



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON DISABILITY

23 SEPTEMBER 2025 BARCELONA

Location: **UfM Headquarters / Palau de Pedralbes, Carrer Pere Duran
Farell 11, Barcelona, Spain**



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
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MINISTERIO
DE DERECHOS SOCIALES, CONSUMO
Y AGENDA 2030

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1. Introduction

The Euro-Mediterranean region has made significant strides in advancing the rights and socio-economic inclusion of persons with disabilities. Building upon previous engagements and studies, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the ONCE Social Group, and the Directorate-General for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the Government of Spain will co-host the Euro-Mediterranean High-Level Dialogue on Disability, addressed at **high level representatives of the National Governments in charge of disability, representatives from international organizations, and regional representatives of the disability organizations.**

The Dialogue is designed to **endorse the EuroMed Disability Agenda based on the Theory of Change (ToC)** and previous work providing the strategic framework for achieving meaningful socio-economic inclusion of persons with disabilities aligned with the provisions of, among others, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the EU Consensus on Development.

The EuroMed Disability Agenda is an evolving initiative that has grown through successive conferences and stakeholder inputs. The 2022 Conference in Barcelona, Spain, laid the groundwork for a comprehensive approach, highlighting the region's challenges and opportunities for fostering socio-economic inclusion. The 2024 Conference in Amman, Jordan, furthered these discussions, serving as a launch pad for the Euro-Med Agenda on the Socioeconomic Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. The recently completed Preliminary Study on the Socio-Economic Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities further illuminates key barriers and suggests potential pathways forward. These efforts collectively inform the Theory of Change, setting the stage for an inclusive, evidence-based disability agenda in the region.

2. Objectives

The Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue aims to:

1. Endorse the EuroMed Regional Disability Agenda which includes targeted policy recommendations that align with existing regional frameworks, as well as practical suggestions for adapting policies to meet the specific needs of persons with disabilities.
 2. Agree on an action plan outlining short-term and medium-term priorities, roles, and responsibilities for implementing the EuroMed Disability Agenda.
 3. Enhance the collaboration between regional and international actors to support the agenda's implementation through knowledge sharing, capacity building, and resource mobilization.
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3. Themes and Focus Areas

In line with the mandate of the UfM, the analysis so far conducted, and the input received from relevant stakeholders, the Conference will focus on the following priority areas essential to the EuroMed Disability Agenda:

- 1. Employment and Economic Empowerment:** Exploring strategies to reduce unemployment and underemployment among persons with disabilities through inclusive employment practices, vocational training, and entrepreneurship support.
- 2. Social Protection:** Examining the gaps in social protection frameworks and disability extra costs to ensure adequate coverage and quality services for persons with disabilities

3. Gender Equality: Addressing the intersectional challenges faced by women with disabilities, promoting gender-responsive policies, and ensuring equal access to socio-economic opportunities

4. Tackling Emerging Topics:

a) **Rights of Migrants and Refugees with Disabilities:** Ensuring inclusive support for migrants and refugees with disabilities, recognizing their unique vulnerabilities and fostering their socio-economic inclusion.

b) **Inclusive Response to Human-Made and Natural Disasters:** Developing frameworks for disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction, response, and recovery, aiming for resilience-building and comprehensive support systems.

c) **Policy Coherence and Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration:** In line with the mandate of the CRPD, encouraging policy coherence and collaboration between government bodies, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) private sector entities, civil society, and international organizations to strengthen governance frameworks and mobilize resources.

4. Methodology

The event will employ a combination of keynote addresses, expert panels, and roundtable discussions to facilitate both high-level policy dialogue and technical discussions. Emphasis will be placed on participatory methods, allowing for an inclusive exchange of ideas and fostering consensus-building among stakeholders.



5. Logistics

The conference will be hosted in Barcelona, Spain, on 23 September 2025 at the UfM Headquarters in Palau de Pedralbes, Carrer Pere Duran Farell 11, Barcelona, Spain.

6. Follow-Up Actions

Following the conference, a detailed report will be published, summarizing key findings, action points, and policy recommendations. This report will serve as a guiding document for stakeholders committed to implementing the EuroMed Disability Agenda.

Agenda

23 September 2025

08:30 – 09:00

Registration of participants

09:00 – 09:30

Welcome addresses

- **Meltem Büyükkarakaş**, DSG SCA and EDE Divisions, UfM
- **Patricia Sanz**, Vice-President of ONCE Social Group
- **Jesús Martín Blanco**, Director on Disability Rights, Spanish Government

09:30 – 10:15

Background of the Euro-Mediterranean Agenda on Disability: contributions from stakeholders & Theory of change

- **Ioannis Vardakastanis**, EESC Member
- **Abdelmajid Makni**, AOPD General Secretary
- **Federico Martire**, UfM Consultant

10:15 – 11:00

Framing the EUROMED Disability Agenda: UfM structure and framework

- **Anna Dorangricchia**, Project Manager Gender Equality and Social Affairs, UfM

11:00 – 11:30 *Coffee break*

11:30 – 12:30

Women with disabilities: Political participation, economic empowerment and resilience

- **Jahda Abou Khalil**, Arab Network of Women with Disabilities
- **Patricia Sanz**, ONCE Social Group
- **Jesús Martín Blanco**, Spanish government (moderator)

12:30 – 13:30

Employment: Regional strategies to improve the participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market

- **Natalia Guala**, Ibero-American Disability Programme & CRPD Committee
- **Stefan Tromel**, Senior Advisor on Disability, ILO
- **Giulia Ferraresi**, UfM (moderator)

13:30 – 14:30 *Lunch break*

14:30 – 15:30

Emerging Topics: Humanitarian action, climate change and inclusive risk reduction

- **Gianpiero Griffo** (online)
- **Ricardo Pla Cordero**, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (online)
- **Maria Ayllon**, ONCE Social Group (moderator)

15:30 – 16:30

Social protection: Towards 2030 and beyond

- **Tarec El-Nabulsi**, League of Arab States (online)
- **Inmaculada Placencia**, EU Commission & CRPD Committee (online)
- **Javier Güemes**, ONCE Social Group (moderator)

16:30 – 17:30

Financing the Agenda, Timeline, and Next Steps

17:30 – 18:00

Barcelona Declaration on Disability & Concluding remarks

- H.E. Special Ambassador on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Spain)
- **Anna Dorangricchia**, Project Manager Gender Equality and Social Affairs, UfM

18:00 - 20:00 *Networking cocktail*



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