

**REPORT**  
**AMiD Final conference**  
**5<sup>th</sup> November 2019**  
**@European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)**

## **Introduction**

The project **AMiD (Access to services for Migrants with Disabilities)** aims to support an efficient management of the reception and integration of asylum seekers and migrants with disabilities in the EU. AMiD purpose is to outline a Needs Assessment Tool (NAT) to empower NGOs and Local Authorities to assess and support with adequate responses migrants and refugees with disabilities in Europe. The project developed targeted workshops to improve knowledge and responses of multidisciplinary professionals (NGOs staff): local organizations working with migrants and refugees' services, disabled people's organizations and service providers for people with disabilities. **AMiD also has a Community-Advisory Board (CAB)**, a permanent task-force able to support the modelling and valorization of project results and to coordinate future common actions.

AMiD final conference took place on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2019 at the European Economic and Social Committee. The purpose of the conference was to analyse the strengths and uniqueness of the project through an open discussion between keynote speakers, project partners and other actors working on the themes of migration and disabilities. The conference was divided in two sessions, a first panel discussion with keynote speakers and a session of parallel workshops.



### Panel discussion Session

The panel discussion brought together different representatives from European and international institutions, as well as representatives of civil society. The first part of the conference being moderated by EASPD Secretary General Luk Zelderloo, was a useful way to present the specific focus of the project, its added value and its sustainability.

The panel speakers were: Yaya Traore, Cultural Mediator of Arci, Ola Henrikson, Director of the Brussels Regional Office of IOM (International Organisation of Migration), Nuria Diez Guardia, from the European Commission's DG HOME, Angela Unufe Kennedy, CEO of Migrant & Minority Disability Network Europe, and Oriol Amorós i March, Secretary of Equality, Migration and Citizenship from the Government of Catalonia.



After an introductory speech by project leader **EASPD Secretary General Luk Zelderloo**, the interactive discussion between the panelists drew attention to the need for more concrete work on the topic of migrants with disabilities. **EASPD project coordinator Domenico Manente** explained how the project grew up little by little during the two years of its duration.

**SOLIDAR's Secretary General Conny Reuter** stressed the need to increase social investments not only through a more concrete integration of migrants, but also through stronger and more efficient social structures. He also underlined the importance of civil dialogue and of giving civil society organisations a greater role as discussion partners.

**Yaya Traore, cultural moderator for project partner ARCI**, in connection via Skype, opened the conversation talking about its personal experience as a person with disability, and more concretely as a person that experienced a post-traumatic stress disorder due to the inhumane conditions of the journey he made to reach Europe. The speech of Mr. Traore has been followed by the projection of the video made by ARCI, in which precisely he is one of the protagonists. **IOM Brussels Regional Office Director, Ola Henrikson**, focused its speech on the UN Global Compact for Migration and its importance in the protection and inclusion of vulnerable people and migrants. More specifically Mr. Henrikson mentioned the objective number 7 of the Compact "Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration".

Representing AMiD project funder, **Mrs. Nuria Diez-Guardia, Policy Analyst Migration and Integration Unit of DG Home** of European Commission, congratulated for the project results and emphasized the great unicity and sustainability of AMiD. Mrs. Diez-Guardia underlined the need to focus on the possible solution and the required policies to address for better address the reception and integration of migrants

with disabilities, instead of continuing to focus on the problem. For this reason, the European Commission is continuing working in collaboration also with civil society organisations to better understand how to drive the policies for integration and inclusion of migrants with disabilities.

**Mrs. Angela Unufe Kennedy, CEO Migrant & Minority Disability Network Europe**, and member of the Community Advisory Board of AMiD explained how AMiD project tries to assess the health care of migrants coming into Europe. She underlines how it is not only a matter of physical health but also mental and intellectual health. According to Mrs. Unufe, thanks to AMiD we are collecting useful data that we need in order to help NGOs and service providers in better address them with this people in need.

**Secretary of Equality, Migration and Citizenship of the Government of Catalonia, Mr. Oriol Amorós i March** presented the main work of the Region of Catalonia in the integration and inclusion of migrants with specific attention to vulnerable categories. The Region of Catalonia has a specific approach in social policies that tries to mix people, citizens and volunteers with the reality, trying to put the medium class of citizens closer to people experiencing vulnerability. The results as he stressed is the recognition of the difficulties that vulnerable groups experience in their daily life.



## Parallel workshops and recommendations

During the second part of the conference, the participants could choose between three different workshops, on three key arguments of the AMiD project. The main outcome of the parallel workshop was to set one or more recommendations from each discussion. Presented during the final remarks, these



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recommendations could be the starting point for next year's work on the topic. Not only a "legacy", but a starting point.

**1. The use of the Needs Assessment Tool for the identification of migrant's support needs. – Moderator Elena Anastasiou, CARDET**

The first workshop recommendation was mainly centered on one of the basic outputs/outcomes of the AMiD project, the development and use of the Need Assessment Tool. The group that attended this workshop underlined the need to spread and promote the use of NAT. During this workshop it has also been stressed the need to make a follow up concerning persons with psychosocial disabilities and mental health in general as more and more migrants face post traumatic disorders linked to conditions during their journey. It is important for this reason to better understand how to support this group of persons with disabilities, and NAT could be a useful tool for organisations working for migrants.

**2. How to improve the skills and knowledge of organisations working for migrants and/or persons with disabilities? – Moderator Valentina Itri, ARCI**

The second workshop recommendation stressed the need to continue mainstreaming disability in a wider context. For this reason, the participants of the discussion wanted to underline also the need of a stronger and better collaboration between DPOs and the organisations working with migrants.

**3. Workshop 3 – A multi-stakeholder approach to the inclusion of migrants with disabilities: the role of public authorities, NGOs, civil society organisations. – Luca Magri, AER**

Also the last workshop produced as results of the discussion a set of recommendations as follows:

- Strengthen the multi-stakeholder cooperation needs to be institutionalised - via different commissions, councils, round tables, in order to ensure regular flow of information, coordination and co-operation. Ideally, some of such bodies should have a decision-making role, based on consensus.
- It is important to allocate resources for multi-stakeholder co-operation, and make sure to involve also people of diverse backgrounds. This is a way to make persons with disability visible.
- Establish quality standards in services, e.g. housing is important, regardless the cost. Create a Participatory structure at the national level with all stakeholders.
- Adopt at the national level harmonised tools to collect data at the national level. Set up national registries for civil society organisations with clear criteria.





### Final remarks and sustainability of AMiD project

The floor for the final remark came back to EASPD Secretary General Luk Zelderloo. Mr. Zelderloo started its speech wishing to continue the work on invisible needs and requirements of migrants and other vulnerable groups. He stressed the need to find a common language between the actors working with migrants and with people with disabilities, and the need to institutionalise this cooperation. There is for sure a need for more quantitative and qualitative data concerning migrants with disabilities, and for this reason the NAT should be promoted and spread as good tool for collecting this information. EASPD Secretary General asked to **include migrants into the next European Disability Strategy for 2020 – 2030**.

The conference last point of discussion has been logically the **sustainability of the project**. AMiD project thanks to its unicity and thanks to the concrete outcomes of the project could have great possibility to be just a pilot of several other project on the topic of migrants with disabilities. Not only the concrete sustainability of a tool as the NAT, also the recommendation set down during the project workshop and discussion could open the reflection on the possibility to integrate the results into a more comprehensive work.