



Free Movement of Persons in the EU – A luxury for persons with disabilities?

ECAS Conference, 12 April 2017

Marie Denninghaus, European Disability Forum

EDF – Introduction

- EU umbrella organisation representing persons with disabilities
- Interest representation: secretariat in Brussels
- More than 100 members (National disability organisations, European NGOs)
- Main topics: Human rights, social policies, accessibility (transport, built environment, ICTs)
- “Nothing about us without us”



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EDF's Freedom of Movement Campaign since 2011

State of play 2011: Persons with disabilities cannot

- 1) fully enjoy their right to move, work and live in another Member State
- 2) access all mainstream goods and services

→ EDF launched “Freedom of Movement” campaign to raise awareness and call for policy initiatives



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Examples on how the right to Free Movement is restricted for persons with disabilities (part I):

“I did not take up a great job opportunity in another Member State as the school did not agree to accommodate for the specific needs of my son.”
(Antti, 45, Finland)

“I had the pleasure of doing an Erasmus year. However, due to the lack of portability of personal assistance, my mother had to come to stay with me for the whole semester.” (Abdel, 24, Denmark)

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Examples on how the right to Free Movement is restricted for persons with disabilities (part II):

“A colleague of mine from another Member State visited, we are both disabled. I felt so uncomfortable when I was charged less for public transport and entrance to museums than my colleague.” (Amaliija, 41, Lithuania)

“We persons with disabilities do not have the same access to information as other EU citizens, not even to information coming from public services.” (Eliisabet, 39, Estonia)

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The main obstacles to freedom of movement for persons with disabilities:

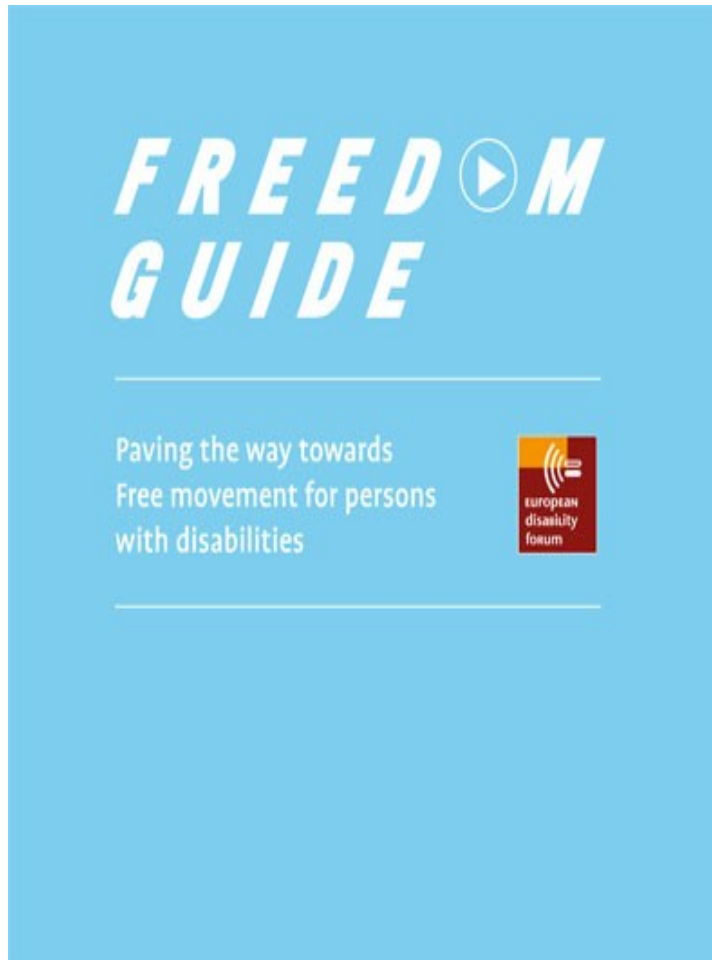
- No portability of social security benefits when moving to another EU Member State
- No recognition of disability status between Member States
- Big differences in social security systems and rights to assistive equipment
- Lack of choice concerning products and services
- Lack of accessible transport & built environment
- Lack of access to (accessible) information



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Taking stock: the Freedom Guide



EDF and partners looked at EU policies of high priority for persons with disabilities:

- Accessibility of goods and services
- Accessibility of transport and the built environment
- Free of movement of persons and what prevents persons with disabilities from using their right

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EDF's top policy demands in 2011:

- Publication of the European Accessibility Act
- Introduction of a European Disability Card
- Adoption of a Directive on the Accessibility of Websites
- The inclusion of accessibility as an award criterion for public procurement and for EU funding

ACCESSIBILITY?
ACT!



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What has been achieved 5 years later (part I):

- Publication of the European Accessibility Act
 - The proposal for the Act was published in December 2015 and is shortly to be adopted by the European Parliament
- Introduction of a European Disability Card
 - A pilot project has been launched with eight Member States to test the introduction of a European Card, mainly for tourism purposes



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What has been achieved 5 years later (part II):

- Adoption of a Directive on the Accessibility of Websites
 - The Directive on the Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Bodies entered into force in December 2016
- The inclusion of accessibility as an award criterion for public procurement and for EU funding
 - The Public Procurement Directive of 2013, the Structural Funds Regulation of 2013, as well as the Trans-European Networks Regulation of 2013 contain accessibility as an award criterion for contracts and EU grants

But there is still a lot to do!

- Implementation and enforcement of existing legislation
- Adoption of a strong and ambitious Accessibility Act
- Widen the EU Disability Card Scheme and include wider advantages
- Stricter controls and better monitoring of the use of EU funding and for public procurement
- Mainstream accessibility in all EU legislation
- Improve participation of persons with disabilities in all law-making procedures as well as standardization
- **Start tackling social security on an EU-wide level**



Thank you!

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