Mobility and inclusion of people with disabilities and the European disability strategy 2010-2020

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The Council adopted **conclusions** on the new European disability strategy 2010-2020.

To recall, the strategy provides a framework for action at European level and suggests actions at national level to address the diverse situations faced by women, men and children with disabilities. Its aim is to empower persons with disabilities so that they can enjoy their full rights and fully participate in society and in the European economy. The strategy identifies eight main areas for action: accessibility, participation, equality, employment, education and training, social protection, health, and external action.

The conclusions call for an appropriate use of existing funding to implement the proposed actions and for mainstreaming of disability within the Europe 2020 Strategy. In order to ensure greater inclusion of women, men and children with disabilities in the society, accessibility should be improved and equal access of disabled persons to quality education and training and quality health care should be ensured.

The conclusions may be summarised as follows :

Accessibility: the Commission and the Member States are invited to:

- support appropriate efforts to improve accessibility to goods and services, especially the built environment, transport, and information and communication, including technologies and services in all relevant areas, by considering stimulating the market through public procurement and by considering the possible need to develop coherent requirements based on European standards;
- encourage the incorporation of accessibility and universal design in educational curricula and training for all relevant professions and occupations, in particular in the fields of engineering and architecture.

Participation

- promote the independence of persons with disabilities and their inclusion in the community, in particular by developing a range of in-home, residential or other community support services responsive to their needs and in accordance with the opportunity to choose, on an equal basis with others;
- ensure equal access to political participation including the European elections;
- promote communication and information, including in accessible formats, so as to raise awareness and improve the participation and social inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Equality

- promote and protect the dignity of persons with disabilities, continue to combat discrimination against persons with disabilities and to review the existing legal framework on protection against discrimination on the grounds of disability, where appropriate, both at national and European level;
- promote the exchange of good practices within the High Level Group on Disability and, in this context, focus in particular on experience concerning the implementation of the UN Convention at Union and Member States level.

Employment

- promote the acquisition of transferable knowledge and skills by persons with disabilities, in an attempt to facilitate their integration and progression on the open labour market;
- promote the employment of persons with disabilities by utilising existing social provisions in public procurement as well as state aid in accordance with the applicable rules;
- support research into and promote the use of assistive technologies, with a view to promoting the employment of persons with disabilities;
- aim to increase the employment opportunities of persons with disabilities including persons with reduced working capacity and develop cooperation in the
- context of the labour market, including, for example, supported and, where necessary, sheltered employment, and in the context of social protection and educational systems.

Education and training

- support relevant initiatives aiming to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to quality education and training on an equal basis with others, so as to increase their knowledge, skills and qualifications in order to promote their mobility and employability;
- promote the exchange of good practices, including comparative studies, with regard to support and assistance for persons with disabilities, with a view to improving their access to the education system at all levels, including, for example, by using assistive technologies.

Social protection

- give particular attention to the needs of persons with disabilities in the context of the voluntary European quality framework for social services adopted by the Social Protection Committee on 6 October 2010;
- ensure social protection of persons with disabilities by developing and/or maintaining protective measures, taking into account the general economic situation and its effect on persons with disabilities.

Health

- improve equal and effective access to quality health care, including by removing inequalities as well as by supporting early screening for health condition in the prevention of disabilities, in accordance with the respective competences of the Member States, and by providing disability awareness training to health professionals and, where appropriate, by developing tailored health services for persons with disabilities.

External action

- promote the rights of persons with disabilities and enhance the visibility of disability matters as a human rights issue in external actions, including in EU enlargement, neighbourhood and development programmes as well as in emergency and humanitarian aid, and support the implementation of the UN Convention by third countries.

In this context, the Member States are called upon to closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including through their representative organisations, in the development and implementation of legislation and policies, when implementing the UN Convention, and to involve and to allow for the full participation of civil society, in particular persons with disabilities and their representative organisations, in the monitoring process.

The Commission is invited to support any measures taken by the Member States with the following actions:

- provide targeted support from existing European resources, especially by ensuring that non-discrimination and accessibility for all, including persons with disabilities, are applied as horizontal principles in European funding;
- review the existing framework aimed at ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities and protecting them against discrimination;
- promote exchanges of good practices at the European, national, regional and local level;
- **propose a governance framework for monitoring the implementation by the EU of the UN Convention**.