The Euro-Mediterranean intergovernmental institution

43 member countries

All EU member states

16 Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries

I. Environmental and climate action

II. Sustainable and inclusive economic and human development

III. Social inclusiveness and equality

IV. Digital transformation

V. Civil Protection

The five areas of action
UfM | Process leading to a Regional Agenda on Disability

• 1st EuroMed Conference on Disability January 2022
• Exchanges with CSOs, EC, International Experts
• Participation into EU Ministerial Conference and Arab Forum on Women with Disabilities

Definition of a future EuroMediterranean Agenda for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

• Preliminary and partial situational assessment of the social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
• Mixing desk research and consultation methods
• Joint initiative UfM and Social Group ONCE
• Workshops institutional partners

UfM Regional Agenda on Disability Rights 2024

• Disability Regional report
• 2nd Regional Conference on the Socio-Economic Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (January 2024).
• Definition of Regional Agenda

Preliminary and partial situational assessment of the social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
2 Workshops on June and July 2023

- Present the preliminary results of the desk research
- Capture of potential policy priorities for the future agenda.
- Discuss and explore spaces for interactions and future Euro-Mediterranean collaboration.

Representatives national institutions in charge of disability inclusion policies. One per country from Malta, Italy, Spain, Morocco, Lebanon, and Jordan.

European Economic and Social Committee, European Disability Forum and Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities.

Technical experts in the field of inclusive employment, social protection, and rights of women and girls with disabilities.
Preliminary analysis: six countries

Methodology

Mixed desk research and consultation methods

Targeted area

- Focus on six countries (Italy, Malta, Spain, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco)

Selection criteria

- Availability of recent data and information to produce a representative picture of disability socio-economic inclusion in the Mediterranean.
- Demonstrated political willingness to advance an agenda of disability rights and inclusion in line with the provisions of the CRPD including existence of good practices with potential for replication across the region.
- North-South Med balance.
Persons with disabilities are among the most marginalized and excluded groups in the Euro-Med region. The health, climate and conflict crisis have further exacerbated their challenges and highlighted the need for urgent action to ensure their full inclusion. The socio-economic, cultural, and political heterogeneity of the region also contribute to the diversity of approaches to disability inclusion. Vast disparity in income levels, varying levels of education and literacy rates, significant differences in labor market participation rates and unemployment rates. There is an urgent need to act for the equal rights of women and girls with disabilities in the Mediterranean region.
Main data

% PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

ITALY: 5.2
MOROCCO: 5.1
LEBANON: 2
LEBANON*: 17.6
JORDAN: 13.0
JORDAN*: 11.2
MALTA: 5.2
SPAIN: 9.7
Access to employment

All countries dispose of legislations and/or national policies/strategies, mostly based on quotas which are seldom respected, even in countries with binding systems (Italy and Malta).

Data variation is gigantic and reflective of different data collection methods (ex.: data for Lebanon vary significantly depending on the source)

Differences appears also within more homogenous contexts (see recent EDF human rights report 7/2023)

Cases of Malta and Jordan are interesting, in their own ways
Fragmented mechanisms (central-local), expenditures in % of public budget vary significantly.

Italy and Spain are at around the OECD average (1.9 and 2.5% GDP respectively, avg: 2% [2019]), Malta among the lowest levels in Europe.

Morocco: The 2017-2021 Action Plan has the theme of social protection as a priority axis and encourages the coverage of costs and expenses related to the loss of autonomy of persons with disabilities, BUT according to the last 2014 census, two out of three persons with disabilities do not benefit from any social protection (65.9%).

Jordan at the forefront: The National Aid Fund (NAF) is articulated in six programs which include cash transfers to family living below the poverty line and families with members with disability. In 2019, 3.5% of the GDP is invested in social protection. The beneficiaries are entitled to free health care and receive insurance cards.
In terms of employment, women face more disparities than men, with both men with disabilities and women with disabilities facing more unemployment than those without disabilities.

In terms of financial resources, women tend to earn less than men, with both men and women with disabilities facing a greater disparity than people without disabilities.

In general, women have lower levels of education, tend to be segregated at home and have limited access to employment, social services or, generally speaking, inclusion in society.
4th Conference of the Arab Forum for Women with Disabilities: key recommendations

- Developing mechanisms for the economic empowerment of women with disabilities, their rehabilitation, employment and inclusion in financial services
- Updating the data collection system and adopting quantitative and qualitative indicators
- Encouraging the private sector to invest in the projects of women entrepreneurs with disabilities, and technological programs and applications for training
- Promoting access to decision-making positions and their participation in all legislative and executive bodies
- Developing a regional program for the political participation of women with disabilities
Emergency dimension: climate change & humanitarian crisis

Supporting data collection and monitoring in accordance with the disaggregation principles laid down in art. 31 of the CRPD

Spearhead and streamline initiatives that underline the intersectionality of climate change and disability rights, investing in the support to and capacity reinforcement of OPDs.

Overall, there is a lack of formal procedures to identify migrants and refugees with disabilities, although some tools to support identification are available.

Identification of persons with disabilities often relies either on information provided by individuals themselves, or on the presence of a ‘visible’ disability, leaving individuals with invisible impairments unnoticed.

Some persons with disabilities fear that their disabilities may affect their status of asylum applicants.
Next steps – Towards the 2nd Euro-Med Conference and beyond

Expand the desk research to the whole Mediterranean region

Elaborate a pillar-oriented Theory of Change for the future UfM Agenda

Ensure participation and funding
Mediterranean Disability Rights Agenda
Promotion of the socio-economic inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Mediterranean

Cross-cutting pillar 1
Reinforcing national disability data collection and use

Cross-cutting pillar 2
Ensuring meaningful participation of OPDs in decision-making processes

Pillar 1
Access to employment in equal conditions with others

Pillar 2
Strengthening social protection mechanisms and covering disability extra costs

Pillar 3
Achieving gender equality for women and girls with disabilities

Pillar 4
Addressing emerging issues from a CRPD perspective

Additional sub-topics
- Independent living and inclusion in the community.
- Access to inclusive education.
- Access to inclusive health care.
- Equality and non-discrimination, particularly regarding the participation of organizations of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes.