



IF Information Package on the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



Introduction

The International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (IF) represents persons with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (SBH) and their families worldwide.

IF advocates for the rights of persons with SBH in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Advocacy towards the European Union (EU) on SBH relevant policies and rights is an important aspect of that work.

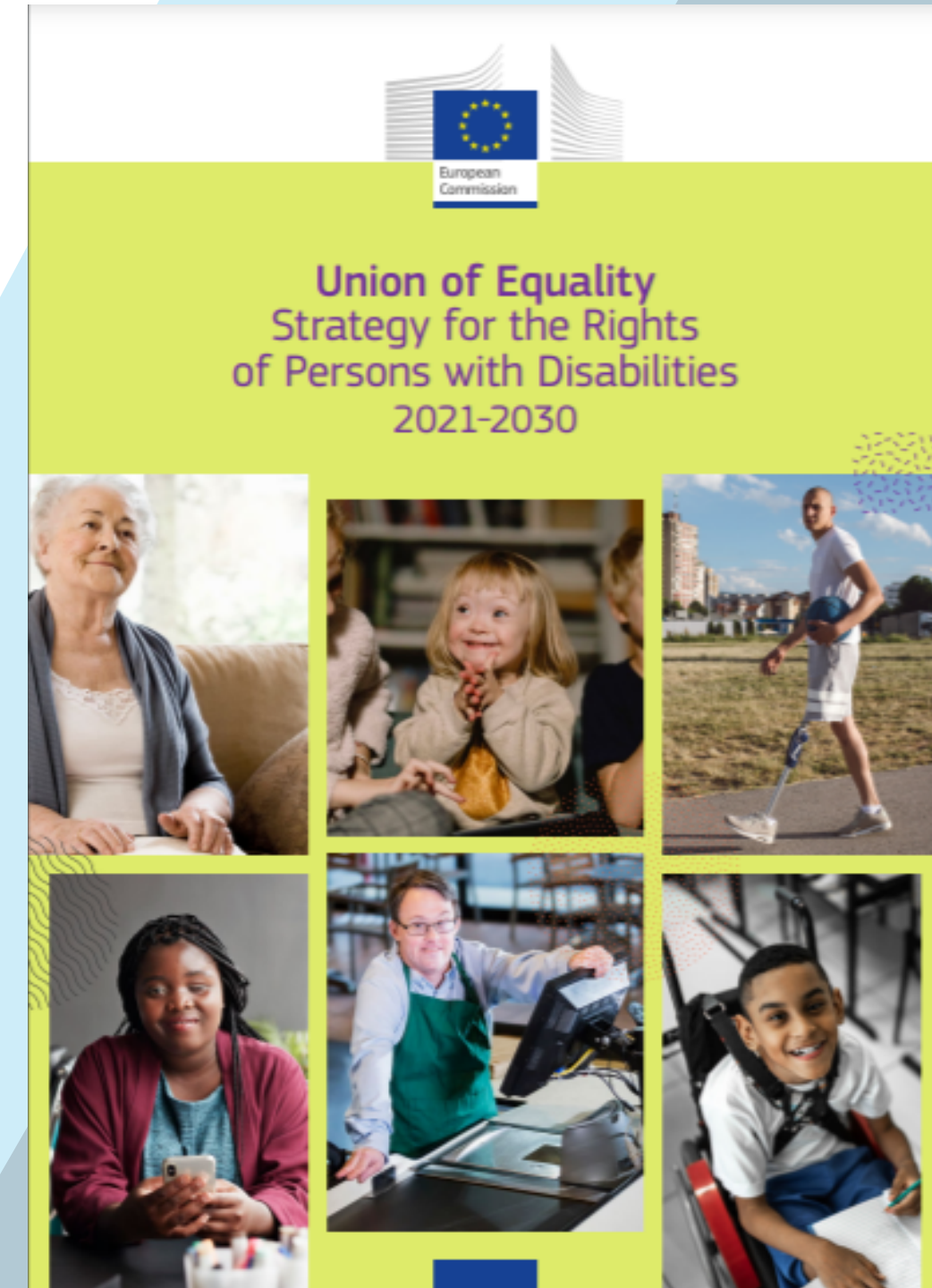
In this information package you will find information on:

- **What is the ESRPD?**
- **How was it created?**
- **How does it work?**
- **Why is the ESRPD important for advocacy on disability rights?**
- **Is the ESRPD relevant for the national level?**
- **How can national SBH associations be involved in the implementation of ESRPD?**
- **What does IF do?**
- **Useful information**
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What is the ESRPD?

In March 2021 the European Commission adopted the 'Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030'. The strategy is also known by the acronym ESRPD.

The ESRPD replaces the previous 'European Disability Strategy 2010-2020'. These strategies are non-binding documents created by the European Commission to outline the actions the Commission aims to implement in order to advance the rights of persons with disabilities in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).



What is the ESRPD?

How was it created?

Before the European Commission begins drafting initiatives such as the ESRPD certain processes must be initiated. This includes inter-institutional consultations which is a process where the different EU institutions consult with each other to ensure that they are all in an agreement before a proposal is published. However, the EU also initiates consultations with external stakeholders.

IF took an active part in those consultations in order to ensure that the rights and needs of the SBH community were considered in the drafting of the ESRPD.

How does it work?

The ESRPD is divided into 10 sections. Sections 2 - 9 are dedicated to specific topics. In these sections the problem is outlined and, depending on the topic of the section, the actions needed to tackle the problem are listed.

The sections are also divided into subsections where needed. For example, Section 5 is equality and non-discrimination, section 5.2 is equal access to social protection, healthcare, education and goods and services including housing.

In the sections you will find different lists of actions. This is where the ESRPD lists the actions which the European Commission wants to achieve in order to advance the rights of persons with disabilities. Some, but not all, sections have 'flagship initiatives' ; these are projects which the European Commission considers to be of high importance.

How does it work?

As it is a non-binding document the ESRPD does not impose a legal obligation on EU Member States or any of the EU institutions.

The European Commission does not have the power (also referred to as competency) to act on all of the ambitions layed out in the ESRPD. That is why in the ESRPD the list of actions are preceded by phrases such as 'the Commission will' or 'the Commission calls on Member States to'.

This is to differentiate between proposed actions where the European Commission has the power to act and those actions where EU Member States have the competency, in which case the European Commission can only 'call on' meaning they are requesting politely that the Member States take action but cannot force them to do so.

It is important when reading the ESRPD to understand when the European Commission is stating that they will take action and where they are simply making suggestions to other EU institutions or Member States.



Why is the ESRPD important for advocacy on disability rights?



As a State Party to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) the EU is obliged to implement and adhere to its principles and the European Commission is the primary actor in achieving this goal.

From a practical point of view the ESRPD provides a list of expected initiatives and a tentative timeline for when to expect those initiatives to happen. This can be extremely useful for individuals and organisations interested in disability rights advocacy on the EU and national level. Early planning and actions are very important in effective policy and advocacy strategies as it enables activists to reach policy makers before drafting has concluded. This increases the likelihood that recommendations from advocates are incorporated into the project.

Disability strategies such as the ESRPD, also allow persons with disabilities and their representative organisations such as IF to take part in the long-term planning of disability related policies and advance the implementation of the UNCRPD.



Is the ESRPD relevant for the national level?

The EU is a very important actor both for its Member States as well as for countries beyond its borders. Actions taken on the EU level do have a significant impact on the lives of individuals and on policies on the national level.

In addition, the ESRPD calls on Member States to take certain actions too. These include important policies such as adopting the Commission Proposal for a horizontal directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment outside the field of employment including disability.

This is a call to national policy makers and therefore national advocacy is essential for continued progress.

How can national SBH associations be involved in the implementation of ESRPD?

The ESRPD is intended to further the implementation of the UNCRPD in the EU. Understanding the ESRPD and incorporating its contents into national level advocacy for disability rights is beneficial for progress on the national and European level. National SBH associations can for example use the ESRPD to highlight to local and national policy makers areas that are in need of action on the local, national and European level.

The benefit of doing so is that it connects the rights and needs of the SBH community to wider developments in disability rights, EU policies and international human rights. This is very useful for increasing awareness of the rights and needs of the SBH community.

As highlighted in other IF publications there are also often opportunities on the EU level for national associations to get involved.

Being actively involved in IF activities, meetings and consultations is also an important way for national SBH associations to get involved with the implementation of the ESRPD.

What does IF do?



IF represents the interests and rights of the global SBH community.

IF has been very active in advocating for the rights and needs of the SBH community in the evaluation of the previous disability strategy and for the drafting of the ESRPD.

Following the publication of the ESRPD IF analysed and published its recommendations for the effective implementation of the strategy. In this statement IF outlined its recommendations to the European Commission, the European Parliament and IF's European member associations.

The recommendations focused on key issues such as:

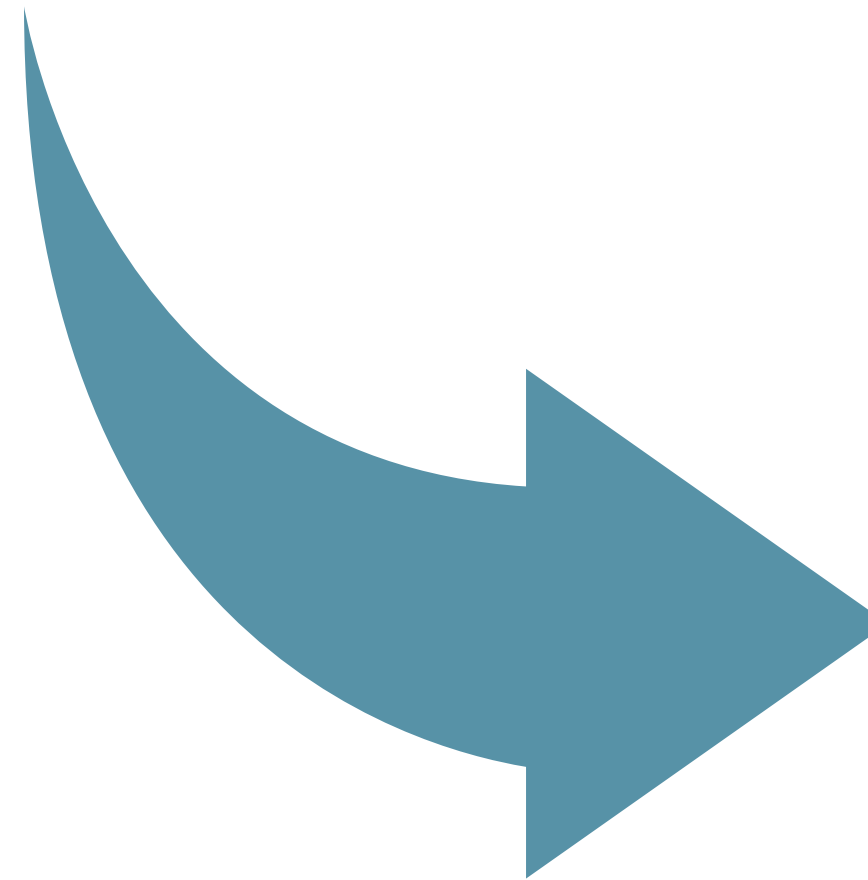
- **Mainstreaming multidisciplinary care, including mental health, ageing, sexuality and reproductive health in all healthcare related initiatives;**
- **To mainstream disability into EU health policy initiatives;**
- **For EU institutions to ensure full and effective consultations with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations and to make those processes accessible and easy to use;**
- **To advocate to local, national and EU level policy makers to ensure that the priorities of the SBH community are taken into consideration in the implementation of the strategy.**

What does IF do?

IF continues to be a strong advocate for the rights and needs of the SBH community towards international organisations and institutions such as the EU.

IF provides support and capacity building to its member associations.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to the IF Team if you have any questions regarding advocacy, disability, health or other SBH relevant policies.



Human Rights



Networking



Policy



Advocacy



Support



Capacity Building


Useful information




 IF Information package on the European Union: <https://www.ifglobal.org/publications/if-information-package-on-the-european-union/>

 IF Information Package on the UNCRPD and the Reporting Cycle: <https://www.ifglobal.org/publications/if-information-package-on-the-uncrpd-and-the-reporting-cycle/>

Relevant IF Statements:

 Press release: IF urges effective implementation of the new European Union Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: <https://www.ifglobal.org/publications/press-release-if-urges-effective-implementation-of-the-new-european-union-strategy-for-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/>

 IF Statement on the European Union Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: <https://www.ifglobal.org/publications/ifs-statement-on-the-european-union-strategy-for-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/>

 IF Statement on EU reporting to CRPD: <https://www.ifglobal.org/publications/if-statement-on-eu-reporting-to-crpd/>

 IF Statement on Covid-19: <https://www.ifglobal.org/publications/if-statement-on-covid-19/>

List of acronyms

IF - International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus

SBH - Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus

EU - European Union

UN - United Nations

UNCRPD - United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

ESRPD - European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate
to contact IF at info@ifglobal.org

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