



**FUNDACIÓN CERMI MUJERES**

# **Ending forced sterilisation of women and girls with disabilities**

This joint report of the CERMI Women's Foundation and the European Disability Forum was adopted by the EDF General Assembly in Madrid, Spain, in May 2017

The report is endorsed by European Women's Lobby. We would like to thank CERMI Women's Foundation for the support in drafting this report, and Inclusion Europe, European Union of the Deaf, European Network of (ex-)Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, Autism Europe, Mental Health Europe and the European Women's Lobby for their valuable contributions.

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# EASY TO READ

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Easy-to-read is one of the accessible information formats along with large print, Braille and audio recordings. It is mostly used by people with intellectual disabilities, as well as other groups like older people and speakers of other languages. Sentences are short and simple using words which are easy to understand. The design is clear and avoids complicated page settings.

# ENDING FORCED STERILISATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES

## WHAT THIS REPORT IS ABOUT

The **European Disability Forum** and **CERMI Women's Foundation** have written a report together.

The **European Disability Forum** is an organisation of people with disabilities in Europe.

In short, we call it EDF.

EDF was created by people with disabilities in 1996.

EDF works to protect the rights of people with disabilities in Europe.

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The **CERMI Women's Foundation** is a Spanish organisation that helps protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities.

This report looks at how to stop **forced sterilisation** of women and girls with disabilities.

**Sterilisation** is when women and girls have an operation that stops them having babies.

**Forced sterilisation** is when women and girls are forced to have this operation.

This report also looks at **legal capacity**.

**Capacity** is when you can make a decision or choice at one moment.



There are laws about how to decide if someone has capacity.

Then it is called legal capacity.

**Legal capacity** means that people with intellectual disabilities can do things on their own.

These are some of the things they can do:

Make choices about their lives.

Get married, start a family and raise children.

Make decisions about their health.

## WHY FORCED STERILISATION IS BAD

Forced sterilisation is a crime says the **Council of Europe**.

The **Council of Europe** is an organization made up of different European countries.

It has 47 members.

The Council of Europe works for human rights and equality for all.

The Council of Europe does not make laws.

It can just make countries follow some international agreements.

Forced sterilisation happens a lot to women with disabilities and it happens the most to women with intellectual disabilities.

It also happens a lot to girls with disabilities.

It is against their rights and must be stopped.

Forced sterilisation shows that lots of women with disabilities are denied their human rights because they are women.

Women with disabilities often do not get the right healthcare.

For example, if they want to have babies.

Or when it comes to other things that only affect women.  
Sterilisation is can be bad for women and girls with disabilities.  
It can affect their health very badly.

Forced sterilisation is very bad because people must know  
what is happening to them.

This is called **informed consent**.

**Informed consent** is when you fully understand something.

In order to fully understand something

it can be important to have access to information that you understand.

For example, information in easy-to-read.

## HOW WE CAN STOP FORCED STERILISATION

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There are some documents which can help stop forced sterilisation.

One of these documents is the

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of  
Persons with Disabilities** (in short, UN CRPD).

This document tries to make sure that the rights of people with  
disabilities are respected.

The UN CRPD says that people should be able to make  
their own choices and not have someone make them for them.

The State should help people with disabilities  
to use their legal capacity and make their own choices.

This means that forced sterilisation must be stopped.



Because forced sterilisation is not a choice.

Another of these documents is the **Istanbul Convention**.

The Istanbul Convention is about how to stop violence against women and girls with disabilities.

Forced sterilisation is violence.

The Istanbul Convention says that forced sterilisation should stop.

## **WHAT EDF AND CERMI WOMEN'S FOUNDATION WANT**

The CERMI Women's foundation and EDF want all the countries in the **European Union** to accept the Istanbul Convention.

This will help to stop forced sterilisation.

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The **European Union** (in short, EU) is a group of 28 countries.

We call these countries "member states".

They have joined together to be stronger.

The EU makes laws on many important things for the people who live in those countries.

The CERMI Women's Foundation and EDF wants countries to make violence against women and girls to be illegal.

This means that forced sterilisation should be illegal.

They also want countries to make sure that health services are helping people with disabilities.

For example by making information **accessible**.



**Accessible** is something that is easy to use for people with disabilities.

Such as:

- Ramps to get into a building.
- Information in easy-to-read.
- Information in sign language.

CERMI Women's Foundation and EDF want sterilisation of girls under 18 to be illegal.

It should only be legal if it must be done to save their life.

It is important for organisations of people with disabilities to help stop violence against women and to help end forced sterilisation.

**“It has meant  
a loss of confidence,  
especially in  
physicians,  
in whom women with  
disabilities often  
need to trust.”**



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