



# « 1million4disability »

## Campaign Press Pack

Brussels, 23 January 2007

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### Campaign launch cocktail – programme

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Date: 23 January 2007

Time : From 18H30 to 20H30

Venue: Hotel Silken Berlaymont, Boulevard Charlemagne 11-19, 1000-Brussels

Contact person: EDF Communication and Press Officer, Helena González-Sancho Boderó, Tel: + 32 2 282 46 04, email: [communication@edf-feph.org](mailto:communication@edf-feph.org)

Programme:

18H30	Welcome drink
19H00	Official launch of the campaign by Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the European Disability Forum, including a short presentation of the campaign website.  EDF President will invite the President of the Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament, Richard Howitt, to say a few words and include his signature on the website.
19H20...	Cocktail

## The Campaign "1million4disability"

**Challenge:** Collection of 1 million signatures in favour of stronger European disability legislation

**Official Launching:** 23 January 2007, Brussels

**Official Closing:** 4 October 2007, Brussels. The signatures collected will be handed out to the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Parliament. A delegation of more than 300 disability leaders from 29 European countries will travel to Brussels for this event. An official closing evening will take place on the same day.

**Campaign life:** 9 months

**Scope:** EU-27 Member States, plus candidate and potential candidate countries, Iceland and Norway.

**Relays:** EDF member organisations in 29 European countries, NGOs, civil society representatives, any individual or organisation that feel concerned and want to take action.

**Target group:** European society, people with and without disabilities, EU decision-makers

**Campaign website:** [www.1million4disability.eu](http://www.1million4disability.eu), available in English and French, and in easy-to read English and French versions. The signature form, the campaign petition and the disability movement declaration is available in all EU official languages. In compliance with the WAI accessibility guidelines.

**Campaign slogan:** "Sign for disability rights. Act today for a better tomorrow"

### The campaign visual identity

The campaign's identity focuses on the capacity of European citizens to improve the lives of 50 million disabled people, by signing up the petition. A simple signature can help to transform society in a better society for disabled people and therefore, in a better society for all.

Several campaign visuals will be produced throughout the campaign.



### **Some background information:**

In 2007 the European Disability Forum celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. 2007 is also the European Year of Equal Opportunities, as well as the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the integration of Article 13 on non-discrimination in the Amsterdam Treaty. An important year for those who face discrimination and in particular, the 50 million disabled people in the European Union.

In the frame of such a key year for the European disability movement, **the "1million4disability" campaign aims to:**

- raise public and political awareness on the daily reality of Europeans with disabilities, who confront discrimination, prejudice and are denied of their most basic rights;
- mobilize the public opinion in favour of a stronger European disability legislation that will effectively protect the rights of disabled people, combating discrimination and enabling them to act as fully active citizens in the EU-27;
- stress the role and moral responsibility of the European Union to work for and protect the rights of all its citizens, with no distinction, under a coordinated and comprehensive approach;
- highlight that disability is above all, a Human Rights issue.

The campaign is the result of a wide and democratic consultation of the European Disability member organisations from all Europe and has been set as a priority for the next forthcoming months.

### **The framework: a Declaration from the disability movement**

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#### **EUROPEAN DISABILITY FORUM 1997-2007: TEN YEARS FIGHTING FOR DISABILITY RIGHTS**

#### **Let's Make Disability Discrimination History Fighting discrimination towards disabled people is an issue for ALL.**

In 1997, European and national organisations of disabled persons and parents of disabled persons who were unable to represent themselves joined together to establish the European Disability Forum (EDF).

EDF is an independent and unique platform in Europe, with a proactive role towards the European Union institutions and decision-makers seeking to protect and defend the rights of disabled persons. Its ambition and day to day activities are to influence the European Union legislation, as each

EU decision and initiative has a direct impact on the everyday lives of European citizens with disabilities at all levels.

A decade has passed since the beginning of our struggle. Today, we, persons with disabilities and the parents of persons with disabilities who cannot represent themselves can look back and be proud of our contribution to the advancement of disability rights in Europe. Today, we must also look ahead and continue to exert influence to strengthen non-discrimination legislative measures in Europe, to ensure that the full integration of disabled persons in society becomes a reality. We must do this because disability is a Human Rights issue and because disability is an issue that concerns us all.

### **DISABILITY BEHIND THE SCENES ....**

- Disabled people are not a small minority: we are more than 50 million EU citizens with a disability, representing more than **10% of the EU population**.
- **One family in four** has a member with a disability.
- We are **more than twice as unlikely** to reach third level education as non disabled persons.
- Many disabled children do not have equal opportunities to **access education**.
- Our source of **income** is less likely to be earnings and more likely to be a statutory benefit. Moreover, our income **is generally significantly lower** than the income of non-disabled persons.
- We face **unemployment, twice as high** than non-disabled persons.
- We live in an **inaccessible environment**, despite the fact that we represent, together with other persons with temporarily reduced mobility, 40% of the population.
- Amongst disabled persons, **one out of two persons has never participated in leisure, cultural or sport activities**, and has never had access to theatres, to cinemas, to concerts, to libraries...
- We are confronted with **isolation and prejudice**.
- There are more than 200.000 persons with disabilities **forced to live in closed institutions**, without the right to make choices in life and deprived of the most fundamental human rights.
- The **free movement of persons** in the European Union is just an ideal for us, because most of the time barriers prevent us from leaving the place we live in.

## **1997-2007: TEN YEARS PAVING THE WAY**

The very first achievement of the European Disability Forum in 1997 opened the path to a new era for persons with disabilities in Europe: the adoption of non-discrimination Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty, the very first and unique reference to disability in the EU Treaty. A major success that established the legal basis to protect disabled people from discrimination and gave the European Union responsibility to work towards this end. Such an achievement would have never been possible without the European wide mobilization of disabled persons and their representative organisations.

After ten years of intensive work at EU and national level, the European Disability Forum has been behind countless European initiatives and legislative decisions that have changed and will continue to change the lives of disabled people in all Europe:

- An increasing number of European cities offer accessible public transport to persons with reduced mobility, contributing to their autonomy and mobility;
- Employers must apply recruitment procedures on the basis of equal opportunities and offer to adapt the workplace to meet the needs of the disabled person;
- A disabled person can start a legal complaint procedure after he/she found himself/herself discriminated by his/her employer while applying to a job or a training;
- An increasing number of public websites are accessible to persons with disabilities;
- An increasing number of lifts are designed to meet accessibility standards;
- An increasing number of information and communication technology products and services such as mobile phones, computer hardware and software,... are now accessible to blind and partially sighted persons;
- Euro coins and banknotes are the most accessible currency ever in Europe for visually impaired persons;
- An increasing number of medicines are sold with informative labelling in Braille;
- Persons with disabilities are entitled to benefit from a full quality assistance service when travelling by air from airport of departure to airport of arrival;
- Initiated by EDF, the European Year of Persons with Disabilities in 2003, created the opportunity to raise awareness about disability from the

European to local level and many governmental and legislative initiatives have been put in place in various EU countries;

- When awarding public contracts for products or services, public authorities must take into consideration accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities;
- 35 % of EU funding for regional and local areas must respect the principles of non-discrimination and full accessibility for disabled persons.
- The International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, strongly promoted by the European Disability Forum, and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2006, is the first legally binding international instrument applicable on the European Union and its member states.

## **2007 AND BEYOND: WE MUST MOBILIZE TO PROTECT OUR RIGHTS!**

### **> Access to legal protection, legal capacity and equal recognition before the law**

We, persons with disabilities, should be entitled just as any other European citizen, to recognition before the law. In line with the existing international Human Rights instruments, we must be able to enjoy legal capacity and when needed, benefit from support to enjoy this legal capacity in all aspects of life, including the right to property, to manage our own finances, to take decisions and make choices affecting our lives and participation in society.

### **> Education for All**

We, as disabled children and adults, must benefit from **equal access** to education; be able to receive education, be special or ordinary, in **inclusive settings** and must be given the **choice** to decide, in dialogue with our families, on our educational needs and wishes.

### **> Equal treatment in employment**

We, like other citizens, must benefit from **equal treatment** when applying for employment and in job retention. Furthermore, we must benefit from **equal salary and rights** for equal professional status and competences.

Finally, employers must be ready to adapt the workplace to accommodate to the needs of the disabled person.

### **> Social protection, including social security**

We, disabled citizens, have a right to equal opportunities to move to another EU country, to study, to work, to join a family member, etc. This requires the removal of obstacles in social protection systems.

### > **To live independently in the community and make our own choices in life**

We, like other citizens, must be given the possibility to live in the place of our **choice**, to make our **own decisions**, to use services ensuring our **independence** and **equal participation** (e.g. right for personal assistance). Families must be recognized as playing a vital role in the life choices, education and social inclusion of disabled children and persons with complex dependency needs who are unable to represent themselves. Resources and support, tailored to the needs of disabled persons and their families, must be provided.

### > **Access to health and long term care**

We, like other citizens, and in particular as persons whose physical and/or mental integrity is compromised, must have the right to access **quality, effective and affordable health and care services** tailored to the needs and consent of each individual, including early diagnosis, prompt intervention, rehabilitation and provision of the necessary resources for our maximum development.

### > **Access to goods and services**

We, like other consumers, must be able to benefit and choose from the same full range of goods and services. Legislative measures must be taken to ensure that all goods and services are to be designed and delivered so that they are fully accessible on the basis of the **“design for all” principle**.

### > **Access to culture, leisure and sports**

We, like other citizens, must be able to **fully participate** in all cultural, leisure and sports activities, which must be fully accessible, and we must be able to express ourselves culturally and artistically.

### > **Access to public transport**

We, like all other citizens, must be enabled **to travel around freely and independently**, by bus, train, plane or boat, to our chosen destination.

### > **Access to public infrastructures**

We, like other citizens, must be able to access fully, freely and independently, also when accompanied by a guide or service dog, any **public buildings and public space**, such as parks, playgrounds, restaurants, bars, theaters, shopping malls, museums, or any part of the **built environment**, such as pavements, streets, pedestrian crossings in

safety. Legislative measures must be taken to make the built environment fully accessible on the basis of the **“design for all” principle**.

#### **> Accessible communication and information**

We, like other citizens, must have full access to **all information** in the private and public sector in accessible formats (electronic format, writing, Braille, large print, sign language, audio, subtitling, easy to understand text). We must have access to the full range of **electronic communication tools** offered on the market, to enable us to fully participate in the socio-economic life of society.

#### **> Banning all discriminatory and stereotyping perceptions of persons with disabilities**

We, disabled women and men, call for **respect of our dignity** in political and public life, in advertising and in the media.

#### **> Equal access for voting and participation in electoral campaigns**

We, like other citizens, must enjoy freely and independently our voting rights (including the right to vote in secret and the provision of accessible venues, voting materials and electoral documents) and our right to be elected to public office.

### **THE DISABILITY MOVEMENT IS CALLING FOR:**

**1. Comprehensive non-discrimination legislation to protect persons with disabilities**, to remove existing barriers, to avoid the establishment of new barriers, to achieve equal opportunities and equal participation in all aspects of life.

**2. A swift signature and ratification** process by the European Communities and the EU Member States of the **International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.

**3.** Concrete measures, targets and objectives ensuring **equal treatment in education** and participation in social life for disabled children through regional, national and European policies.

**4.** Concrete measures, targets and objectives ensuring **equal treatment in employment** through regional, national and European policies.

**5.** National reforms aiming at **deinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities and provision of alternatives for independent and community living**, through quality and affordable services supported by adequate funding, including at EU level;

**6. Basic standards of accessibility and non-discrimination requirements in all funding instruments**, including at EU level, to avoid creating new barriers;

**7. Facts and figures about disability**, that will reflect the real situation and living conditions of disabled people in Europe to provide a sound basis for the development of legislative measures and initiatives to effectively protect our rights.

**8. Common standards and legislation to ensure full access to products and services** across the European Union;

**We, people with disabilities in Europe, call on the European Union, the national, regional and local authorities, in close cooperation with all the civil society actors to banish discrimination to the annals of European History!**

**TAKE A STEP, MAKE A CHANGE**

**One minute of your time can change the lives of more than 50 million persons**

**SIGN at [www.1million4disability.eu](http://www.1million4disability.eu)**

## **The signature petition**

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**1 million 4 disability.eu**  
**I take a stand for disability rights**  
**We are 1 000 000 European citizens signing to make a difference**

### **BECAUSE I AM AWARE THAT ...**

- ☞... there are more than 50 million citizens in Europe with a disability
- ☞... persons with disabilities face discrimination and prejudice on a daily basis and in all fields of life
- ☞... persons with disabilities do not have equal access to education, are on the top of unemployment rates and generally live on significantly lower income
- ☞... persons with disabilities cannot move around freely, go to work, to a restaurant, to theatres, to cinemas, to libraries, shopping, meet friends, or any other daily activity, due to inaccessible public transport, pavements or buildings

- ☞... free movement of disabled persons in the European Union is just an ideal due to legislative barriers preventing to leave the home country.
- ☞... more than 200.000 disabled persons in Europe are forced to live in closed institutions deprived of the most fundamental human rights

### **...AND I BELIEVE IN**

in a European Union that **works for** and **protects the rights of all** its citizens, with no distinction:

- 📖 the right to equal access to education
- 📖 the right to equal treatment in employment
- 📖 the right to equal recognition and equal protection before the law
- 📖 the right to social protection, health and long-term care services
- 📖 the right to live independently in the community
- 📖 the right to access public transport, buildings and other architectural infrastructures
- 📖 the right to access information and communication technologies and services
- 📖 the right to access products for daily use

### **TODAY, I TAKE A STAND!**

**For a European Union in which disabled persons' rights are protected through effective legislation, combating all forms of discrimination and guaranteeing the full inclusion of more than 50 million citizens with disabilities in the European society**

**(signature form)**

## **Behind the campaign: what is the European Disability Forum?**

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In 1996 a significant number of organisations of disabled people and their families decided to establish an independent European platform to highlight the common concerns of all disability groups and act as representative for all disabled citizens in a process of constant dialogue with the European Union institutions.

The mission statement of EDF is to promote equal opportunities for all disabled people and to protect their human rights, while always guaranteeing their direct involvement in all decision taken that concern them.

The EDF is behind countless European initiatives and legislative decisions that contribute to a better inclusion of disabled people within society. Today, its network includes organisations from all 27 EU Member States

as well as organisations from Iceland and Norway. EDF members are also European-wide networks representing specific impairment groups. In turn, all of them have their own networks. This helps make the EDF a vast and solid chain mail of organisations representing disabled people throughout Europe. The diversity of its constituent organisations and networks highlights the diversity of the disability movement and also its specificities and particular concerns.

All EDF decision-making bodies are made up of a large majority of disabled persons or parents of disabled people unable to represent themselves. The democratic and representative structure that is established in the EDF's rules and regulations is a guarantee that all decisions derive from a real consensus and are unequivocally the decisions of its members.

The EDF is a totally independent organisation. Its work plan and timetable are decided upon and implemented by its member organisations. In the framework of the support it brings to civil society and in helping fight against discrimination, the European commission covers 85% of EDF's running costs. This contribution also complemented by the yearly fees of the EDF members and other grants, guarantees that EDF's actions remain independent of any ideological or economic pressure from other interest groups.

### **EDF's values**

- ✓ ***Self-advocacy:*** we are an organisation where disabled people and parents of disabled people unable to represent themselves are the decision makers.
- ✓ ***Involvement:*** we believe in and campaign for the right of disabled people to be fully involved in policy-making process through their representative organisations, our guiding principle being: "nothing about disabled people without disabled people".
- ✓ ***Independence:*** we make sure that our organisation remains independent, and that it is our members who decide upon the EDF work programme and policy positions.
- ✓ ***Visibility:*** we demand that the rights of disabled people are visible in all sectors of life.
- ✓ ***Rights-based inclusion:*** we fight for the inclusion of disabled people in society as a right; we refuse the out-of-date charitable approach to disability.
- ✓ ***Solidarity:*** we work to build a stronger and more united disability movement, with special attention to those with significant and multiple disabilities, those who face multiple discrimination or any other form of marginalisation.

- ✓ **Partnership:** we build alliances with all those organisations that share our goals and help us to promote the rights of disabled people. Our extensive network is our strength. With our partners we exchange ideas and experience, enriching our work with their know-how and expertise.

### **EDF priority work areas**

- ✓ **Capacity building of disability organisations in all EU Member States and candidate countries;**
- ✓ **Campaign for disability rights,** including the implementation and progress of non-discrimination legislation, human rights, facilitating Court action...
- ✓ **Mainstreaming of the disability agenda** in specific areas such as:
  - EU action plan on the situation of disabled people in the Member States;
  - Employment, social policy and social security;
  - Structural funds;
  - Air, rail and maritime transport;
  - Built environment;
  - Information society, telecommunications and assistive technologies;
  - Services of general interest;
  - Education, culture, media and sport;
  - Research and development;
  - Consumer policy and standardisation;
  - Development cooperation
- ✓ **Ensuring that no groups of disabled people are excluded** (women, people with complex dependency needs, youth, people from ethnic minorities, people with mental health problems and with intellectual impairments)
- ✓ **Building of alliances** with key stakeholders, including employers, trade unions, media, local authorities, industry.

## EDF's Major achievements in the past 10 years

<b>1993-1996</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>
24 organisations take part in the European Community programme HELIOS II, for the promotion of equal opportunities for disabled people and their improved integration at all levels of society	First edition of the European Day of People with Disabilities	The founding members of EDF sign the statutes of what will become the first independent European platform for disabled people	The EDF starts up its activities. The collective voice of disabled people towards the European Institutions is born.
<b>1997</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2003</b>
Signature of the Amsterdam Treaty. EDF succeeds in introducing Article 13 thereby guaranteeing the protection of disabled people against all forms of discrimination.	Lobbying by the EDF leads to the adoption of the first European directive on non-discrimination I employment and at the work place, also covering disabled people.  Integration of two disability references in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights	The Forum obtains the integration of standardised norms for accessibility to public city buses as part of a European directive.	The EDF convinces the European Union to declare 2003 "European Year of People with Disabilities". Many initiatives and new legislations followed on from this Year.
<b>2004</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Thanks to a campaign led by the EDF, specific clauses on the employment of, and accessibility for disabled people are introduced into the European Directives on Public Procurement.	In parallel to the enlargement of the European Union the EDF extends its members' network to the new Member States and candidates to accession. 29 countries are now represented in EDF.	This year will be marked by two big EDF successes; firstly, the adoption of a Regulation on the rights of disabled air passengers; secondly, the integration of the principle of non-discrimination and accessibility within the General Regulation of the European	<b>The EDF celebrates 10 years of existence. Its new goal: achieving far-reaching European legislation against the discrimination of disabled people in all sectors of life, to be obtained thanks to the backing of a million European citizens.</b>

Structural Funds  
2007-2013

In December 2006, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopts a Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. EDF played a key role throughout the negotiation process.