

## **MEPs and organisations call: move the Commission's Disability Unit!**

Freedom of movement, transport, digitalisation, EU funds, anti-discrimination laws, employment strategies... persons with disabilities are affected by virtually all EU laws and policies.

That is why 8 MEPs and 9 disability organisations, led by the European Disability Forum, call for the Unit in charge of disability to be moved to the Secretariat-General, to focus only on disability and to be strengthened in terms of financial and human resources. They further recognise that there was an encouraging step in adding the fulfilment of the EU's obligations towards the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to the mandate of the Commissioner-designate for Equality.

The EU ratified this human rights treaty as a regional body, which means that the EU itself (not only the Member States) has binding obligations that extend to all its competences. This means that the Unit in charge of disability must act as a focal point to make sure the UN Convention is respected and implemented across all policies. Establishing the Disability Unit in a prominent position with adequate resources within the Commission will facilitate the accomplishment of this goal.

Yannis Vardakastanis, President of EDF stated "Commissioner-designate for Equality's Dalli mission letter includes the implementation of the Convention. The Unit in charge of disability needs to be under her direct supervision and have central and direct access to all relevant policies."

This move will not be unprecedented. In 2009 the Unit moved to DG Justice along with other services tackling antidiscrimination and equality, a move later reversed in 2014.

## Notes to editors



The [European Disability Forum](#) is an umbrella organisation of persons with disabilities that defends the interests of 80 million Europeans with disabilities. EDF is a unique platform which brings together representative organisations of persons with disabilities from across Europe. It is run by persons with disabilities and their families. EDF is a strong, united voice of persons with disabilities in Europe