European Year of People with Disabilities 2003

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This report presents the findings of the final evaluation of the “European Year of People with Disabilities 2003” (EYPD). Prepared by Ramboll Management between August 2003 and October 2004, the final evaluation Report being summarised here was commissioned by DG Employment and Social Affairs. Ramboll Management is responsible for the views presented in the Report. Under the terms of the contract Ramboll were asked to examine the overall impact and relevance of the EU on the EYPD. They were asked to apply a number of criteria when undertaking their research into the EYPD, including, for example, its relevance, its consistency with the subsidiary principle, how far its objectives have been met, how effective it was overall, how efficient it was in terms of a cost/benefit ratio, the role of the different actors involved in the project, its level of synergy with other Community instruments and lastly how it complemented other Community instruments. In terms of methodology, attention was given to the implementing bodies rather than the individual projects concerned. The findings were based on interviews with Commission representatives, the Disability Advisory Committee and the relevant national authorities.

The objective of the EYPD was to achieve equal rights for people with disabilities by raising awareness at all levels and involving key stakeholders – in particular people who themselves had disabilities plus the organisations representing them. The Council Decision, establishing the EYPD set eight objectives to be met, namely to raise awareness, to stimulate debate on measures needed to promote equal opportunities, to promote the exchange of good practice, to encourage co-operation between NGO’s and public bodies, to promote the positive image of people with disabilities, to raise awareness of the heterogeneous nature of people with disabilities, to raise awareness of discrimination which people with disability face and to pay special attention to the right of children and young people with disability. Overall responsibility for the project was awarded to the European Commission, supported by an Advisory Committee. Most of the functions, however, were de-centralised to National Co-ordinating Bodies in the Member States. They were responsible for selecting the actions that would receive support from the global grant.

The budget assigned to the EYPD amounted to EUR 12 million, later increased by EUR 780 000 following an amendment by the European Parliament. Of that amount, EUR 7.4 million was given to the Member States as global grants and for national launch events, with the remaining budget allocated to a number of Community-wide initiatives. In total more than 1 100 projects were co-financed via the global grants and included activities such as Conferences, sports-events, studies, cultural events and events designed to empower people with disabilities. A number of large celebrations for the EYPD itself benefited from funding. At Community level, the budget was used to finance actions such as the overall EU information campaign, including a “People’s march”, which made its way through the EU Member States on a bus, plus NGO information campaigns, opening and closing ceremonies, a study situation of people with disabilities in institutions, trans-national projects and the European Parliament of Disabled Persons.

The evaluator’s Report concludes by examining in detail each of the projects undertaken during the EYPD, such as the information campaign. Each conclusion is accompanied with a set of recommendations for future actions. Overall, the Report notes that an information campaign was an appropriate tool to address the challenges facing people with disabilities. In addition, the evaluation shows that the decentralised structure of the delivery mechanism supports the subsidiary principle. In its conclusions the Report states that, in light of the available evidence, the planned output and results of the EYPD were realised. Other findings note that integrating disability organisations in the Commission’s planning brought a number of benefits.