# **Elections 2024**

# **Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**

# **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

# **Human Rights Committee (HR Cttee)**

# **Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**

Questionnaire for candidates

Six UN Treaty Bodies (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Human Rights Committee (HRCttee), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) and Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT)) will have elections organised in 2022.

In order to strengthen the treaty bodies, the International Disability Alliance, Child Rights Connect and IWRAW Asia-Pacific – as part of [TB-Net](https://tbnet.org/en/), the NGO network on the UN Treaty Bodies – seek to promote quality, independence and diversity of treaty body membership through transparent and participators nomination and elections processes.

This questionnaire, which is sent to all nominated candidates and is based on the criteria set forth in the relevant treaties and in the General Assembly Resolution 68/268, will enable all States and other stakeholders to better understand the skills, experiences and motivation of running candidates to CRPD, CEDAW, HRCttee, CRC and CESCR in advance of the elections.

The written responses to the questionnaires will be made available on the website [www.untbelections.org](http://www.untbelections.org), while the video responses will be shared on a dedicated [YouTube page](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3AE1yyjFFbfT9G9lFKAaTQ).

*This initiative does not imply that we support or oppose any individual candidates.*

## Questions for all treaty bodies candidates

1. **Name**: Elena Kochoska

2. **Nationality**: Macedonian

3. **Current** **position**: Expert on Disability and Human Rights

**4. Are you currently holding, or have you previously held any position on behalf of, or for, your Government (Executive branch) that may compromise your actual or perceived independence and impartiality? If so, please give details:**

No. I have not held any position on behalf of my Government.

**5. Please indicate any current or potential conflict of interest that may prevent you fr exercising independence and impartiality in your work as a member of a UN treaty body:**

I don’t have any potential conflict of interest that will prevent me from exercising my work as a member of a UN treaty body.

**6. Was the nomination process for your candidacy a transparent and participatory process? Was civil society or other relevant stakeholders involved?**

For my nomination, there were consultations with organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs)[[1]](#footnote-1) and other civil society organizations (CSOs, human right and service providers), members of the Inter Party Parliamentary Group on the rights of persons with disabilities.

**7. During your possible mandate as a Committee member, what other positions or professional activities do you intend to engage in?**

During my possible mandate, I intend to continue to educate train and coach persons with disability on their rights, in line with the CRPD, with the focus on their legal rights, and, encourage them to get meaningfully involved and engaged in the implementation and monitoring, stimulating them to be more proactive using the mechanism for submitting shadow reports and complaints (strategic litigation) and to be self-advocates for their rights. I intend to continue to be member of the European Network on Independent Living - ENIL Board.

**8. The commitments as a Committee member are very time-consuming during and outside session time. How will you ensure to have the capacity to dedicate the necessary time to the work of the Committee, both in person and online?**

As a very active woman with disability, who works freelance, I have the capacity to control my own work schedule and to dedicate all the necessary time to the work of the Committee, both in person and online.

**9. What are the current and main challenges that you see for the treaty body system and what are your ideas for improvement?**

The main challenges for the treaty body system are:

* The intersection of human rights between the different treaties should become more embedded by implementing the CRPD principles in all of them, closing the intersectional gaps and building bridges between the committees themselves, but also with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, to have a common impact during the UN General Assemblies. Enhance coherence in the human rights monitoring system.
* Promotion of the CRPD Committee’s work and CRPD as an international agreement
* Disability mainstreaming as an intersectional question and cross – disability question within other issues such as conflict prevention, disaster risk reduction, and other global challenges on the political agenda
* Better understanding and acceptance of political and civil rights of persons with disabilities, including the right to independent living
* Providing adequate funding and staffing to treaty bodies, especially the CRPD enabling them to work more proactively and effectively implement its mandate.
* Intensify the cooperation with participating States and OPDs.

**10. Given the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide and the disruption of in person meetings of treaty bodies, will you be willing to adapt to undertake online work during your mandate, as an increasing way of functioning of the Committees?**

Yes

Link to your full resume:

**Questions for candidates to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**

*Please provide responses that are as precise as possible and in no more than* ***200 words per question****.*

***Your motivation, experience and qualifications to become a member***

1. What do you think are the core values and key functions of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in protecting and promoting their rights?

The main function of the Committee is to promote the human rights of persons with disabilities, and to provide States parties with recommendations to support the implementation of provisions enshrined in the CRPD. Also, the Committee can receive and examine individual complaints and can undertake inquiries in the case of reliable evidence of grave and systematic violations of the Convention. The Committee also can publish its interpretation of the content of human rights provisions, known as general comments, on thematic issues. The main core values are the standards of efficiency, competence and integrity of the members and not excluding the understanding and implementing the human right model for disability.

2. What motivates you to be a member of the CRPD Committee?

My motivation to become a member of the CRPD Committee is personal and professional. Personally, I want to see the CRPD Committee as a strong bastion for promoting and defending our rights. Therefore, with my involvement, my network and skills, I can motivate OPDs to get more involved in their countries and worldwide, to be part of all the processes promoting the self-determination of disabled people, to be more proactive in standing for our rights using the CRPD. Professionally, with my expertise on different level and from different angles, I can contribute to ensuring a better understanding and implementation of the CRPD and the human rights model of disability, promoting the legislative reforms and overcoming misunderstandings of the CRPD, as well as promoting the implementation of the intersectional disability approach. I can contribute in the process of strengthening the networking with other agencies and bodies, and to promote the CRPD Committee’s work through the OPDs networks worldwide. With my involvement, I can contribute the commitments on disability inclusive equality and help ensure that they are translated into action throughout the world.

3. Do you have lived experience as a person with disability or as a family member or close associate of any person(s) with disabilities?

I am a woman with a physical disability from my birth and I live in R. N. Macedonia, a country of 2 million people in Southeast Europe. I have always strived to live a life with dignity, to fully enjoy my rights and to actively and independently participate in public, social and political life. I have been engaged personally and professionally in promoting inclusive equality, making sure that the voices of my fellow citizens are heard, thus making an impact on the lives of people, especially girls and women across the disability spectrum, and contributing to a more effective implementation of the CRPD.

4. Please indicate areas of your expertise and experience relevant to CRPD and the work of the CRPD Committee. What would be **particular values** that you can add / bring as a member of the Committee? In which areas of the CRPD do you feel you have the strongest understanding or expertise? Please describe. **(video option)**

As an economist and my legal background, I have more than 23 years of experience as a human right defender and advocate for policy and legislative reform. All my work is grounded in the vision of inclusive equality enshrined in the CRPD, advocating for the elimination of intersectional discrimination; independent living and the empowerment of disability community; the achievement of inclusive equality, as well as participation and inclusion of disability community as partners and beneficiaries of development, humanitarian action, and peace and security. As a woman with disability, I am also a very active member of the disability community on international, regional and national level. For 10 years, I was the technical coordinator of the Inter Party Parliamentary lobby group for the rights of persons with disabilities. Currently, on international level, I am member of the Board of the European Network on Independent Living - ENIL. At the national level, I am the Chairperson of the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation Board, and a consultant to many OPDs, service providers, international organizations and Embassies on regional national and local level helping them to mainstream CRPD within their programs and actions. Through those years I am also closely working with the national monitoring mechanisms in the country.

Beside my experiences and knowledge of international, regional and national legislation, I have extensive experience and professional knowledge in the area of monitoring of laws, participation and inclusion, drafting and policy creation for disability and gender equality, minority rights, including gender responsive policy making and budgeting.

My key areas of expertise as a human right disability defender include advocacy, empowerment of right holders and capacity building of OPDs, persons with disabilities, duty barriers, research and policy making on advancing the rights of persons with disabilities and CRPD implementation at national, regional and international level. I have been engaged and worked with national, regional and international human rights mechanisms, submitted reports and supported implementation of their recommendations. On the other hand, my backgrounds as an economist comes with expertise in financial issues and advocating for an open and sustainable economy, advancing the rights of people with disabilities in the labor market, implementing disability budgeting at the national and local level by different actors, as well as regulating the relationships among different stakeholders and service providers following the CRPD principles.

In the last years, my professional focus has been on political and civil rights, political participation and access to justice, through the lens of the right to live independently and being included in the community, with an intersectional approach. Therefore, as a member of the Committee, I can contribute (1) to strengthening the legal quality of the Committee’s work and (2) to deepening the coordination of working methods among the many UN treaty bodies, International organizations, CSOs and OPDs and Empowerment of persons with disabilities. I will put (3) a particular emphasis on the right to access to justice and political participation as an essential prerequisite for an effective protection of our right to independent living.

5. Have you had the opportunity to use or apply the CRPD and/or other human rights instruments in your work? Please describe your experience and direct us to any documents that evidence this application.

All of my work is grounded on the CRPD principles. My most important accomplishments include:

* Publication [Assessment of gender and diversity dimension in the work of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors,](https://www.osce.org/mission-to-skopje/544330) OSCE, 2023
* Monitoring Report of the Process of Deinstitutionalization 2020 – 2023 and report about the Independent living of persons with disabilities for the Ombudsman 2023 - 2024
* Publication [Participation of women and girls with disabilities in political and public life](http://65swsp.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Book-of-abstracts-SWSP-in-Times-of-Global-Crises.pdf.)”. 2023
* Main expert in the report “[Situational Analysis on the Issue of Disability](https://www.undp.org/north-macedonia/publications/situational-analysis-rights-persons-disabilities-republic-north-macedonia-2021)” 2021
* Publication “[Gender and Diversity Analyses of the impact of Covid – SARS – 19” 2021](https://www.osce.org/mission-to-skopje/480401%20))
* Disability expert in the [Fundamental Rights Report for North Macedonia](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/north-macedonia-frr2020_en.pdf) 2020-2023
* Publication Analysis of the situation of Roma with disabilities through intersectional lenses (2022)
* Publication [Guidebook for Reasonable Accommodation](https://www.osce.org/mission-to-skopje/446743.) 2021
* Publication [Analasis of the Political participation of people with disabilities](https://www.osce.org/mission-to-skopje/410309), OSCE 2019
* Publication [Parliamentary practices for CRPD implementation (2019).](https://www.academia.edu/45632098/%D0%90%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%9B%D0%98%D0%97%D0%90_%D0%97%D0%90_%D0%9F%D0%A0%D0%90%D0%9A%D0%A2%D0%98%D0%9A%D0%98%D0%A2%D0%95_%D0%9D%D0%90_%D0%9F%D0%90%D0%A0%D0%9B%D0%90%D0%9C%D0%95%D0%9D%D0%A2%D0%98%D0%A2%D0%95_%D0%92%D0%9E_%D0%9E%D0%94%D0%9D%D0%9E%D0%A1_%D0%9D%D0%90_%D0%97%D0%90%D0%95%D0%94%D0%9D%D0%98%D0%A6%D0%90%D0%A2%D0%90_%D0%A1%D0%9E_%D0%A5%D0%95%D0%9D%D0%94%D0%98%D0%9A%D0%95%D0%9F)
* Writing the [Shadow report for the implementation the CRPD in Macedonia](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRPD/Shared%20Documents/MKD/INT_CRPD_CSS_MKD_31979_E.doc%20.). 2018
* Publication [Analysis of the situation of people with physical disabilities](https://mhc.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Analysis-of-the-situation-of-people-with-physical-disabilities-in-the-Republic-of-Macedonia.pdf) 2017
* Publication [Holistic report on persons with disabilities in the Republic of Macedonia](https://openthewindows.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/HOLISTIC-REPORT-ON-PERSONS-WITH-DISABILITIES-IN-THE-REPUBLIC-OF-MACEDONIA.pdf.)” (2015)
* National [strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2024 – 2030](file:///H:\2024\(https:\ener.gov.mk\Default.aspx%3fitem=newdocumentdetails&detalisId=61)
* Publication [Prevention of Gender-Based Violence Against Women And Girls With Disabilities](https://www.osce.org/mission-to-skopje/513250), 2019
* Publication "[Corruption and persons with disabilities through the lens of employment](https://www.academia.edu/116445094/%D0%9A%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%83%D0%BF%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0_%D0%B8_%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0_%D1%81%D0%BE_%D1%85%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B5%D0%BF_%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B7_%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0_%D0%BD%D0%B0_%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%82%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B5)" 2017
* Publication [Gender budgeting analyses from the perspective of disability community](https://crpm.org.mk/product/%d1%80%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%be%d0%b2%d0%be-%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%b3%d0%be%d0%b2%d0%be%d1%80%d0%bd%d0%be-%d0%b1%d1%83%d1%9f%d0%b5%d1%82%d0%b8%d1%80%d0%b0%d1%9a%d0%b5-%d0%b7%d0%b0-%d0%b8%d0%bd%d1%82%d0%b5%d0%b3/)  2016

6. Have you advocated for the adoption and/or implementation of the CRPD or other human rights instruments in your work? Please describe your experience, referring in particular to activities to publicize, defend or strengthen the CRPD implementation at the national, regional or international level.

As a result of my advocacy and pressure through the OPDs and the Inter Party Parliamentary Group for the rights of persons with disabilities (I was the coordinator of this group from 2008 until 2023), in 2011 the Government agreed to ratify the CRPD without any reservation. I have initiated and prepared the text of th[e Declaration for the political participation of people with disabilities](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_KVg1jxiElA) (the Declaration was enacted on 23.12.2019). I was part of the working groups for the preparation of the [Law for prevention and protection from discrimination](https://kszd.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/%D0%97%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D1%81%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%87%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B5-%D0%B8-%D0%B7%D0%B0%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B0-%D0%BE%D0%B4-%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0.pdf). The Law includes the definition of disability and has recognized the intersectional discrimination against the disability community, including the obligation to provide reasonable accommodation. With ENIL, I was involved in the process of giving input in the preparation of the European Disability Forum's Manifesto on the European Elections. In 2024, I have started an initiative and lobbied for the establishment of the first informal council of persons with disabilities in my municipality. With my experience throughout all these years, I have been involved in many processes and activities on national[[2]](#footnote-2) and international level advocating for disability rights to be mainstreamed across all areas of policy and life. I have conducted a series of trainings for understanding the Istanbul Convention through CRPD.

***Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: challenges ahead***

7. What do you think are the major issues and challenges in the implementation of the CRPD and its Optional Protocol, globally as well as in your country/region? **(video option)**

The big challenges are:

* Low awareness about the CRPD among all stakeholders in all areas. The international community has not made enough publicity about the CRPD.
* Uneven implementation and understanding of the CRPD and the paradigm shift has not yet been effectively achieved globally. There is limited application and understanding of inclusive equality and nondiscrimination, lack of laws addressing inter-sectional discrimination, and limited material scope.
* Existing and continuous discrimination on grounds of disability and stigma that the community is surviving; The use of disability within the term of vulnerability is an additional barrier and there is misinterpretation of the CRPD.
* Independent living and political and civil rights are not sufficiently understood and implemented. The laws still permit institutionalization of persons with disabilities, depriving the legal capacity not respecting our autonomy and hamper significantly our political and civil rights to independence. The States are still not recognizing disability as part of the human diversity.
* The absence of disability focal points in the UN entities and other bodies on national and international level lead to CRPD not being implemented in a cross sectorial way. The existing structures within the States for coordination, participation and implementation do not fulfill the CRPD requirements. There is a lack of participation and involvement of persons with disabilities in the structure and as members in other UN Committees.
* The excuse of not having funds is used by the States, donors and UN entities to not implement the CRPD, even though they are obliged to implement disability budgeting, to mainstream disability and CRPD obligations.
* The involvement of OPDs and advocates with disability is crucial, but they are not recognized by the State and donors; disability is still missing from their programs and policies, and our involvement is not on a satisfactory level.
* The CRPD Committee and its Secretariat are understaffed, which leads to delays in reviewing States’ implementation of the CRPD and limited ability to do research and create new guidance and general comments.

8. What do you think are the areas where the Committee needs to strengthen its capacity and/or improve its work to advance implementation of the CRPD? What would you say is the biggest challenge the CRPD Committee faces currently?

* There is no link and coordination between reporting to international monitoring bodies and the regional monitoring bodies. The challenge of overlapping is compounded when treaty bodies have different approaches to identical human rights challenges in their recommendations that are not in line with the CRPD approach.
* Delays in reviewing state reports allow state parties to slow down the implementation. Additionally, just focusing on the progress of implementation through the list of issues can ignore many others violations that are facing persons with disabilities.
* It is equally important for the Committee to be able to work hand in hand with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, with the understanding that more monitoring and cooperation among the UN bodies there is, the greater the chance of obtaining justice for the disability community. This can be achieved by advancing strong proposals that promote human rights protections and serve as mechanisms to create pressure for the compliance with both the CRPD obligations and the Committees’ observations/recommendations; for example, by uniting voices in joint communiqués on general situations that fall within the mandates of both treaty bodies and special procedures.
* The other challenge is the promotion and recognition of the CRPD Committee and its jurisprudence within the States and by the relevant stakeholders.
* Finally, the Committee should put a particular emphasis on political participation and the right of access to justice as essential prerequisites for an effective protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

10. How do you envision the role of the CRPD Committee with respect to the Sustainable Development Goals?

The sustainable development concept provided significant ways of addressing the concerns and efforts to end the discrimination experienced by the disabled community. Despite this achievement, much effort still needs to be made in addressing the concerns involving the rights of persons with disabilities within other goals; not just focusing on health, gender equality, reduced inequalities, but using a holistic approach and covering also access to justice in promoting the rights of people with disabilities and protecting them from being discriminated. There is still a large gap between the policy and assessment tools, due to neglecting the CRPD obligations. Therefore, the Committee’s role is in the process of monitoring and providing recommendations to enhance the implementation of CRPD together with SDG goals, but also vice versa. The reporting process is completely on voluntary base and in this process OPDs are not involved, which is why we are “left behind”. To overcome this, it would be good to have a component in the State reporting about the SDG implementation trough the CRPD and vice versa.

***Interaction with other key stake-holders***

11. Who are the relevant stakeholders, apart from State parties, with whom you think the Committee needs to strengthen its engagement e.g. civil society, NHRIs, UN agencies, members of the Parliament, judicial actors? And how?

The Committee needs to strengthen its engagement with all actors, such as the civil society, including OPDs and disability networks, NHRIs, UN agencies, members of the Parliament, judicial actors, as well as the media. This can be done by doing joint trainings, workshops on different issues, networking for exchange of good practices and more participation and visibility of the Committee on important global worldwide challenges, placing the disability on the political and economic agenda.

12.NGOs, particularly organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), had an important participatory role in the negotiations of the CRPD.

a) What is your experience working within or with the disability rights movement?

As a woman with disabilities, I am part of the disability rights movement. Personally and professionally, I am engaged and involved in the process of empowerment of persons with disabilities in the region (particularly Western Balkans and Central and Eastern Europe), and at the international level. Currently, I am part of the Board of the European Network on Independent Living – ENIL, a user-led network of people with disability working at the European and international level.

b) How do you envision the interaction of civil society with the Committee?

The Committee can and should interact with the OPDs and CSOs through information and awareness building, where OPDs and the networks of OPDs can be a good channel for reaching citizens with disabilities and without disabilities.

c) How do you think the Committee could work more effectively with civil society?

The Committee could work more effectively with CSOs and OPDs through partnership and dialogue by sharing information on the review process with OPDs and creating a platform where CSOs and individuals with disabilities, and allies, can participate and provide comments and suggestions to the Committee and to disseminate the results of its work among governments, the media and the general public.

1. For my nomination, I had a support from Union of physical disability Mobilnost Skopje, Union of physical disability Mobilnost Strumica, Hendikep Plus – Kriva Palanka, Resursen Center - Parent organization of children with disabilities, Youth sing – organization of deaf people, Dajte ni kralja – organization of rear rare diseases, Union of blind, Union of deaf, European Institute for Policy, Macedonian Center for international cooperation, Hera, Members of the Inter party parliamentary group 2021 – 2023) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. I was part of the technical working group within the UN agency for implementation of the UNPRPD (2023). I was part of the national coordinative body for the implementation of the law for prevention and protection against discrimination (2020 – 2023), the working group for changes in the Electoral Code (2023). I am continually consulted by the USAID and other international agencies about incorporating CRPD in their or annual work program. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)