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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003

(Submitted by the European Commission in accordance with Article 13 of Council Decision 2001/903/EC)

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Implementation and key actions at EU level

Defining priorities for the EYPD campaign and its implementation at EU level was an involved process. It required a great deal of coordination between the EU and national levels and a number of key partners had to be involved, in particular the European Disability Forum - the non-governmental umbrella organisation representing people with disabilities at European level. As an integral part of the Commission's approach to the Year and as a fundamental principle in the area of disability, disabled people and their representatives had to be involved in all the key aspects of designing and implementing the EYPD campaign.

As much of the impetus to establish a European Year of People with Disabilities had come from disabled people themselves, and after lobbying by the European Disability Forum, the Commission intensified its relations with the European Disability Forum in 2002 and consulted this organisation and others extensively during its preparations and throughout 2003. This ensured that the views of people with disabilities were taken on board and that their own representatives were able to develop the main messages to be passed on. The Commission also wanted to use the EYPD campaign to promote its approach to disability and underline the policy issues it was considering at EU level. The flexibility of the approach adopted for the EYPD and the ownership created by the decentralised approach ensured that there was room in the campaign for all organisations to put forward their views, even if these did not necessarily coincide.

As a framework for the implementation and development of the EYPD, the Commission, in cooperation with its partner organisations (particularly the European Disability Forum) launched a specific promotional and information campaign. The principal aim of this campaign was to give a clear identity to the EYPD, both visually and in terms of a message which would reinforce the EU nature of the initiative, but which would also reinforce actions taken at national, regional and local level. The campaign was managed by PR consultants Ogilvy.

The core concept of the campaign was to catalyse a year-long march of people with disabilities across Europe. This was based on the idea that, since disabled rights are a human rights issue, those who are disabled should be put at the forefront for the campaign for change. By avoiding a traditional promotional campaign implemented from outside, the Commission sought to create ownership by disabled people of the concept of the EYPD by ensuring that they were directly involved in promoting the campaign and by encouraging their mobilisation and participation. The slogan "Get on board!" was developed for the campaign to emphasise the participative nature of the EYPD, and this was supported by a campaign bus travelling from country to country during 2003. The bus underlined the European nature of campaign, linking all the national campaigns and messages, and underlining the point that disability is an issue which concerns the whole of the EU, despite the specific inherent differences between participating countries. During 2003, the campaign bus was present at 211 events in 181 cities or towns in 16 countries and covered a distance of 45 000km.

The logo chosen for the campaign was distinctive and clearly identifiable. This logo was made easily available on a number of internet sites and in the current 20 Community languages, plus those of the acceding states and of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey .Under the

campaign rules all organisations and individuals wishing to be involved with the EYPD campaign were encouraged to use the logo.

In order to support the whole EYPD campaign, and to provide a resource for organisations and individuals wishing to participate in the EYPD, an EU-wide website was set up. This website (www.eypd2003.org) was fully interactive and easy to access[1], and all key aspects and functions were available in all Community languages. In contrast to previous European Year campaigns, the website allowed pages to be created by third parties who wished to publicise their actions or events, upload documents and create contacts. This allowed those who might not normally have the necessary facilities to be present on the internet for the duration of the EYPD. In addition to basic information on the EYPD, the website also contained links to the official EYPD sites in the participating countries and a diary and photo section, updated daily with news of the EYPD march and bus.

The Commission also launched two calls for proposals at EU level. The first concerned information campaigns at EU level to support the main EYPD campaign, and was aimed at specific populations within the overall target group of the campaign. One example of this was an innovative campaign established by the European Union of the Deaf[2], which established a specific website for the EYPD with information available in the main sign languages of the participating countries. The second call related to transnational projects, where the Commission financially supported a small number of large projects, allowing beneficiaries from a number of Member States to jointly organise a project to support the aims and objectives of the EYPD.

Another key action undertaken by the Commission at EU level to support the EYPD was the Corporate Participation Programme. Backed by the PR contractor, Ogilvy, this programme sought to bring large companies on board the EYPD campaign by allowing them to participate in a unique venture and encouraging them to create awareness and support for the EYPD and undertake specific actions. These actions were encouraged with a view to reinforcing already existing positive approaches to disability, and with a view to acting in a socially responsible manner towards people with disabilities by promoting employment and training opportunities, developing design-for-all products and services, improving accessibility, etc.

Although responsibility for overseeing the EYPD campaign and actions at EU level lay with the Commission's Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs, it was possible to mobilise all of the services whose work had some connection with disability issues and to ensure that the EYPD was included as a particular priority for action in 2003. This was the result in particular of the commitment of various Commissioners and Directorates-General to the aims of the EYPD and a desire to support the mainstreaming of disability issues in general. Examples include the stepping up of funding of specific projects within the different action programmes in the area of education, training, youth and culture; the adoption by the Commission of a revised Code of Good Practice for the Employment of People with Disabilities (C(2003)4362); actions in the area of relations with the then candidate countries focusing on disability issues; and a number of actions in the area of policy on the information

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1 WAI-AA standard – it was not possible with the available resources and the interactive nature of the site to achieve a AAA rating

2 http://www.eudeaf2003.org/

society, including a specific conference on e-accessibility[3]. This latter theme was also addressed from the technical research point of view of by the EC Joint Research Centre. Much of this work was coordinated successfully through an Interservice group on disability issues, ensuring optimum complementarity across different Community policy areas.

In order to reinforce the key messages and demonstrate the commitment of the EU, many major European events and conferences also adopted the EYPD campaign as a key component, either by focusing exclusively on disability issues or by including certain disability issues within a wider programme. One example of this was the European Mobility Week[4] in 2003 to highlight accessibility issues for people with disabilities. EU agencies, too, became involved in the EYPD and undertook specific actions to support the aims of the year[5]. A number of the EU institutions also made specific contributions to the EYPD through actions (such as newly accessible websites or accessibility reviews of their buildings) or through specific events. These included the European Parliament of Disabled People hosted by the European Parliament[6] and organised with the support of the European Disability Forum and the Commission, a conference on the regional dimension of disability policy organised by the Committee of the Regions[7], and an event organised by the European Economic and Social Committee[8] on the integration of people with disabilities into European society and the world of work. Other European organisations also made their own contributions to the EYPD through specific actions and events. The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSNE), supported by DG EAC, organised a hearing of young people with special educational needs in the European Parliament. Young people from 22 countries had the opportunity to express their feelings, ideas and wishes concerning their education and their future. During the hearing there was an exhibition of materials and information from specially invited EC project representatives from Leonardo, Youth, Minerva and Grundtvig, as well as the EASDNE and UNESCO. Europe 21 held an event on corporate social responsibility and disability issues[9] and a conference organised by the European standards organisations examined how their work could help the issue of accessibility for all[10][11][12]. These are but a few examples of the many hundreds of specific actions and events which took place at EU level.

In order to coordinate many of these different activities, and in particular to coordinate actions at EU level with the specific EYPD activities and campaigns at national level, the Commission established an advisory committee as early as January 2002. This committee continued to work until the end of 2004, coordinating the preparation of measures and financial assistance for the EYPD, overseeing the EYPD promotional and information

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3 http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/03/1375
http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/03/1183
http://voice.jrc.it/events/ev2003/eaccessibility/_eaccessibility_en.htmhttp://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/03/1183&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en

4 http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/03/1240

5 http://europe.osha.eu.int/good_practice/person/disability/

6 http://www.europarl.eu.int/comparl/empl/conferences/20031110/default_en.htm

7 http://www.cor.eu.int/document/en/rioja_16_17_dec.pdf

8 http://www.esc.eu.int/pages/en/acs/events/28_11_03_disabilities/final_programme_en.pdf

9 http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/02/623

10 http://www.cenelec.org/NR/exeres/09E16A1B-E757-4F85-B542-872A21C7C15F.htm

11 http://www.cenorm.be/cenorm/news/pressreleases/guidelines.asp

12 http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/03/161

campaign and developing the key messages in relation to disability issues. It was made up of representatives of the participating countries, observers from the then candidate countries, representatives of the European Disability Forum[13] and other partners concerned, such as the European Association of Service Providers for People with Disabilities[14]. The social partners were invited to participate in this committee, but did not take up the invitation.

The committee took key decisions relating to the allocation of global grants to the participating countries to support the co-funding of EYPD projects and actions, approved key elements of the campaign such as the choice of logo (which, for the first time in an EU campaign, was chosen through a poll on the internet) and the promotional items, and adopted a series of common criteria for the selection of projects to be co-funded to ensure that the key EYPD objectives set out in the Council Decision were taken into account. This approach also sought to ensure fair treatment between those applying for co-funding in different participating countries. The committee members also performed a liaison function between the implementation of the EYPD at EU level and implementation at national level, in particular by coordinating with the work of the national coordinating bodies. The committee was also able to cooperate closely with the two EU presidencies (Italy and Greece) during 2003 and thus ensure a clear political profile for the EYPD campaign within the actions of the Presidencies.

The committee played a key role in ensuring the success of the EYPD, working principally through consensus on all key decisions and benefiting from the experience and commitment of all those who participated in its work. This required extensive input and involvement from all members throughout the preparation, execution and follow-up activities for the EYPD.

[13] http://www.edf-feph.org/
[14] http://www.easpd.org/

Implementation and key actions at national level

At national level, the participating countries were required to set up a national coordinating body. In line with the Council Decision establishing the EYPD, it was the responsibility of this body to develop national strategies/priorities for the EYPD, oversee the implementation of the global grant, ensure that people with disabilities participated in the decision-making processes and manage the call for proposals whereby financial assistance was given to specific actions to support the EYPD. During 2002, the national coordinating bodies played an important role in undertaking preparatory actions, creating awareness about the aims of the EYPD and, in most cases, organising the national launch event for 2003. In most of the participating countries, the coordinating body was linked to or located within a national ministry. In all countries, representatives of people with disabilities were involved in these bodies, as required by the Council Decision.

The work of these national bodies was essential to the success of the EYPD campaign and to widening the scope for adapting the EYPD to the national context and specific situation of people with disabilities. The structure of the national coordinating bodies varied significantly from country to country, with some opting for relatively large bodies with representatives from many different interest groups. Other countries preferred to focus on the input of a number of key individuals with specific experience of disability issues. Often the national bodies were supported by regional and local groups established specifically to join the EYPD campaign and to maximise awareness locally and mobilise disability organisations, in particular, to participate actively in the EYPD.

The external evaluation of the EYPD confirms the enormous commitment of those involved in the national coordinating bodies, many of whom worked unremunerated, and their vital contribution to achieving the aims of the year at the level closest to the citizen. Many had to work with limited resources and deal with large numbers of applications to take part in the campaign. A number of participating countries established specific local committees to support schemes and activities throughout the year and ensure the involvement of key disability organisations. A majority of those consulted in the coordinating bodies considered that involving disabled people in this manner would pave the way for greater cooperation between disability organisations and governments. In addition, many countries chose to involve local authority organisations and representatives of the social partners at national level in the coordinating bodies. Reflecting the situation at EU level, corporate involvement was encouraged at national level in some countries, while in others representatives of arts associations and voluntary bodies participated, and in others political parties took part in the respective national coordinating bodies.

In all participating countries, calls for proposals were made to encourage project promoters to apply for co-financing to support specific actions and measures in line with the different aims of the EYPD. Again the approach varied between countries, with some preferring large projects, often national or regional in focus, to achieve specific impacts. Other countries focused on smaller local projects, thus allowing greater numbers of organisations to participate in the EYPD. Many thousands of project applications were received in most countries and almost 800 projects were supported with EU funding allocated to the EYPD. However, many countries chose to provide further funding to support additional projects, and the external evaluation showed that, in many countries, projects which could not be funded from EU and national sources were able to secure funding from other sources. In addition,

project funding from other EU actions and programmes increased the available financial support. In this way, the decentralised approach was able to mobilise enormous support for the EYPD and increased the sense of ownership of the campaign. For the Commission, this approach created specific difficulties of coordination, as it was necessary to adapt to the specific approach in each participating country. The decentralised approach also made establishing transnational projects very difficult, as it was necessary to take account of different funding regimes and priorities in each country. However, the representatives of the coordinating bodies indicated a high level of satisfaction with the delivery mechanism and the decentralised structure adopted for the EYPD and with the coordination undertaken by the Commission.

Another key task of most national coordinating bodies was to help organise the route of the EYPD bus as it passed through each participating country. Many of them arranged for the bus to attend specific EYPD events or organised actions to coincide with its passage. In addition to the many thousands of spectators and participants reached by these events, the bus created a specific media focus and, for example, many thousands of articles or items of television coverage related to the EYPD bus. The Commission also recruited specific campaign supporters in each country who had overall responsibility for the bus and its route while it was on their territory. The majority of these campaign supporters were appointed by the European Disability Forum. The Commission's PR contractor organised specific training to help them benefit as much as possible from the presence of the bus. In order to support the promotion of the campaign, most participating countries also established special national websites, linked to the main EYPD website and providing specific information for a national audience. Moreover, the Commission also established a media network in the Member States, with a group of experts supporting the media activities of the national coordinating body and promoting the EYPD campaign.

It is clear from the external evaluation of the EYPD that the choice of a decentralised approach increased the efficiency and output of the campaign and amplified the overall impact of the year at national level. At the same time, the overall EU dimension was maintained through the common criteria for selection of proposals, the logo and slogan of the EYPD campaign and the EYPD bus. As indicated below, the national focus of much of the campaign also helped to maximise the financial impact of the year, allowing many thousands of organisations to participate in and make a specific contribution to the aims of the EYPD.

Key results of the EYPD Campaign

One of the key challenges of the EYPD campaign was to promote a wider understanding and acceptance of the main issues related to disability. The opinion poll on the EYPD which was carried out on behalf of the Commission in September 2003[15] asked EU citizens for their views on disabilities in the context of the EYPD. It revealed that one third of the EU population were aware of the EYPD and its purpose. Given the nature of this campaign, the number of international events which seized the public's attention in 2003, and the availability of resources at European and at national level to carry it out, this can be seen as a very positive result.

The journey of the campaign bus throughout the EU was a key element which succeeded in emphasising the European nature of the EYPD campaign. It provided disabled people and their organisations with a valuable tool to promote and highlight their actions and to generate considerable media attention for them. This was reflected, for example, in the large number of articles in the press featuring references to the bus. The bus was also effective in that it managed to reach many of the smaller cities and towns in the participating countries, getting the message across to a public which is not often involved directly in such European campaigns.

In terms of media volume, the analysis conducted on behalf of the Commission, looking specifically at the printed media and the internet, showed that EU-wide coverage of disability issues increased in 2003 by between three and over ten times. On average, coverage in the Member States rose by just over 600%, with the EYPD campaign specifically mentioned in over half of this coverage. In addition, the EYPD website appeared to be successful and an important vector in the campaign, with almost 40 percent of media coverage using material, logos or pictures from the site and over half of media coverage making reference to the site or giving its address. This situation was also replicated at national level, with reference to national EYPD websites in particular. Other data related to the official EYPD site also confirm its success, with an average of over 2 000 unique visits per day and over half a million unique visits in 2003.

The Corporate Participation Programme can also been seen as a positive result of the EYPD. It is clear that for many of the participating companies it led to or strengthened an existing long-term commitment to disability issues. In this respect, a number of companies in the programme have decided to continue their cooperation in this area through a network at European level.

At national level, the commitment to the decentralised approach, involving the drawing up of national priorities for the EYPD and ensuring the involvement of disabled people throughout the campaign, can be seen as a key result and one of the main factors in the success of this campaign. Much of this work of cooperation and consultation will continue, as many of the bodies formed, or those already existing and built up during 2003 decided to continue their work beyond 2003. The data submitted by the participating countries on the projects which were supported during the EYPD by EU funding, national funding, a combination of both, or

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15 http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/index/eurobar_highlights_en.pdf

funding from other sources, have shown particularly positive results. In some countries, some of these projects will continue to receive funding beyond 2003. The decentralised funding approach chosen by the Commission in cooperation with the participating countries has clearly had a particularly high leverage effect within the campaign.

Given the devolved approach to the EYPD and responsibilities assumed at national, regional and local level to undertake actions and measures, it would be impossible to list or describe the concrete results from this campaign. There are many thousands of such results reproduced throughout the participating countries and beyond. These take a variety of forms:

- new partnerships between public, private and non-governmental organisations;
- commitments by mainstreaming bodies and organisations to promote the rights, participation and inclusion of people with disabilities across a wide range of fields (employment, training, education, culture, sport, politics etc)
- actions providing for better awareness and understanding of disability issues;
- measures to improve the physical accessibility of the built environment, including transport systems;
- measures to improve access and combat exclusion from the information society and promote better e-accessibility;
- new national legislation to protect the rights of people with disabilities and promote non-discrimination;
- regular reporting on disability issues at different levels;
- developing measures to better support the families of disabled people.

In this respect, the EYPD has achieved its objectives of raising awareness, exchanging and disseminating good practices and reinforcing co-operation between the various stakeholders.

Annex 1: Background

2003 was designated the European Year of People with Disabilities (EYPD) by the European Union[16], with the aim of raising awareness about the rights of the EU's disabled citizens to participate fully and equally within society. The EYPD was also about laying the foundation for action over the longer term and providing a new political impetus across Europe to achieve equality of rights for people with disabilities.

All of the then 15 EU Member States formally participated in the EYPD, together with Norway, Iceland and, latterly, Liechtenstein (hereinafter "the participating countries"), and its overall implementation in the EU Member States and the EEA countries was the responsibility of the European Commission. Although no formal requests to participate were received from the then candidate countries for EU accession, many of these countries and other states beyond, such as Switzerland, Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria, developed campaigns and undertook a wide range of activities and actions in support of the EYPD.

In contrast to previous European Years, the Commission proposed that much of the responsibility for the implementation of the EYPD should be decentralised to the level of the participating countries. To this end, each country was required to appoint and set up a national coordinating body, composed of a representative range of organisations representing people with disabilities and other relevant stakeholders. Much of the EU funding made available to support the actions and activities undertaken in the EYPD was awarded directly to national authorities to be spent in cooperation with the national coordinating body.

Although the main target audience of the EYPD campaign was the public at large, from the outset the Commission was committed to ensuring that 2003 should be a year *of* and not *for* people with disabilities. In all the key decisions and actions carried out during the EYPD, the involvement of people with disabilities themselves, at all levels, was of crucial importance. The Commission therefore ensured that representatives of people with disabilities at European level were involved in the development of priorities for the EYPD, the actions to be supported and the main messages for the campaign. At national level, the participating countries had to ensure that representatives of people with disabilities were part of the national coordinating body, and in particular that preference was given to organisations representing or defending the rights of people with disabilities when awarding co-funding. One of the aims of the EYPD campaign was to ensure that people with disabilities realised that 2003 was their year, during which they could become involved so as to guarantee that the issues of most interest to them were high on the political agenda.

The EYPD budget at EU level was initially agreed at €12 million. However, following a budgetary amendment adopted by the European Parliament in December 2002, a further €780 000 was added to the EU budget allocated for this action. Together with the contribution from the EEA countries, the final budget for the EYPD was almost €12.977 million.

At EU level, the Commission established an advisory committee (the "Disability Advisory Committee"), composed of official representatives of the participating countries, representatives of European disability organisations and other organisations concerned. The social partners at EU level were also invited to sit on this committee. At EU level, the

[16] Council Decision of 3 December 2001 (2001/903/EC)

Commission also contracted and managed an EU-wide promotional campaign, which sought to create an overall identity for the Year, to mobilise all key stakeholders and to support the campaigns developed at national level.

At national level, in line with the specific priorities they adopted, the national coordinating bodies had responsibility for using EU co-funding to promote the aims of the EYPD and to support projects at local, regional, national and transnational level. Additionally, the Commission awarded funding to participating countries to organise launch events at the start of 2003, and additionally to the two countries holding the EU Presidency in 2003 (Greece and Italy) for the EYPD opening and closing events and a conference on the media and disability.

Overall, it can be considered that the EYPD was successful. The campaign was able to mobilise large numbers of organisations and individuals across Europe in support of the aims of the EYPD and it acted as a catalyst for, or in support of, a number of major actions and policy measures. These served to create a vast amount of general awareness about the rights of the EU's disabled citizens and increase the visibility of issues related to disability. This was reflected especially in the media coverage of disability issues in general and the EYPD campaign in particular, through the written press and through television and radio coverage. Moreover, the global grants awarded to each participating country to support projects had a particularly important leverage effect, generating huge interest in undertaking actions during 2003 and creating a 'snowball' effect as envisaged in the original Commission proposal.

Annex 2: Financial issues

As stated above, an amount of almost € 13 million was made available from the Community budget to support actions and activities for the EYPD. Almost two thirds of this amount was passed directly to the participating countries in the form of the global grants awarded to each country to co-finance projects and actions at national, regional and local level, or to support the national launch events, opening and closing events (organised by the EU Presidency countries) and one thematic conference. In accordance with the Council Decision, this funding was awarded to the designated authority in each participating country – a public-law body nominated by the state to take responsibility for managing the funds awarded. In most countries, the designated authority was the ministry with the main policymaking responsibility for disability issues.

In accordance with the Council Decision, all Community funds awarded as global grants and for national launch events could be used to finance up to 50 percent of the eligible costs of actions. Community funds awarded for the opening and closing events and thematic conference did not represent more than 80 percent of the total eligible costs. In order to manage the Community funds awarded as global grants, a funding agreement was signed between the Commission and each designated authority, setting out the measures to be implemented, the criteria for choosing beneficiaries, the conditions and rates of assistance, and the arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and controlling the use of the global grant.

Generally, Community co-funding for projects in the participating countries was significantly less than 50 percent. In fact, the average across the 17 participating countries was around 20 percent. The other main sources of funding at national level were the national, regional and local authorities. In some of the participating countries, the designated authority required project beneficiaries to supply the additional funding either from their own resources or from other sources, such as sponsoring.

From figures supplied to the external EYPD evaluators[17] it appears that for every 1 euro from the Community budget 4.5 euros were invested at national level in specific EYPD projects. Given the very large number of projects submitted in many of the participating countries, it is clear that limiting the EU financing rate to a maximum of 50 percent was a positive and effective approach in this particular instance.

At EU level, the Commission took responsibility for managing all the calls for tenders and calls for proposals for actions at EU level (with the exception of the Presidency and Media conferences). The overall commitment rate achieved for all actions supported from the Community budget was 98 percent (see annex 1).

[17] Rambøll management – see annex 2

Annex 3: Detailed breakdown of expenditure commitments in 2002 and 2003 (Budget Line 04 04 05 ex B5 806)

	Description	**Amount (in €1000)**
Total EU contribution to co-financed projects and actions in the participating countries		**8,299**
	Global grants	6,686
	National Launch events	685
	Opening ceremony	300
	Media and Disability Conference	228
	Closing ceremony	400
Total EU contributions to co-financed projects at EU level		**1,144**
	NGO information campaigns	337
	Transnational Projects	582
	Parliament of Disabled Persons	225
Total EU contributions to promotional activities		**2,403**
	EU Information and Promotional Campaign	2,400
	EDDP Postcards	3
Total EU spend on evaluation and study activities		**809**
	Evaluation of the European Year	194
	Eurobarometer survey	165
	Study on situation of disabled people in institutions	450
GRAND TOTAL		12,655

Annex 4: Overall assessment and long-term policy outlook

Through the EYPD campaign, the Commission wanted not just to draw attention to all the barriers that persons with disabilities face, but also to identify new ways of overcoming barriers, as well as new methods and approaches to do so. As part of its follow-up to the EYPD and in order to ensure the production of sustainable results beyond 2003, the Commission adopted the Communication on the policy follow-up to the EYPD – 'Equal opportunities for people with disabilities: A European Action Plan'[18]. In particular, the Communication puts forward an Action Plan for the Commission with a time horizon of 2010.

The objective of the Action Plan is to provide a reference point and a framework for mainstreaming of disability rights and issues into relevant Community policies and for developing practical measures in crucial areas to enhance the integration of people with disabilities. In this respect, the Commission has made a specific commitment to ensuring that the impetus created by the EYPD will continue well beyond 2003, and has delivered its own considerable contribution to ensuring the longer-term policy effects of many of the key objectives of the EYPD. Building on the contributions of a large number of Commission departments during 2003, supported by the Commission's Disability Inter-service Group, the work to integrate a mainstreamed approach on disability issues across Community action and to enable people with disabilities to participate equally in Community programmes and initiatives will continue. Moreover, the momentum created since 2003 has certainly contributed to raise awareness on disability issues in the scientific community and is triggering high quality research proposals.

The EYPD campaign has also succeeded in underscoring the European dimension of disability issues (through the very strong EU identity of the campaign, the march and bus route through all the participating countries). Across the whole EU, disabled people have used the EYPD campaign to put the issues of most concern high up the political agenda and in the forefront of the public mind. In many of the participating countries, particularly through the considerable media coverage of disability in 2003 and the strong and positive images portrayed, disability and the situation of people with disabilities has been, for the first time, a major subject of attention and a high level of public awareness has been achieved. This has reinforced the messages at all levels that disability does not mean inability, nor does it equate to lack of ability.

As indicated in the Commission's Communication on the follow-up to the EYPD, all of the then Member States adopted new legislation or developed the new policy measures which were implemented or announced in 2003. These concern not only the updating of existing laws and the passing of new ones, but also the promotion of new approaches, innovative methods and positive measures. It is clear that the EYPD has provided the impetus in Member States for new policy developments towards achieving equal opportunities for people with disabilities, triggering a definitive shift towards more pro-active measures in favour of people with disabilities, while laying the foundations on which future long-term action can be built.

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[18] http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2003/oct/com650_final_en.html

Annex 5: External evaluation of the EYPD Campaign

The Commission engaged an external contractor to evaluate the EYPD campaign. In view of the decentralised approach to the EYPD, this was a particularly difficult task. The very nature of a transfer of responsibility to the national level, and the efforts made by those involved at all levels to encourage ownership of the EYPD and mobilise the largest possible number of organisations and individuals in the campaign, meant that it was not possible to monitor the implementation or impact of these actions directly and individually. Therefore, the methodology adopted for the external evaluation required by the Council Decision was to analyse all the key products of the EYPD campaign and interview many of the key players at EU and national levels. The evaluator also undertook a number of case studies, looking at the approach to the EYPD in some of the participating countries or specific actions at European level, and circulated a questionnaire to all of the projects which received EU co-funding. The summary of the evaluation report is attached in Annex 2 below.

The overall conclusion of the evaluation was that the approach taken with respect to the establishment of an overall EU campaign with decentralisation of some of the implementation of the EYPD to national level was the correct one. This, in particular, allowed the EU to address and focus on many of the challenges which people with disabilities still face on a daily basis in all participating countries. At the same time, the approach helped to create a campaign that was very relevant and appropriate within its broad overall objectives, while addressing national priorities and the evolving needs within the participating countries. The evaluation concludes that the approach also allowed maximum involvement by people with disabilities in the EYPD and supported the prioritisation of resources in line with the key issues identified at national level. However, it is clear that overall resources to support the EYPD campaign were often limited and the backing of a number of key EU and national organisations and individuals was vital to the success of the campaign.

The evaluation report also found that the EYPD campaign acted as an important lever for disability issues at different levels, as it was able to influence and define actions, prompt various decision-makers to focus upon disability issues and put disability higher up the political agendas. However, the evaluators consider that attention should have been focused more on highlighting good practice and innovation, and on identifying ways in which actions could be replicated and transferred to other contexts. The report also established that all key players in the implementation of the EYPD (the Commission, disability organisations, national coordinating bodies, government authorities etc) implemented it in line with the Council Decision establishing the EYPD and, given the limited human and financial resources available at different levels, managed to achieve the participation of a wide variety of stakeholders including national, regional and local authorities, social partners, and most importantly disability organisations and other NGOs. The report notes a similar involvement, especially of disability organisations, in the projects co-financed from the Community budget. Finally, the report concludes that the decentralised approach and delivery mechanism adopted by the Commission was a strong vehicle and a significant factor in the success of the EYPD campaign.