



Yekaterinburg, September 2017

Dear friends,

**We have a dream. We want to share this dream with you.
The time for a positive change has come.
You can drive this change.**

The wind of change first blew 18 years ago, when the idea to organise a congress for persons with disabilities was first voiced in Berlin. Since then, thousands of people all over the world have attended congresses in Europe, South America and Asia. The congresses became the starting point for positive change in the lives of people with special needs in many countries. The first global congress marks a very important step along the way. It's time to unite the forces of all people across the globe and remind the world of the values that really matter. It's time to demonstrate the potential of cooperation in a friendly and creative environment where diversity is respected and individual issues are not a barrier to understanding.

**We invite you to participate in the first World Congress for Persons with Disabilities.
It will be held in Yekaterinburg, Russia, on 7th – 10th September 2017.**

The Congress will be a social and cultural event with a focus on networking and building cultural and interpersonal relations. It will center on persons with disabilities, their needs, and their roles in the society. One of the goals is to present disability as a starting point for development of new human skills that today's world needs so much and to give persons with disabilities an opportunity to play an active role in creating an inclusive society.

The rich conference programme features theatrical performances, artistic contributions, lectures, discussions, workshops, sightseeing tours and visits to institutions and NGOs, athletic competitions, an arts and crafts show, and a trade fair for technical rehabilitation tools and social services, and an inclusive flashmob on the streets of Yekaterinburg.

Do not miss the unique chance to explore the Middle Urals. The land that once was at the heart of Russia's gold rush and where gold and gems lie right under your feet. Have you ever found yourselves on two continents at the same time? This is where just one step will take you from Europe to Asia. Take a journey along the Trans-Siberian Railway for unmatched, unforgettable impressions. Explore the vast expanses of Siberia with their steep cliffs and big rivers of breathtaking beauty, thick pine forests and birch groves filled with light. Listen to Russian music and enjoy tea from a "samovar" and "pelmeni" – a perfect combination on the cool days of Siberian golden autumn. Feel the hospitality and discover the mysteries of the Russian soul.

Yekaterinburg offers experiences to suit everyone's taste: a rich display of gems, a museum of old Russian icons, the Sverdlovsk Film Studios, a vintage Morse converter machine in the Radio Museum, Siberian tigers and bears at the zoo and classical music in concert halls. See the basement where the last Czar of Russia spent the last months of his life and that now is part of the All Saints' Cathedral. Look at the office where the first Russian President worked. Take a journey through Russia's history. Immerse yourself in the atmosphere of today's Yekaterinburg – a vibrant city, in its diversity looking into the future.

**Contribute to "making values visible",
bringing to life the motto of the first World Congress.
Join us. Let's make this Congress happen together.**

Enclosed you will find the Congress brochure. For further details and registration please visit our website: www.kongress2017.ru. Practical things will be explained under the FAQ (Frequently asked questions) section. For all matters concerning the Congress, please contact the Congress Office by emailing to kongress2017.ekb@gmail.com.

Welcome to the Urals - welcome to Russia!

Thomas Kraus and Vera Simakova
(on behalf of the Organising Committee)