



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

Statement of Slovenia on behalf of the EU

Special Event dedicated to the entry into force of the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, 8th session of the Human Rights Council

The EU welcomes this event and warmly congratulates those first 27 state parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 16 state parties to its Optional Protocol. The EU is proud to have among its members several states that have already managed to finish ratification process and continues to wholeheartedly support full implementation.

The Convention just started its life as a legally binding international instrument. It recognises disability as an element of human diversity and praises the contributions of persons with disabilities to society. We are fully committed to its long-term goal of changing the way the public perceives persons with disabilities, thus changing society itself making it richer but also more understanding and human.

The EU strives for inclusive society free from negative stereotyping, barriers and discrimination affecting persons with disabilities. Its legislative framework comprises prohibition of discrimination based on disability in the employment sphere and ensures equal opportunities, reasonable accommodation and universal design in that sphere. Policy measures, awareness raising and education campaigns in this field were further strengthened during the 2007 Year of equal opportunities for all. Practical and sustainable approach to mainstreaming of disability represents the EU Disability Action Plan 2004 – 2010 which focuses on projects in the field of education and e-learning, e-accessibility, universal design for all, information society, independent living, deinstitutionalization, promotion of employment etc.

Also in the EU, the Convention has already raised public awareness and attention to this important issue, and it is becoming an important tool to fight inertia and ignorance and also to inspire persons with and without disabilities alike. We believe that it will continue to do so with the active involvement of civil society, including persons with disabilities, so that all persons with disabilities can achieve their legitimate aspiration for equality and justice and live up to their full potential.

Involving persons with disabilities in the process of creating and implementing the Convention and its Protocol has been and continues to be crucial. Persons with disabilities contribute enormously through their motivation, selfless hard work, expertise and knowledge.

The EU would like to use this opportunity to encourage again all States to ratify the Convention as soon as possible. We are looking forward to the Secretary-Generals' call for nominations to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and would like to encourage State Parties to put forward nominations of outstanding personalities so that the first Committee can soon live up to the high expectations we all have.

