



ENNHRI CRPD WORKING GROUP

Annual Report
2020

**Global Pandemic and Persons with
Disabilities – Overcoming New Barriers**



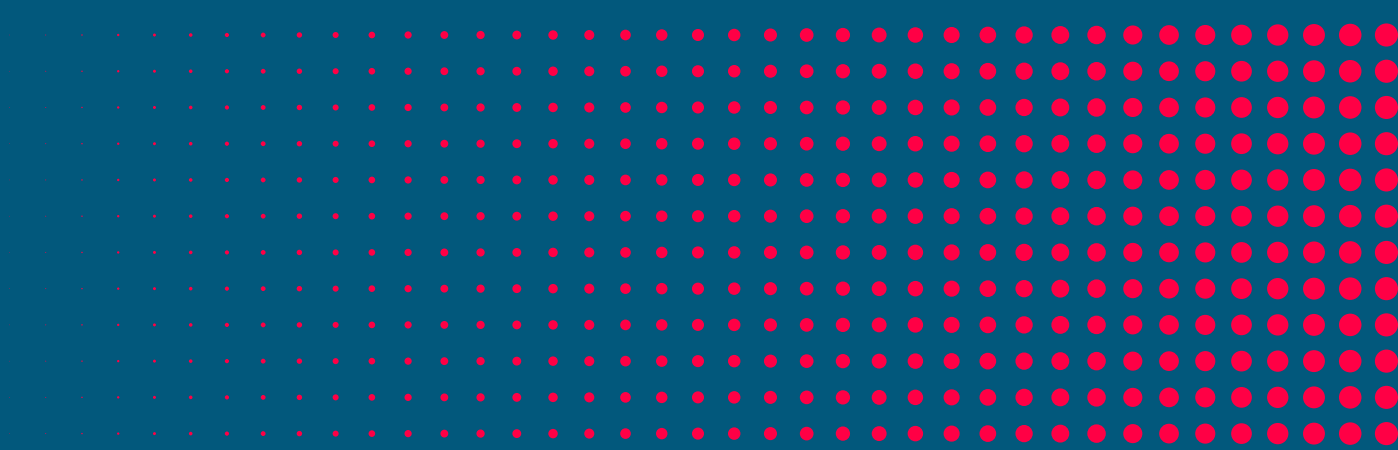
The rights of persons with disabilities is an important part of the work of European National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), both individually and collectively through ENNHRI. Persons with disabilities must enjoy all human rights on an equal basis with others. However, they may face multiple barriers and discrimination, such as a lack of access to inclusive education, discrimination when seeking employment and being subjected to violence and abuse.

ENNHRI CRPD Working Group brings together over 30 European NHRIs, in addition to Observers such as Equality Bodies, the EU's CRPD Monitoring Framework and leading organizations in this field. The Working Group acts as a hub of experts in this area and a platform to exchange knowledge, good practices and challenges that NHRIs face when working on the rights of persons with disabilities. It also coordinates engagement with regional actors at the EU and Council of Europe level.

WG objectives for 2020:

- Strengthening the capacity of NHRIs to work on the rights of persons with disabilities, with a focus on an exchange of practices and peer support;
- Bringing the collective voice of NHRIs to relevant discussions on legislative or policy developments in the field of disability in the European Union and Council of Europe;
- Ensuring synergies between regional and international developments on the rights of persons with disabilities;
- Keeping WG members informed about relevant developments on disability rights in Europe.





2020 was not an ordinary year for the entire globe. On March 11, 2020 WHO announced the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic. The new situation was challenging for NHRIs, and the Working Group served to unite those institutions. It was crucial to set new goal of adapting Working Group activities to the new reality, which had significantly affected human rights and especially rights of persons with disabilities, in the situation of lockdown, social distancing, isolation, terminated rehabilitation and support services, and risks faced by large residential institutions.

ENNHRI CRPD WG has been working actively in the new circumstances and doing its best to facilitate communication and sharing of information and best practices between its members. The Group held several online meetings and discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the rights of persons with disabilities, exchanged information and good practices and coordinated future work. ENNHRI CRPD WG also held a meeting with EU CRPD Monitoring Framework to discuss a review of the EU CRPD implementation by the UN CRPD Committee.

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

2 Newsletters

Rights of Persons with Disabilities during COVID-19 and beyond (February – June 2020); Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Important Role of NHRIs, Regional and International Organizations (July – September 2020).

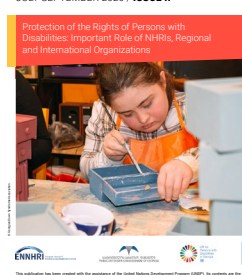
ENNHRI CRPD WORKING GROUP NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY-JUNE 2020 / ISSUE I



ENNHRI CRPD WORKING GROUP NEWSLETTER

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2020 / ISSUE II



3 WG meetings

1. On 9 April 2020, over 20 representatives from ENNHRI members and close partners participated in a web-meeting on the impact of COVID-19 on the rights of persons with disabilities;
2. On 20 May 2020, 24 ENNHRI members and close partners participated in an on-line meeting of ENNHRI's CRPD Working Group;

3. The online meeting brought together 16 ENNHRI members and representatives of 7 observers and facilitated an open discussion and exchange of views on a variety of issues, including in relation to the review of the EU CRPD implementation by the UN CRPD Committee.

1 Webinar

September 23, 2020, Online webinar on: “On-site Monitoring of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities during COVID-19 Pandemic”. The online meeting was an opportunity for representatives of NHRIs responsible for the monitoring of the rights of persons with disabilities to receive

information about guidelines on conducting monitoring visits during the pandemic from the representatives of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) and European Disability Forum.



Joint report with Mental Health Europe

ENNHRI and Mental Health Europe have published a new report on supported decision-making for people with disabilities. It highlights what supported decision-making entails in theory and in practice, as well as outlining developments in Europe and the role of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in ensuring compliance with international standards.

1 survey

Survey on the views regarding how to best work and communicate together as a group.

2020 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Effective communication was strengthened between the group members, which is particularly important for the member-led working group. In 2020, the group conducted an internal survey on how to improve communication and how to work more closely together. The implementation of the survey results in practice enabled us to adapt the communication rules and activities of the group to the interests of the group members, which had a positive impact on the general activities of the group. Despite the pandemic, regular communication channels have been created, which we actively use in our activities.

NHRIs strengthened their capacity to work on the rights of persons with disabilities, with a focus on an exchange of practices and peer support, especially in the immediate response to the challenges created by the coronavirus pandemic. At the very early stages of the pandemic, in April, a special working group meeting was held to discuss the challenges facing the group members and the response of the working group to the pandemic. The group has been sharing its practices through emails and meetings and we have been supporting each other with practical advice throughout this period. The webinar also allowed us to identify best practices and share experience in the field of monitoring the institutions for

persons with disabilities, one of the most vulnerable groups to the pandemic.

For the purpose of **promoting the activities of the group**, following the initiative of the Georgian Public Defender's Office, a newsletter was drawn up. The newsletter reflects both the activities of the group members, as well as international and regional news relating to the rights of persons with disabilities. The first issue of the newsletter was dedicated to the situation of persons with disabilities in the context of the pandemic. The second issue of the newsletter was dedicated to the important role of NHRIs, regional and international organizations.

We enhanced our cooperation and joint work with various institutions at the EU and Council of Europe level, as well as NGOs. Representatives of EQUINET, GANHRI and other organizations are represented as observers in the working group. In 2020, a joint meeting was held with the EU CRPD Monitoring Framework, which was attended by a representative of the European Ombudsman, Members of the European Parliament, FRA, EDF and other partners. The Working group will continue Ensuring synergies between regional and international developments on the rights of persons with disabilities through active cooperation with different international stakeholders.

