

## EP adopts resolution on rights for people with disabilities

### Clearer and more proactive EP mechanisms are needed to combat exclusion of children and adults with disabilities

Brussels 21 May 2015 // In its resolution on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted yesterday, the European Parliament calls for **more measures to ensure that citizens with disabilities enjoy their right to free movement** between the Member States on an equal footing with others. The International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (IF) stresses that the EU obligations under the Convention (ratified by the EU in 2010) will not be complete until all children and adults with disabilities enjoy the right to cross-border healthcare without discrimination on the basis of disability.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities obliges the European Union to take all possible measures to ensure the right of people with disabilities to health and personal mobility, among other things. For many Europeans with spina bifida and hydrocephalus (SBH), this means the need to travel to other Member States to receive complex and specific healthcare that is not available in their home country. Although the EU law already protects **patients' rights in cross-border healthcare**, many people with disabilities who need to use accessible and often more expensive transport and accommodation abroad, and rely on the personal assistant, remain disadvantaged compared to their non-disabled peers. These health inequalities create great obstacles to living an active life and to giving a meaningful contribution to society.

IF President Margo Whiteford said: “*The realization of the right to health for patients with SBH requires a life long **multidisciplinary approach** and access to affordable, adequate, and appropriate services is imperative though not always available in one's country. From my personal experience and from multiple members' accounts we can confirm that **limited or inadequate access to healthcare can increase the marginalization in society and a risk of developing life threatening complications.***”

IF is pleased with the overwhelming support that the resolution received at the European Parliament and calls the Parliament to take on a more active role in realising the European Union's obligations towards persons with disabilities. A strong, responsive and proactive EP mechanism able to act quickly and efficiently is necessary to respond to the challenges faced by the EU under the Convention.



MEP Jana Zitnanska said: ***"The inability of disabled people to access healthcare in other Member states is unacceptable. We, the Members of the European Parliament, the Commission but first and foremost the Members States must work harder to remove the obstacles in the area of transport and in the ways disability is standardised and reviewed across Europe. Only then will the right to the freedom of movement become a reality for all."***

**Contact** //

Janina Arsenjeva, Europe Programme Manager | [janina.arsenjeva@ifglobal.org](mailto:janina.arsenjeva@ifglobal.org)  
Ewa Kampelmann, IF Communications Officer | [ewa.kampelmann@ifglobal.org](mailto:ewa.kampelmann@ifglobal.org)

**About UNCRPD** // The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol was adopted by the UN on 13 December 2006 and entered into force on 3 May 2008. The Convention is intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit, social development dimension. It adopts a broad categorization of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

**About IF** // The International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus was founded by people with spina bifida and hydrocephalus (SBH) and their families in 1979. Over the years, it has grown from a voluntary association into a professional disabled people's organisation (DPO) with global coverage, democratic structure and transparent and accountable processes. IF's fast-growing membership now includes 51 member organisations in Africa, Australia, the Americas, Asia and Europe. Membership of IF is open to all nationally registered organisations that share IF's vision and mission and actively involve people with SBH in their work.