



Brussels, 30 January 2026

Ref: EDF-26-XX-YV

To: António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General

Subject: Urgent Call for Action Against the Council of Europe's Draft Additional Protocol to the Oviedo Convention

Dear Secretary-General,

We are writing to express our deep concern regarding the proposed Council of Europe's 'Draft Additional Protocol to the Convention on human rights and biomedicine' (referred as Draft Additional Protocol to the Oviedo Convention), currently under consideration by the Council of Europe.

This draft protocol seeks to regulate involuntary placement and treatment in psychiatry. It represents a profound deviation from the standards established by the **United Nations**, particularly the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)** as well as the positions of the **UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, the **UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, and other UN human rights mechanisms. Rather than advancing the rights of persons with disabilities, it risks legitimising practices that are discriminatory and contrary to international human rights law.

We note with appreciation that the **Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe** has already delivered a **negative opinion** on this draft. Despite this, the process toward adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe continues. If adopted, the Additional Protocol would further institutionalise coercive measures in mental health settings and undermine the global movement toward rights-based, non-coercive alternatives consistent with the CRPD. It would also be a troubling signal that the Council of Europe is willing to deviate from the well-established positions of the United Nations and its human rights bodies.

We respectfully urge you, Mr. Secretary-General, to:

1. **Communicate with the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe**, warning them of the incompatibility of this proposed protocol with the United Nations' human rights framework and the CRPD. This should be done in February as the decision may be made in the next weeks.
2. **Raise this issue directly with European States**, urging them to oppose the adoption of the draft Additional Protocol.

3. **Call on States**, should the protocol nonetheless be adopted, **not to ratify it**, in line with their obligations under the CRPD and other international human rights instruments.

This is a critical moment for human rights and the dignity of persons with disabilities, including those with psychosocial disabilities. We count on your leadership to ensure that the United Nations' commitment to human rights and equality is upheld, and that efforts contrary to these principles are strongly opposed.

We thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and look forward to your action and response.

Yours sincerely,



Yannis Vardakastanis,
President - European Disability Forum