

Manifesto

adopted 11 November 2003

by the European Parliament of Disabled People

from the European Parliament of Disabled People to the European Parliament (and all prospective election candidates) regarding the 2004 European Parliament elections

Whereas:

- (i)** Elections for a new enlarged European Union will take place in June 2004. This is a turning point for Europe. It is an opportunity for future members of the new European Parliament to make strong commitments to concrete changes that will ensure that disabled people can fully enjoy their civil, social, economic and political rights;
- (ii)** Disabled people make up at least 10% of the population and at least one in four people has a disabled family member. Allies such as families, friends, colleagues and assistants are also concerned that society should take the concerns of disabled people into account. Disability issues are issues for everyone and the European Parliament of Disabled people calls on prospective MEPs to listen and address our demands;
- (iii)** Europe has developed without adequately taking into account the needs and the rights of the whole of its population. As a result, there are many types of barriers to the full participation of disabled people in society. The consideration of issues related to disability concerns everyone because their resolution will benefit the whole population;
- (iv)** We the delegates of the European Parliament of Disabled People, 200 official disabled representatives of 50 million disabled people and parents of disabled people unable to represent themselves, call upon all candidates running as prospective members of the European Parliament and all political parties to adopt the following commitments which are crucial to respecting the human rights of disabled people and to ensuring equal opportunities for disabled people in society;
- (v)** The European disability model should be based on a broad definition of human rights and consist of a combination of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that outlaws all forms of discrimination faced by disabled people and positive action that provides disabled people with the support they need to ensure a real integration in society;
- (vi)** The decentralisation of responsibilities from central governments to regional and local authorities is advancing in the whole of Europe and increases the need for national planning of local disability policies, also it increases the need for a nationally monitored, local human rights-, or UN-Standard Rules based programme on disability policy planning, such as Agenda 22.

We the delegates of the European Parliament of Disabled People, representative of the diversity of the disability movement which consists of 50 million people in Europe, have the following demands of the EU Institutions, Member States and EU candidate states, and call upon all candidates in the June 2004 European Parliamentary election campaign to commit to realise the following:

Campaign for Human Rights Legislation

1. Adopt Disability Specific Directive :

adopt a horizontal anti-discrimination Directive which removes barriers in all areas of EU competence to enable disabled people to achieve their full potential in life including access to education, transport, health care, social services and access to goods and services;

2. Support National non-discrimination legislation :

support and campaign for the adoption or improvement at national level of comprehensive horizontal legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in areas including housing, education, leisure and culture, employment, transport, health care, social protection, social services and access to goods and services. It is necessary to ensure there are strict and effective sanctions in cases of non-compliance;

3. Transpose Directive on Equal Treatment in Employment immediately:

support and campaign for immediate and full transposition at national level of the Framework Directive on Equal Treatment in Employment, including those provisions which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability;

4. Support legally binding UN Convention :

support a UN Convention on the rights of Disabled People to be legally binding in nature with strong and effective monitoring mechanisms and sanctions in cases of non-compliance;

Build a Europe for All

The below-mentioned issues should be considered in the context of EU member countries and candidate countries to ensure they follow all EU-wide disability related improvements and benefit from them.

5. Mainstreaming :

ensure that disability policy be recognised across all areas of EU policy and national policy, mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for

the purpose of achieving equality of disabled people. When defining and implementing these measures and policies, their possible effects on the situation of disabled people should be systematically examined.

6. Funding conditions :

support the introduction of accessibility criteria attached to the disbursement of European funds such as Structural funds and consideration of the disability dimension in general, which would ensure that all components of funded projects (e.g. information, communication, infrastructure, built environment, employment, exchange or training schemes, services of general interest) would be fully accessible; collect statistical evidence of the improvement of the employment and social inclusion situation of disabled people generated by the structural funds; involve disabled people's representatives in the development of the criteria for the allocation of funds.

7. European Parliament for all :

ensure that the European Parliament itself be an example of good practice and guarantee the full and equal accessibility of its facilities, documents, web sites, and meetings (including by providing sign language interpreters) and ensure equal opportunities in employment;

Demonstrate Commitment to Disability Issues

8. Endorse Madrid Declaration and Agenda 22 for local community disability policy planning:

endorse the Madrid Declaration adopted by the European Congress on Disability on behalf of 50 million Europeans with disabilities; endorse the Agenda 22 method adopted by the Annual General Assembly of the European Disability Forum in 2003 as a framework for National Action Plans on local disability policy planning;

9. Join Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament :

become a member of the Disability Intergroup which is an informal grouping of MEPs from all nationalities and the major political groups. The Disability Intergroup works within the European Parliament on disability policy;

10. Consult disabled constituents :

consult constituents who have a disability and their representative organisations and parents of disabled people who are unable to represent themselves on a regular basis.

In addition, the representatives at the European Parliament of Disabled People call for accessible democracy, including fully accessible 2004 elections, by ensuring:

Full and Equal Access to Democracy

11. Consultation :

that before election campaigns are finalised, disabled people or the parents of disabled people who are unable to represent themselves including members of the European and national disability movements are consulted on what their issues and demands are. We demand that proposals submitted by disability organisations on issues related to disability be taken into account when drafting the electoral programmes.

12. Accessible and inclusive campaigns :

that political campaigns reach all voters with disabilities and that political campaigns include as key commitments the demands of disabled people. This would include ensuring that campaign messages aimed at the general public are made available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, spoken word audio and electronic format, ensuring that the availability of these alternative formats is publicised and that information is made available in plain easy-to-read language and in sign languages.

13. Accessibility of information about election procedure and accessibility of the vote itself :

that information about the whole election procedure be made fully accessible (including in sign language) to disabled people, including those with complex dependency needs. This would include information on how to present oneself as a candidate, how to register as a voter and where and how to vote; this would also include access to polling stations on the day of the elections and maintaining the integrity of secret ballots for all voters during voting including those with visual disabilities. We urge the development of e-voting systems and call for e-voting websites to be made fully accessible using WAI guidelines.

14. Disabled candidates :

that candidate lists are representative of society which means encouraging disabled people or the parents of disabled persons unable to represent themselves to participate in the election process and to run as candidates.

Nothing about us without us.