

Diary of a study visit to Denmark

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Local Agenda almost appended, mini-projects are coming to an end, and the campaign "Agenda 50" has come to one of the most interesting moments of the campaign - a study visit to Denmark, which was organized by the Office on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its partner organization the European House. Impressions of participants, meeting in the ministries, municipalities, social institutions and a rethinking of the experience - it all read in the diary study visit.

Exchange of experience

An important part of the campaign "Agenda 50" - an exchange of experience between the Belarusians and representatives of the European Union. Therefore, to write local agenda Belarusian activists and LA with help Polish coaches of TUS Foundation. Another important "international" component of the program - study visits. The "Agenda 50", visited Warsaw in 2016, and now 2018 - Copenhagen.

- In recent years, working in the 5 towns of Belarus, the participants found it quite difficult to understand the new approach for them: to formulate a local policy on disability. It builds on the principle of "bottom-up" - when the local community based on their knowledge of the needs of people with disabilities, living with them, know the specifics of their region and formulate priorities for local politics - says the coordinator of the campaign "Agenda 50" Michael Mackiewicz.

After the signing and ratification by Belarus of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, local authorities, social workers, non-governmental organizations were in a new situation where they need to implement the existing standards of the Convention under the unreformed system.



Denmark passed this way a decade ago and has a good experience in public relations to vulnerable groups. This visit was a good opportunity to see with their own eyes what could be possible also in Belarus.

The main purpose of the visit was to show the Belarusian activists, social workers and representatives of the authorities, how Denmark has implemented the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and how it works as a part of the Danish social system.

That did the members saw during the visit?

In Denmark active participants went in groups to develop local agendas. Among them are: social workers, and non-profit organizations. Of each pilot area - two representatives.

The itinerary was extremely rich: meetings, trainings, meet different people. During the visit, the participants and the LA were able to visit a variety of social institutions of Denmark: Danish organizations of disabled persons, the Danish labor market agency and recruitment, the Danish Institute for Human Rights and even the Ministry of Children and Social Welfare.



Places to Stay were chosen: those institutions, through which can be seen as Denmark inculcated Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The participants also visited the island Bornholm. Here lives approx. 40 thousand people, so the area is similar to the Belarusian regions.

- I hope that, thanks to the visit, participants were able to look at the disability is not only medical, but also in the social sense - says Lene Petersen, the coordinator of the organization of the European house's project in Belarus. - We have tried to show which services are available to people with disabilities in Denmark.

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Reconsider attitude to work

- I really liked the educational visit, - says Svetlana Blashko, director and coordinator TTSSON Stolbtsy write a local agenda in the column. - a lot of impressions. The first time I flew a plane, it's exciting! Copenhagen impressed with its uniqueness - a city-museum.

Svetlana says that useful for its work were all part of the study visit. It was important to understand the working of the system, to find the differences.

- Most of all it was interesting to visit the municipality on the island Bornholm. Municipalities work with people with disabilities resembles the work of Belarusian TTSSON: where people with disabilities can spend your holiday, live and work there. Very impressed barrier-free environment: in fact any building accessible to people with disabilities.



- I believe that this visit has pushed people to the discussion on the existing social assistance system, the principles and objectives, according to which social assistance, - says Mikhail Matskevich. - Of course, some of these best practices can not be implemented at the local level as it will occur dramatic changes at the national level, - says Mikhail Matskevich

Svetlana shared impressions and Angelina Shpakovskaya, coordinator of the "Agenda 50" from Szczuczyn. - This trip was needed to see the Danish social system. I, as a person who works in the Belarusian system, the trip was very useful. I can say that we have a lot of work to be done - Denmark progressed in the years ahead. There's Convention - this is not a hammer, but a tool for dialogue, - she says. - People with disabilities in Denmark are not sitting inside the four walls, and tend to occupy a niche in society and benefit. With the new knowledge we will adjust the local agenda.

The material was prepared in the framework of the international project "Rights of People with Disabilities: agenda for Belarus (Agenda 50)."



"Agenda 50", the company implemented with the support of the European Union in partnership with the [Fundacja TUS](#) (Poland) and the NGO ["European House"](#) (Denmark). The implementation of the company in Belarus participate [Office on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) , International Consortium ["EuroBelarus"](#) and the [Center for European Transformation](#) .