



# Benefits of a structured dialogue on transport accessibility

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## Introduction – Who are we?

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- Independent NGO representing 80 million persons with disabilities EU
- “Umbrella organisation”: More than 100 member organisations (national councils; national and European NGOs)
- Represents all types of disabilities
- Organisation **of** persons with disabilities, not for persons with disabilities.  
“Nothing about us without us”
- Main objectives: create a network, build capacity, and **influence the EU institutions**



## Inclusive approach

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- Persons with disabilities are citizens with rights as everybody else
- Disability rights are human rights
- Not the persons is the problem - the environment creates barriers!
- Aim: full inclusion in the community
- Encourage dialogue and involvement of representative organizations
- Strengthen local organisations and use their expertise



## Background

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### United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD):

- First international human right treaty of the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Adopted by UN in 2006
- EU ratified the Convention in 2010; so have all EU Member States
- Obligation to implement!
- Powerful legislative tool to support the rights of persons with disabilities in the EU



“States parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, **on an equal basis with others**, (...) both in urban and in rural areas” (Art. 9)

# Relevant policy areas

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## Accessibility

- Built environment
- Accessibility of products and services
- Information & Communication Technologies
- Transport
  - Passengers' rights (air, rail, coach, & maritime transport)
  - Rail Accessibility (TSI-PRM)
  - Accessibility of urban buses
  - Accessibility of maritime vessels
  - European Accessibility Act


All policy areas are relevant: **mainstreaming is key!**



# What does EDF do?

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## Lobbying

- We follow the decision-making procedure from A to Z and often we are the ones who **push for changes or a new proposal**
  - We make sure that we **speak with one voice** and give a clear message
  - We provide **technical and in-depth knowledge**
  - **Awareness raising**, communication, and campaigning
  - Networking
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## Why dialogue?


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### We often have opposite positions to industry associations

- However, when we can agree on something, our statement is much more powerful
- Our proposals are more likely to be taken onboard by decision-makers
- By keeping a dialogue, we automatically raise awareness of disability issues
- We create a network of like-minded people or associations


But of course sometimes we just have to **agree to disagree** – a dialogue does not always lead to a common solution or position!

EDF is also careful as to whom we collaborate with. Not everyone has the same motivation.



## Examples of structured dialogue in transport

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- European Commission: Meetings of National Enforcement Bodies for Passengers' Rights
  - European Railway Agency: Working Party on Rail Accessibility
  - Rail sector: CER Customer Liaison Group
  - Aviation: Collaboration on “Accessible Airport Awards”
  - Inter-sectorial: European Citizens' Mobility Forum (ECMF)
  - Ad-hoc initiatives such as the [UITP-IRU-EDF guide on accessibility for public transport staff](#)
  - Individual meetings
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## Conclusion

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- Dialogue is useful to raise awareness
- It can also help to achieve political goals
- But it is not a solution for everything!
- Often demands are diametrically opposed and no common ground is possible
- An open, independent forum can help to encourage exchange and dialogue to create a starting point for dialogue



# Thank you!



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