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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Disability-inclusive humanitarian action

Following the meeting of the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) on 23 and 24 April 2025, delegations will find in Annex the presentation made by the European Disability Forum ^{1 2}.

¹ European Disability Forum, identification number in the EU Transparency Register: 358634350714-60.

² This document contains a presentation by an external stakeholder and the views expressed therein are solely those of the third party it originates from. This document cannot be regarded as stating an official position of the Council. It does not reflect the views of the Council or of its members.



Disability-Inclusive Humanitarian Action in Ukraine: Lessons and Opportunities



COHAFA meeting
Brussels, 23 April 2025

Nadia Hadad
EDF Executive Committee member

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The impact of the war in numbers

1,8 million persons with disabilities in need of humanitarian assistance.

3.9 million people in Ukraine are estimated to have moderate to severe mental health conditions, with persons with disabilities among those most at risk.

300,000: the number of people that acquired a disability due to war-related injuries.

Half of displaced households living in collective shelters include older persons or people with disabilities.



Credit: Yurii Yevtushko



Key Barriers

- **Limited representation of OPDs in coordination and planning**
- **Lack of disaggregated data and inclusive needs assessments**
- **Inaccessible humanitarian infrastructure and services**
- **Reinstitutionalisation risks due to inaccessible evacuation/transit and some reforms**
- **Guidelines not being used**
- **Coordination remains inconsistent across UN clusters**
- **Underfunding**



Credit: Marta Kusmierz



OPD-Led Inclusive Humanitarian Action in Ukraine

- **Inclusive Cash Assistance:** The National Assembly of Persons with Disabilities of Ukraine led a disability-inclusive cash feasibility assessment, informing inclusive modalities for humanitarian actors.
- **Accessibility Expertise in Emergency Settings:** League of the Strong provided guidance to local authorities on inclusive infrastructure and emergency shelter design.
- **Support for Women and Girls with Disabilities:** Fight for Rights implemented programmes empowering women and girls with disabilities to participate in community-based responses and access GBV services.
- **Pilots for Community-Based Support:** In Chernivtsi region, OPDs contributed to deinstitutionalisation efforts by piloting inclusive, community-based support models.

Lessons Learned

- Disability inclusion is most effective when **OPDs** are meaningfully involved, with **leadership roles**
- **Inclusive** responses are more **sustainable and accountable**
- **Disability indicators** across humanitarian cycle and funding frameworks should be included
- Donors must support **flexible funding and long-term** capacity development



Credit: Yevhenii Khil



When talking about disability inclusive humanitarian aid, it's essential that we also address the availability in aid in general and States' responsibilities. There has now been a [7 weeks siege over Gaza](#). Israel has not authorised any aid to come in, may it be food, fuel and medicine, necessary to everyone. In addition, no medical devices, crutches, or disability specific aid is being authorised in. The EU and all Member States have an obligation to use their political power to ensure aid reaches persons with disabilities, and all civilians, in accordance with international humanitarian law and the CRPD. "



Data:

An estimated **420,000 people** are on the move again because of new Israeli evacuation orders, making it difficult to compile hard data on hunger and malnutrition, but Oxfam estimates that **most children are now surviving on less than one meal a day**.

About **95% of aid organisations have suspended or cut back services because of airstrikes and the blockade**, and since February, Israel has [tightened restrictions](#) for international staff to enter Gaza. Basic medical supplies – even painkillers – are running out.

First-hand info from colleagues in the region (February 2025)

There is a mental health tsunami and people realise their losses. Recovery will take decades with focus needed on most vulnerable people (children, women, people with disabilities...)

Destruction in the north is so immense, and existing roads are so damaged, that displaced people with disabilities have little possibility to rebuild their lives.



EDF guiding questions

1. How can EU support strengthened donor coordination in promoting OPD leadership?
2. How can the EU increased systematic inclusion of disability indicators and monetary and funding?
3. How will the EU ensure accessibility and engagement of organisations of OPDs in the recovery processes?



Thank you for your attention

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