

PLENARY VI: “THE ROLE OF POLICY MAKERS IN SUPPORTING POSITIVE ACTION”

Some European media have been very proactive regarding disability portrayal and co-operation with the representative organisations of disabled people, as it makes a good business sense. Nevertheless, from the disability movement point of view, the voluntary approach should be complemented by a policy framework that will guarantee and effective protection of disabled people’s rights in the mass media.

What is the situation in the different European countries? How these policy frameworks have contributed to improve the participation and the presence of disabled people in the media? How can a policy framework benefit the most proactive media?

In this Plenary, **Ms. Maria Eagle**, UK Minister for Disabled People and **Mrs. Marlies Ypma**, from the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports will share the government’s point of view on the issue, presenting concrete initiatives developed in the UK and The Netherlands.

Mr. Ronald Besemer, from the Dutch Council of the Chronical Ill & the Disabled will provide a concrete example of the fruitful co-operation between the Dutch government, the Dutch media and the disability organizations to improve the image of disabled people in society and to develop a successful raising awareness campaign.

This plenary will be moderated by **Mr. Stefan Trömel**, Director of the European Disability Forum.

Key issues for discussion:

- How can media contribute to the participation of disabled people in the public and political arena?
- How can the rights of disabled people be protected in the media in order to avoid discrimination?
- Which mechanisms should be put into place to guarantee an adequate portrayal of disabled people in the media? Media observatories? Media ombudsman? Is it the role of the media or the role of the government to monitor the presence of disabled people in the media?
- Should a permanent co-operation between the media and disability organizations be regulated?
- Should a legislative framework protect and defend the rights of disabled people in the media?