The National Commission Persons with Disability (NCPD)

The Netherlands

Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Focal Point: The ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS)

Poland

Authority responsible for signature and ratification process: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (in cooperation with other competent ministries);

Ratification possible by the President on the basis of a consent expressed by the Parliament in the Act on ratification.

Focal Point: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Portugal

National Institute for the Rehabilitation.

Romania

Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Labour; Family and Equal Opportunities; Ministry of Education; Research and Youth; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Transportation; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Finance; Central authorities subordinated to them; National Authority for Persons with Disabilities

Slovak Republic

Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family

Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society, European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities and the selected sectoral ministers (e.g. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance of the SR)

Representatives of relevant sectors, non-governmental organisations and representatives of self-government, i.e. the Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia

Focal Point: Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family

Slovenia

Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs

Governmental Council for Persons with Disabilities

Relevant ministries

Slovenian National Council of disabled people's organizations

Focal Point: Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs

Spain

Ministry of Education, Social Political and Sports .- Secretary of State for Social Political, Families and Dependence and Disability attention

Ministry of External Affairs and Cooperation (MAEC)

Coordination: General Directorate for the Coordination of Policies on Disability, National Council on Disability (General State Administration + Associations of common public interest+ experts advisors).

Focal Point : The Secretary of State for Social Political, Families and Dependence and Disability attention, through General Directorate for the Coordination of Policies on Disability.

Sweden

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.

Social Services Division of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Coordination: Swedish Agency for Disability Policy Coordination.

Focal Point: Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

UK

Department for Work and Pensions. Office for Disability Issues

The UK Advisory Network on Disability Equality (group of disabled people)

Equality and Human Rights Commission (non-departmental public body (NDPB))

Focal Point: Department for Work and Pensions. Office for Disability Issues

European Community

European Commission

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

2. Contact Persons

Austria

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Bulgaria

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Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Czech Republic

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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The Netherlands

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Portugal

No data available

Romania

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Slovak Republic

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Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family

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European Community

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Annex 3: Websites

Czech Republic

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs: www.mpsv.cz

Czech National Disability Council: www.nrzp.cz

Estonia

Ministry of Social Affairs www.sm.ee

Estonian Chamber of People with disabilities www.epikoda.ee

Finland

Electronic Treaty Data Base www.finlex.fi

Ministry of Foreign Affairs forin.finland.fi

Germany

www.bmas.de

Greece

Ministry of Health and Social Security: www.mohaw.gr,

National Confederation of People with Disabilities: www.esaea.gr

Hungary

<http://www.szmm.gov.hu>

Italy

Ministry for Social Solidarity

www.solidarietasociale.gov.it

Lithuania

Ministry of Social Security and Labour and Department of Disabled People

http://www.ndt.lt/id-teises_aktai.html; <http://www.socmin.lt/>

Malta

National Commission Persons with Disability (NCPD) website <http://www.knpd.org/>.

Poland

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy website: www.mpips.gov.pl

Portugal

www.inr.pt/content/1/50/organizacao-das-nacoes-unidas

Slovenia

http://www.mddsz.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/invalidi/konvencija_o_pravicah_invalidov

/

Spain

Ministry of Education, Social Polical and Sports : www.mec.es

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation: www.maec.es

Comité Español de Representantes de Personas con discapacidad (CERMI): www.cermi.es

Sweden

Government's home page: www.gov.se

UK

www.officefordisability.gov.uk

Contains English language Easy Read version of the Convention.

Other relevant websites

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/>

www.easpd.eu

www.communityforall.eu

www.handicap.dk

www.nrozp.sk

www.cnditalia.it

www.superando.it

www.edf-feph.org/

www.epr.eu

<http://www.un-convention.info/index.html>

Independent (part funded by the UK Government) UK website dedicated to promoting disabled persons human rights.