

**4-5 DECEMBER 2025**

# EUROPEAN DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



#EDPD2025  
#UNIONOFEQUALITY  
#EUACCESSCITY

ACCESS CITY  
Award **2026**

# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME



**08:00 – 09:00****Registration and welcome coffee****09:00 – 09:40****Welcoming** by Ana Carla Pereira,  
Director, DG JUST, European Commission**Opening session**

- Hadja Lahbib,  
Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management
- Video message from Sophie Hæstorp Andersen,  
Minister for Social Affairs and Housing, Denmark
- Marilena Evangelou,  
Deputy Minister of Social Welfare, Cyprus
- Ioannis Vardakastanis,  
President of the European Disability Forum (EDF)

**09:40 – 10:40****Panel 1 - Forging Ahead:  
The Next Chapter in implementing the Strategy for  
the Rights of persons with Disabilities 2021-2030****Moderators**

Ana Carla Pereira,  
Director, DG JUST, European Commission  
Catherine Naughton,  
Executive Director, European Disability Forum

**Speakers**

- Personal testimony of Nicole Marinos,  
Disability advocate, AHEAD
- Li Andersson,  
Chair of the EMPL Committee, European Parliament
- Marie-Pierre Le Breton,  
President of the Permanent Group on Disability Rights,  
European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- Markus Schefer,  
Member of the UNCRPD Committee

**10:40 – 11:10****Coffee break****11:10 – 12:30****Panel 1 (continued)****Q&A and discussion**

**12:30 – 14:00****Lunch****14:00 – 15:15****Panel 2 - Funding the Union of Equality:  
towards a Disability-Inclusive EU budget****Moderators**

Lucie Davoine,  
Head of Unit, DG JUST, European Commission

Thomas Bignal,  
Secretary General of the European Association of Service  
providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD)

**Speakers**

- Personal testimony of Patrick Luypaert,  
ICT Officer, Emino
- Maria Toumazou,  
Social Attaché, Permanent Representation of Cyprus  
to the European Union - Presentation of ESF+  
projects in Cyprus
- Nadia Hadad,  
Co-chair of the Board of the European Network  
on Independent Living (ENIL) and  
Paulina Sobolewska,  
Independent Living Institute in Poland – Presentation of  
the EU Funds for Fundamental Rights project (FURI)
- Franck Conrad,  
Head of Unit, DG BUDG, European Commission

**15:15 – 15:45****Coffee break****15:45 – 17:00****Panel 2 (continued)****Q&A and discussion**



**08:00 – 09:00**

**Registration and welcome coffee**

**09:00 – 10:30**

**Access City Award Ceremony**

**10:30 – 11:00**

**Coffee break**

**11:00 – 12:30**

**Panel 3 - Preparedness and crisis management inclusive of persons with disabilities**

**Moderators**

Inmaculada Placencia Porrero,  
Senior Expert, DG JUST, European Commission

Alejandro Moledo del Río,  
European Disability Forum (EDF) Deputy Director  
& Head of Policy

**Speakers**

- Personal testimony of Ruslan Topchan,  
Veteran of the Armed Forces of Ukraine
- Hans Das,  
Deputy Director-General, DG ECHO, European Commission
- Jari Honkanen,  
Department for Rescue Services of the Government of  
Finland and  
Veera Florica Rajala,  
President of the Finnish Disability Forum
- Delphine leMaire,  
Policy Officer, European Union of the Deaf (EUD) and  
Lidia Best,  
President at the European Federation of Hard of  
Hearing People (EFHOH) - Emergency communication

**Q&A and discussion**

**12:30 – 13:00**

**Conclusions**

- Pat Clarke,  
Vice-President, EDF
- Ana Carla Pereira,  
Director, DG JUST, European Commission

**13:00 – 14:30**

**Lunch**

DAY 1

# SPEAKER'S BIOGRAPHIES



## Welcoming



### Ana Carla Pereira

Director DG JUST, European Commission

Ana Carla Pereira is Director for 'Equality and non-discrimination' in Directorate-General Justice and Consumers where she is responsible for policies combating discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation. Previously she served as Cabinet Expert and employment&social policy adviser to Nicolas Schmit, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights. As Cabinet Expert, she steered flagship initiatives such as the minimum wage directive, the platform work directive or work on social dialogue. Prior to that, she was Head of Unit in Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion at the European Commission, firstly being responsible for skills and qualifications policies and later on for social protection policies. She graduated in Economics at University of Coimbra (PT) and holds a MA in European Human Resources Studies from the College of Europe (BE). She speaks Portuguese as a mother tongue and is fluent in English, French and Italian.

## Opening session



### Hadja Lahbib

Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management

Hadja Lahbib is the European Commissioner for Equality; Preparedness and Crisis Management. She is responsible for promoting equality and inclusion across the European Union, upholding the rights of minorities with the aim of creating a fairer society and social model for everyone. She also leads the EU's work on preparedness and crisis management, ensuring a more robust and proactive approach to European crisis management and civil preparedness, both within our borders and on the global stage. In this capacity, she plays a central role in shaping and overseeing the EU's humanitarian action worldwide. Working closely with the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), she sets the strategic direction for the Union's humanitarian policy and ensures that EU assistance is principled, needs-based and in full respect of international humanitarian law. Before joining the European Commission, Ms Lahbib served

as Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs, Foreign Trade and the Federal Cultural Institutions of Belgium (2022–2024). She previously had a long career at Belgium’s French-speaking public broadcaster RTBF (1993–2022) as a journalist, news anchor and documentary filmmaker. Ms Lahbib co-led Brussels 2030, preparing the city’s candidacy for the European Capital of Culture. She holds a degree in Journalism and Communication from the Université Libre de Bruxelles, and completed executive training in Change Management and Digital Leadership at the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management.



## **Sophie Hæstorp Andersen**

Minister for Social Affairs and Housing, Denmark

Sophie Hæstorp Andersen is the Danish Minister for Social Affairs and Housing and was appointed in August 2024. She was first elected as member of the Danish Parliament at the age of 27 for the Social Democratic Party before she entered regional and local politics as Chairperson of the Capital Region in Denmark and later Lord Mayor of Copenhagen. The Minister holds a Master in Political Science from the University of Copenhagen. During the Danish Presidency, the minister and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing have focused on the issue of ensuring independent living for persons with disabilities. In October, the Council of the European Union approved Conclusions on the social inclusion of persons with disabilities through the promotion of independent living. And in November, the Danish Presidency hosted a high-level conference on the topic of independent living in Copenhagen.



## **Marilena Evangelou**

Deputy Minister of Social Welfare, Cyprus

Marilena Evangelou was born in Lefkosia on July 9, 1975. She comes from the Kyreneia District and lives in Lefkosia. She studied Communication and Mass Media at the National Kapodistrian University of Athens, and has worked for 25 years as a journalist for various television and radio stations, for newspapers and online media as a reporter, political editor, editor in chief, radio programme presenter, as well as online programme presenter. She also worked in the private sector, in the field of administration, public relations and communication. She has attended numerous seminars in Cyprus and abroad, on, inter alia, issues of Discrimination on the basis of Gender, Nationality and Religion, Equality between Men and Women, Democracy and Human Rights, Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press. She has participated as a speaker in Seminars and conferences, in Cyprus and in Brussels, on Media, Social Media and the Cyprus Problem. She is actively involved in public affairs and has also studied Music. She is married to Antonis Serdaris, from Morfou, and she has two boys, aged 14 and 15.





## **Ioannis Vardakastanis**

President of the European Disability Forum (EDF)

Ioannis Vardakastanis is the President of the European Disability Forum (EDF), the umbrella organization representing the interests of persons with disabilities at the European level. He also serves as President of the National Confederation of Disabled People of Greece (N.C.D.P.), the umbrella organization of the Greek disability movement. Born on the Greek island of Zakynthos in 1957, Mr. Vardakastanis has devoted his life to human rights advocacy, actively contributing at national, European, and international levels. He has been a member of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) since 2010, representing N.C.D.P. in Group III. He currently serves as Vice-President of the Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion (ECO), one of the six specialized sections of the EESC, and as Co-Chair of the EU-Turkey Civil Society Joint Consultative Committee of the EESC.

## **Panel 1 - Forging Ahead: The Next Chapter in implementing the Strategy for the Rights of persons with Disabilities 2021-2030**

### **Moderators**



## **Ana Carla Pereira**

Director DG JUST, European Commission

Ana Carla Pereira is Director for 'Equality and non-discrimination' in Directorate-General Justice and Consumers where she is responsible for policies combating discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation. Previously she served as Cabinet Expert and employment&social policy adviser to Nicolas Schmit, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights. As Cabinet Expert, she steered flagship initiatives such as the minimum wage directive, the platform work directive or work on social dialogue. Prior to that, she was Head of Unit in Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion at the European Commission, firstly being responsible for skills and qualifications policies and later on for social protection policies. She graduated in Economics at University of Coimbra (PT) and holds a MA in European Human Resources Studies from the College of Europe (BE). She speaks Portuguese as a mother tongue and is fluent in English, French and Italian.



## **Catherine Naughton**

Executive Director, European Disability Forum

Catherine Naughton is the Executive Director of the European Disability Forum (EDF), a unique platform which brings together representative organisation of persons with disabilities from across Europe. She was the Vice President of the Social Platform from 2017 until 2023. Social Platform is the largest network of European rights- and value-based civil society organisations working in the social sector.

Catherine has an academic background in public health, and 25 years of experience in the field of disability- with a particular focus on inclusive development: the rights of persons with disabilities in low and middle income countries.

She has worked in many countries, and at the EU and International level in promoting the inclusion of person with disabilities in mainstream development and humanitarian programmes.

## **Speakers**



## **Nicole Sophie Marinos**

Disability advocate, AHEAD

Nicole Sophie Marinos is a passionate advocate for disability inclusion, committed to bridging the gap between policy and lived experience. She currently works with AHEAD supporting graduates with disabilities in accessing inclusive workplaces through a work placement program with tailored needs assessments, employer training, and policy implementation. Previously, she led a Disability Inclusion Project at Laya Healthcare, developing inclusive solutions to improve accessibility and workplace accommodations. At University College Cork, she served as Chairperson of the Access Ambassadors Disability Services Advisory Group, championing student-led recommendations that improved accessibility and engagement. Drawing on over 20 years of lived experience as a hard-of-hearing person, she brings valuable insight into accessibility challenges and universal design. Through public speaking, advocacy, and community engagement, she is committed to advancing education, employment, and policy initiatives that ensure persons with disabilities are not only accommodated but fully included and empowered to thrive.



## **Li Andersson**

Chair of the EMPL Committee, European Parliament

Li Andersson is a Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs. In Finland, she has served as leader of the Left Alliance, Member of Parliament and Minister of Education in the Marin government (2019–2023).

Andersson's political work combines a strong stance on fundamental and human rights, an ambitious environmental and climate policy with policies such as strengthening workers' rights and reducing economic and social inequalities.

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## **Marie-Pierre Le Breton**

President of the Permanent Group on Disability Rights, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

After a professional career centered on personal services, including support for vulnerable people, working with local authorities, national agencies, and a ministry, Marie-Pierre Le Breton shifted to national-level responsibilities within France's leading mutual insurance company and the largest mutual social protection group in the country. In these roles, she combines political, strategic, and corporate responsibilities. At the EESC, where she has served for five years, she chairs the permanent group for people with disabilities.

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## **Markus Schefer**

Member of the UNCRPD Committee

Markus Schefer is a Professor of Public Law at the University of Basel, Switzerland, and has been a member of the U.N. Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities since 2019. He has published widely on constitutional and human rights and, in particular, on the rights of persons with disabilities. On the CRPD Committee, he was Rapporteur for Individual Communications and Chair of the Working Group on Working Methods for six years. He has served as Rapporteur in over 30 State Party review processes, including in the review of the European Union in 2025.

Markus Schefer has taught in numerous workshops on the CRPD Convention in South Korea, Malta, Austria, several countries of Central Asia, and others. He engages closely with organizations of persons with disabilities globally.

On the domestic level, in Switzerland, he has closely participated in drafting laws on the rights of persons with disabilities in seven Cantons and on the Federal level. He co-wrote a popular initiative to amend the Swiss Constitution with a provision on the rights of persons with disabilities. He closely participates in a Swiss program on strategic litigation on the rights of persons with disabilities.

## Panel 2 - Funding the Union of Equality: towards a Disability-Inclusive EU budget

### Moderators



#### Lucie Davoine

Head of Unit, DG JUST, European Commission

Lucie Davoine is Head of the Disability Unit in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers. The mission of the unit is to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities and to promote their full and equal participation in society. In particular, the unit is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-30, and acts as the EU's focal point for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Prior to this, Lucie worked as policy officer in different departments of the European Commission, where she was successively responsible for initiatives on gender equality, access to social protection and the future of work, as well as education and training. She holds a PhD in economics, as well as a master's degree in political sciences.

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#### Thomas Bignal

Secretary General of the European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD)

Thomas Bignal is Secretary General of the European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD). EASPD is a European umbrella network representing over 20.000 organisations across 45 countries active in the field of care and support, employment and training, education, assistive technology and other forms of services. Thomas has been active at EU level for close to 15 years and has particular expertise in areas related to disability rights, social services, social economy and social dialogue. Thomas has a Master's degree in International Law and speaks English and French fluently.

### Speakers



#### Patrick Luypaert

ICT Officer, Emino

Patrick Luypart is a person with a physical disability. He had a dream... To live as much as possible as if his disability didn't exist. There are three things that are very important to him :

1. Independence Driving his own car
2. Having a social network He has many friends and plays billiards in competitions and in a club



3. Working and earning his own money Finding work wasn't easy for him. He came from school where he studied horticulture.

Applying for jobs as a horticulturist with a disability is not ideal. He decided to look for other jobs — a seated job where his disability plays no or less of a role. For example, office and computer work.

He ended up at an organization that helps people discover their talents and find a job. There, he learned to work with a computer, and indeed, it was completely his thing.

He was then offered a job as an administrative assistant.

Over the years, Patrick and his employer kept looking at his talents and didn't stand still.

Now, 23 years later, he has grown into an ICT staff member for the organization with several responsibilities. His dream really came true. Without this organization, and without the support of these projects, his story wouldn't exist. It's so much more than just giving money. They help develop talents; it's helping build dreams. Empowering people with disabilities to participate in society.



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### **Maria Toumazou**

Social Attaché, Permanent Representation of Cyprus to the European Union - Presentation of ESF+ projects in Cyprus

Maria Toumazou holds a BA in Sociology and two Master's degrees, in Social and Development Psychology and in Business Administration. From 2009–2016 she worked as a Social Support Officer at Evangelismos Special School and the School for the Deaf in Cyprus. Since 2016 she has served as a Social Inclusion Officer in the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, leading ESF+ co-funded projects on de-institutionalisation from the Psychiatric Hospital of Cyprus, supported living homes and programmes, and the family intervention and support centre for autism. She coordinated Cyprus's first National Strategy and Action Plan on Autism 2024–2028 and has contributed to disability assessment policy, supported employment and grant schemes for self-employment of persons with disabilities. She regularly lectures and organises disability-related seminars and conferences. Since March 2025 she has been Social Attaché at the Permanent Representation of Cyprus to the EU, following social and equality files under EPSCO and, during the Cyprus Presidency, chairing the Affordable Housing and the Disability files.

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### **Nadia Hadad**

Co-chair of the Board of the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL)

Nadia Hadad, a human right activist who worked as a civil engineer from water-projects to training craftsmen and youth



excluded from education, to support local women's groups in technical issues in many countries. Later, she became a Disability Inclusion Policy Officer in the development cooperation, with Ngo PHOS. She gives lectures and training on the UN CRPD, SDGs, inclusive cooperation, Climate Justice & Disaster Risk Reduction. Nadia is a member of the Brussels Region Advisory Panel and the Belgian Supervising Commission of the independent monitoring mechanism of the UN CRPD in Belgium, for GRIP and of the resonance board of Ethics at the Catholic University Leuven. She's Co-chair of the European Network on Independent Living, member of the Executive Committee of the European Disability Forum, advisory panel of European Disability Experts (ex-ANED), the EC Disability Platform, Co-chair off the IDDC OPD Task group and before the Advisory Panel of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency's FR Platform.

Nadia has a degree in Electromechanical Engineering, specialising in "Mechanical conception", water resources engineering, human ecology, environment coordination, and Philosophy.

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## **Paulina Sobolewska**

Independent Living Institute in Poland – Presentation of the EU Funds for Fundamental Rights project (FURI)

Paulina Sobolewska has a background in law and works with the Polish Forum of Persons with Disabilities and the Independent Living Institute. She is engaged in national and international projects promoting the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities and migrants.

She contributes to the "FURI (EU Funds for Fundamental Rights)" project, focused on ensuring human rights compliance in EU-funded activities, and to the project "It's Ability! Fostering the Integration of Caregivers for Persons with Disabilities among Ukrainian Refugees in Germany, Poland, and Lithuania."

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## **Franck Conrad**

Head of Unit, DG BUDG, European Commission

Franck Conrad is head of unit in DG BUDG at the Commission in charge of policy coordination, performance and communication. He has been working on the preparation of the next Multiannual Financial Framework and is now involved in the negotiations with the European Parliament and the Council. Before joining DG BUDG in 2023, Franck was in the Secretariat-General of the Commission, first working on the coordination of economic policies and as from 2020 on the response to the COVID crisis with the establishment and implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Prior to this, Franck has held several positions in the Commission, including in DG FISMA and DG TAXUD.

DAY 2

# SPEAKER'S BIOGRAPHIES



## **Access City Award Ceremony**

### **Panel 3 - Preparedness and crisis management inclusive of persons with disabilities**

#### **Moderators**



#### **Inmaculada Placencia Porrero**

Senior Expert, DG JUST, European Commission

Inmaculada Placencia Porrero is a Senior Expert in Disability and Inclusion at DG JUST at the European Commission. Her unit is responsible for the coordination of the European policies for persons with disabilities and for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Inmaculada Placencia Porrero holds a degree in Physics and Computer Science and worked in research and development before joining the European Commission in 1991. She has worked on research programmes addressing accessibility and was Deputy Head of Unit for various disability-related units in the Commission. Her work in the “e-inclusion” unit of the Directorate-General for Information Society and Media addresses accessibility policy. While at the Directorate-general for Justice she contributed to disability-related anti-discrimination legislation. She was responsible for the Task Force for the preparation of the European Accessibility Act and remains responsible since its adoption in 2015. She had also a leading role in the preparation of the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. 2021-2030. She is an elected member expert for the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



#### **Alejandro Moledo del Río**

Deputy Director & Head of Policy, European Disability Forum (EDF)

Alejandro Moledo leads and coordinates EDF’s advocacy and policy work at EU level and supports the work of the European Parliament Disability Intergroup.

Among other areas, Mr. Moledo has developed policy positions and recommendations regarding political participation of persons with disabilities, accessible Information and Communication Technologies, Assistive Technologies and different standardisation activities.

Alejandro Moledo holds a Bachelor’s degree with honours in Journalism from University of Valencia (Spain, 2005-2010), including one



year at York University (Canada), as well as a Master's degree in political and corporate communication from University of Navarra and George Washington University (Spain and US, 2011-2012). During his bachelor's studies he worked as communication officer for a political group within the parliament of the Valencia Region (2009 and 2010). After working as a journalist in digital media and a communication agency in Andorra, he started working in a European public affairs company (Madrid) in 2012, before joining the European Disability Forum in 2013. Alejandro Moledo is also member of the Spanish Blind Organisation (ONCE), for which he worked as a journalist and regional representative of young visually impaired people inside the organisation (2008-2011).

### Speakers



#### Ruslan Topchan

Veteran of the Armed Forces of Ukraine

Ruslan Topchan, a 22-year-old veteran of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, is a master's student from Kyiv whose background has been shaped by his family's displacement after the Chernobyl disaster. He later took part in a humanitarian program supporting children affected by its consequences. In early 2022, Ruslan joined the Armed Forces of Ukraine, serving first in territorial defence and later in the reconnaissance unit of the 5th Separate Assault Brigade. In December 2022, during combat operations near New York in Donetsk Region, he sustained injuries that led to the amputation of both lower limbs. After extensive treatment and rehabilitation, he became an active advocate for veterans, drawing on both his military experience and academic training. He works as a demobilized personnel support specialist and contributes to initiatives focused on improving quality of life, expanding opportunities, and strengthening social inclusion for Ukraine's veteran community.



#### Hans Das

Deputy Director-General, DG ECHO, European Commission

Since February 2024, Hans Das is the Deputy Director-General and Chief Operations Officer of the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) of the European Commission. Before that, he was Director for Emergency Management and rescEU, where he oversaw the EU operations coordinated by the European Emergency Response Coordination Centre and the development of a strategic reserve of response capacities called rescEU.

Hans joined the European Commission in 2004. He worked in DG Environment, DG HOME and DG ECHO.

Hans holds a Ph.D. degree in public international law and started his career at Leuven University.



### **Jari Honkanen**

Department for Rescue Services of the Government of Finland

Equality, fairness and seeing possibilities have been essential values in Jari's life. These values have been guiding his career both in the Ministry of the Interior as a senior specialist in civil preparedness since 1999 and in the Finnish Red Cross coordinating voluntary organisations. Different kinds of networks are his working environments and at the same time networks are effective tools to work both horizontally and vertical engaging all relevant actors.

Jari chairs the National Sendai Network, which he sees a relevant podium for its members who represent voluntary organisations, authorities, research. The Network covers well also the civil society, it enables building common understanding of issues that need to be taken in consideration when developing self-preparedness, civil defence and national resilience. Further, he works with civil preparedness issues within the Baltic Sea Region as well as with international projects.

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### **Veera Florica Rajala**

President of the Finnish Disability Forum

Veera Florica Rajala holds a Master of Laws (LL.M.) and serves as Chair of the Finnish Disability Forum.

She is also an advisor in the Finnish disability rights committee and works as an expert at The Swedish-Speaking Federation of the Visually Impaired in Finland. Florica Rajala has also held courses in disability law at the University of Helsinki. In recent years her focus has been on the crisis management and national preparedness for people with focus on people with disabilities. She has also held courses in 72-hour preparedness for crises, with a focus on and for persons with disabilities. She is a deputy member in the Sendi-network. Florica Rajala has also lived and worked in Sweden for parts of her life.

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### **Delphine le Maire**

Policy Officer, European Union of the Deaf (EUD)

Delphine le Maire has been the EUD Policy Officer since 2025. She holds a Master's degree in Law with a specialisation in European Law, as well as a Master of Laws (LL.M.) in International Human Rights Law. She is deeply committed to promoting equal opportunities and advancing a human rights-based approach to deaf people and National Sign Languages. With extensive experience in advocacy and research within both the disability movement and deaf communities at national, European and global levels, Delphine contributes to shaping EU legislative and policy frameworks. Her work includes

developing policy papers, engaging in advocacy with EU institutions, producing capacity-building materials, and disseminating EUD's policy outputs. In 2025, she focused particularly on analysing the implementation of accessibility legislation across EU Member States in relation to the rights of deaf sign language users, with special attention to the European Accessibility Act (EAA), the European Electronic Communications Code (EECC), and the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD).



## Lidia Best

President at the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH)

Lidia Best serves as President of the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People, with 15 years of experience in research, accessibility, policy development, and capacity building. She is dedicated to advancing awareness and transforming societal and systemic perceptions regarding individuals with hearing loss. Beyond her role at EFHOH, Lidia Best chairs the Joint Coordination Activity on Accessibility and Human Factors (JCA-AHF) at the International Telecommunication Union, where she focuses on promoting the participation of experts with disabilities in standardisation efforts within the telecommunications, digital, and multimedia sectors. Lidia's advocacy efforts were formally acknowledged in 2021 when she received the Heather Jackson Award, established to honour deafened changemakers.

## Conclusions



## Pat Clarke

Vice-President, EDF

Pat Clarke is CEO retired of Down Syndrome Ireland and Past- President of Down Syndrome International. Pat is President Emeritus of the European Down Syndrome Association and Vice president of the European Disability Forum. He is the past Chair of the Disability Federation of Ireland and has served on the boards of the Children Rights Alliance Ireland and on the governing body of the International Disability Alliance. He has served on the OSCE-ODIHR Advisory Panel on Political Participation of persons with disabilities. He has attended many meetings of the Council of Europe's CD-BIO committee in relation to it's work on the Oviedo Convention. He has been a long-time advocate for the full inclusion of people with Down syndrome in particular and all people with disabilities in general in society at every level.

