



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Minister for Equality attends international conference to launch Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017 - 2023**

The Minister for Equality Samantha Sacramento has today concluded her attendance at a two day conference in Cyprus during which the Council of Europe launched its Disability Strategy for 2017 - 2023. She was accompanied by senior officials from the Ministry of Equality, Sabina Guillem and Jason Belilo.

The objective of the strategy is to make the rights of people with disabilities a reality, the strategy as a tool to improve the inclusion of people with disabilities can contribute fully and participate equally in society with the overall objective being the equal treatment of people with disabilities.

The Conference included participation from numerous members of the Council of Europe, including the Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muiznieks. There were also keynote speakers from high level institutions and numerous universities as well as NGOs representing different disabilities and individuals conveying personal testimonials.

Minister Sacramento said “The conference was very successful, it was incredibly dynamic and the sessions on a wide variety of subject matters were in-depth and hugely informative.

A principal focus was on working together to change perceptions and the removal of barriers to enable equal participation.

The aim of the conference was to serve a catalyst for those attending to consider implementation strategies. Attendances at conferences such as this one assists my team and I in developing our national action plans, strategic framework, and priority areas. It also gives us the opportunity to have meaningful discussions with other countries, particularly smaller ones, to see what experiences can be shared.

It is clear that if we are to succeed in achieving inclusion of people with disabilities, we need a holistic approach. To succeed, we need everyone to embrace the principles and actively participate in change.”