



PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Opening statement by Dr. Rosaleen McDonagh, Commission Member, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

To be delivered to the Joint Committee on Disability Matters. 5 May 2022

- My thanks Chair.
 - The Commission is Ireland's National Human Rights Institution and National Equality Body. We also monitor CRPD.
 - As such, we welcome today's meeting.
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- Article 11 is about humanitarian emergencies. It requires states to protect disabled people during armed conflict.
 - Article 32 says States must cooperate for disability rights, both with each other and with civil society – in particular, DPOs.
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- The Commission is proud of the solidarity in Ireland's response so far. As across the EU, Ukrainians here have access to work, education, welfare and services.
 - The HSE says Ukrainians will be able to apply for disability services. Issues may arise with such self-referral. People need information and supports to navigate the system. Waiting times for services will be another problem.
 - The HSE is engaging with disability umbrella groups on its response. DPOs must be involved to ensure a rights-based approach.

- This is vital as when people are injured in war, they are often left disabled. Many disabled people may come here. Their rights must be protected.
 - This includes disabled children. Will people pledging shared accommodation house them? Will housing be accessible? Will people with more complex disabilities be welcomed?
 - And if the State decides to pay hosts, we need to avoid exploitation and ensure autonomy and agency for Ukrainians themselves.
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- What about disabled people still in Ukraine? The UN notes their fate is largely unknown.
- People are reported trapped or abandoned at home and in institutions. Many lack medication, food and water, emergency information and shelters. Disabled women are at higher risk of sexual violence.
- The Commission recommends the State do all possible to facilitate disabled people to find safety, including through our EU and UN Security Council Memberships, and Council of Europe Presidency. This is in line with CRPD.
- Thank you.