

2019 Report on EDF Women's Committee work and achievements

In February 2019, EDF Women's Committee adopted its workplan for 2019-2021 with a roadmap for 2019.

The Committee communicates and works essentially by e-mail. Two in-person meetings were organised this year.

This document reviews the activities undertaken by the Committee in 2019 in accordance with its workplan and 2019 action points.

Highlights:

- Two meetings of the Committee in Latvia and Belgium
- Publication of a position paper on sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls with disabilities
- Launch of the newsletter "EDF Women's Voice"
- Training on the CEDAW Committee for EDF members at its General Assembly
- Submission of recommendations for the next EU Gender Equality Strategy
- Participation in Beijing +25 civil society and official UN ECE meetings in Geneva
- Participation in the 'Building Partnerships for Sustainable Development Goals: Empowering Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs)' project as part of the EDF delegation to India
- Presentation to the European Parliament hearing on the EU Strategy for Gender Equality (2020-2024) on December 4th

Committee meetings

On 14-15 September 2019, the Committee met in Riga, Latvia, hosted by the Latvian umbrella organisation SUSTENTO, and EDF General Secretary, Gunta Anca. Prior to the meeting, the members attended an international conference on women and disability organised by SUSTENTO and a training on the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women given by its Chair and UNCRPD Committee member Ana Peláez Narváez. On 27 November 2019, the Committee met in Brussels, Belgium, and members attended the European Day of Persons with Disabilities on 28 and 29 November.



Action area 1 - gender mainstreaming in EU disability policies

The [public consultation](#) on evaluation of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 was sent out to the members of the Committee and in EDF Women's Voice. Six members of the Committee participated in the consultation.

Members of the Women's Committee actively participated in the European Day of Persons with Disabilities' discussion on the evaluation and future of the European Disability Strategy.



Action area 2 - mainstreaming disability in EU gender equality policies

In May, the Committee prepared and submitted EDF's input to the consultation on [Gender Equality in the EU](#).

In November, EDF Secretariat participated in a civil society organisations' workshop "Towards the Post-2019 Gender Equality Strategy", using the Committee's input as basis for advocacy.

In December, EDF submitted to the European Commission recommendations for the Gender Equality Strategy post 2019 prepared by the Committee. We called for the adoption of an ambitious EU strategy on gender equality 2019-2024 sufficiently resourced and including the multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities.

The Committee's Chair and EDF Vice President, Ana Peláez Narváez, spoke at a [hearing organised by the FEMM Committee of the European Parliament on the next Gender Equality Strategy on 4th December](#), and met with representatives of the European Commission's Gender Equality Unit and MEP Langenspielen.

Action area 3 - combating violence against women and girls with disabilities

The Committee had planned to prepare and conduct a webinar on the Istanbul Convention for organisations of women with disabilities in the countries under review by the [Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence \(GREVIO\)](#). This activity was moved to 2020, and will take place during EDF Annual General Assembly in May 2020 in order to reach out to more organisations of persons with disabilities.

Committee members from France, Italy and Spain participated in the review of the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in their countries and further discussion on violence against women. In France, Claire de Saint participated in the "Grenelle de lutte contre les violences conjugales".

EDF Secretariat attended, as observer, the GREVIO meeting on Belgium, in Brussels, to get more familiar with process.

The agenda of countries for review by GREVIO was sent to EDF Women's Committee and EDF Board members.

Action area 4 - advancing the human rights of women and girls with disabilities

The Committee prepared [EDF position paper on sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls with disabilities](#). It was published and disseminated on 8th of March. It is available in English, French, Spanish, Italian and Easy-to-Read English.

The Committee was actively involved in the Beijing +25 review process and prepared a [Factsheet on women and girls with disabilities in Europe](#). Pirkko Mahlamäki attended the Civil Society Forum and UN ECE meetings on Beijing +25 in Geneva in October 2019.



The Committee was consulted and provided inputs on a joint paper with [Sightsavers](#) on women with disabilities, and its section on “Review of the Role and focus on Women with Disabilities in International Cooperation.” It will be published in the Spring 2020.

Action area 5 - Women’s Committee position papers, statements and other documents

- [EDF position paper on sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls with disabilities](#)
- [Statement on 5 reasons why the EU should ratify the Istanbul Convention](#)

Action area 6 - monitoring international human rights treaties relevant to women and girls with disabilities

EDF prepared and conducted a training course on CEDAW, the role of the CEDAW Committee and how to provide alternative reports to the CEDAW Committee. This took place after EDF General Annual Assembly in Brussels, Belgium, on the 2nd of June.



The event included a keynote speech by Ana Peláez Narváez, EDF Vice-President, Chair of EDF Women's Committee and member of the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Participants discussed how to use the Convention and the work of its Committee for the defence of the rights of women and girls with disabilities. The seminar included examples from Belgium, Lithuania, Italy, Finland, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and an intervention from a delegation from India, explaining their practical experience in advancing rights of women with disabilities, through self-defence classes and education on marriage, for example. EDF encouraged its members to be more involved in the work of the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and will prepare a booklet with practical information on how to do so in 2020.

With the support of the EDF Secretariat, EDF members submitted alternative reports to UN Treaty bodies including information on the situation of women and girls with disabilities in their countries. The [Belgian Disability Forum](#), [Lithuanian Disability Forum](#) and [CERMI Women's Foundation](#) submitted alternative reports to the [CEDAW Committee](#). Disability national councils from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, France, Norway and Spain submitted alternative reports to the [CRPD Committee, including a section on women and girls with disabilities](#). In addition, CERMI Women's Foundation submitted shadow reports to the CRPD Committee and for the Universal Periodic Review of Spain.

Action area 7 - networking

The Committee and EDF Secretariat carried out a mapping exercise to identify national organisations of women with disabilities in Europe. We identified 19 organisations, committees and groups of women and girls with disabilities from 13

countries. The list has been posted on EDF website and disseminated. It will be revised regularly.

Action area 8 - external representation

Pirkko Mahlamäki is a member of the European Women’s Lobby (EWL) Executive Committee and has attended its meetings throughout the year.

Two EDF Women’s Committee members, Pirkko and Luisa Bosisio, are involved in EWL working groups (WG) and observatories. Pirkko is member of the Observatory on ending violence against women and WG on women in politics. Luisa is a member of Feminist Economics WG. She particularly consulted the Committee on the Purple Pact “The Purple Economy: feminist values and principles underpinning an economy that works for all” prepared by EWL Feminist Economics WG.

Members of the Women’s Committee met with the Executive members of the European Women’s Lobby during a shared lunch at EDF’s office on 27th November.



In 2020, the Committee will look more at new opportunities to participate in EWL’s working groups.

The Committee members also participated in other external events throughout the year:

Date	Event	Representative
31 January – 1 st February	EIGE Annual CSO consultation meeting	Pirkko Mahlamäki
11-22 March	Commission on the Status of Women	Claire Desaint, Ana Peláez Narváez

24-25 April	AMID CAB meeting	Pirkko Mahlamäki (by Skype)
13 May	Work Forum on the implementation of the CRPD	Ana Peláez Narváez
14 May	EU Disability High Level Group	Ana Peláez Narváez (for EDF) and Pirkko Mahlamäki (for EWL)
6-8 June	Global Disability Summit in Argentina	Ana Peláez Narváez
30 September-1 October	Finnish presidency high level conference on gender equality 'Europe for Gender Equality? Taking Stock – Taking Action'	Pirkko Mahlamäki
28-30 October	Beijing +25 Civil Society Forum and UNECE meetings	Pirkko Mahlamäki
28-30 October	EBU General Assembly	Ana Peláez Narváez
13 November	AIDEX event	Ana Peláez Narváez
14 November	Bridging the Gap annual event	Luisa Bosisio and Ana Peláez Narváez (Ana by video message)
18-24 November	EDF delegation in India	Luminita Caldaras
28-29 November	European Day of Persons with Disabilities	Ana Peláez Narváez, Pirkko Mahlamäki, Luisa Bosisio, Claire Desaint, Zara Todd, Luminita Caldaras, Foetini Zafeiropoulou, Monique Post

3 December	COPEC Sunrise Event: International Day of Persons with Disabilities	Ana Peláez Narváez
4 December	European Parliament FEMM Committee Hearing on Gender Equality Strategy	Ana Peláez Narváez
17th December	Meeting with European Commission Gender Equality Unit	Ana Peláez Narváez

Action area 9 – communication

The Committee prepared and issued communications to mark three international days relevant for women and girls with disabilities.

- International Women's Day (March 8th): EDF published its [position paper on sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls with disabilities](#). Women with disabilities was the [topic of EDF Disability Voice newsletter of March](#), featuring information on the Committee and the testimony of Committee member Pirkko Mahlamäki.
- International Day of the Girl Child (October 11th): EDF shared on social media two young women with disabilities who advocate for a better world: Greta Thunberg and Nujeen Mustafa.
- International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (November 25th): EDF published a [statement on “5 reasons why the EU should ratify the Istanbul Convention”](#).

In March, EDF launched a new newsletter, [EDF women's voice](#), that shares women/gender news, issues and event from an intersectional perspective.

The Committee reviewed and enhanced information related to [gender equality and women and girls with disabilities](#) and the [Women's Committee](#) published on EDF's website.