Resolution on the List of issues adopted by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in relation to the initial report of the European Union

2015/2684(RSP) - 22/06/2015 - Follow-up document

The Commission presents a document containing the replies of the European Union to the questions of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities concerning the EU's report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which entered into force in 2011. The Commission prepared the replies in liaison with other EU institutions, bodies and agencies.

The List of Issues and the Commission's responses include action taken to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities in the EU as well as a detailed discussion of specific rights such as equality and non-discrimination, accessibility, and health and employment.

In this connection, the Commission noted that the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 lays down actions to implement the Convention at EU level.

The Commission implements some actions directly; others require the agreement of Parliament and Council, while for others implementation is shared with Member States.

The Commission regularly discusses implementation of the Convention at EU and Member State level in the High-level Group on Disability and the Work Forum. The Commission prepares an annual report of the High-level Group with input from Member States. The Work Forum brings together focal points, coordination and monitoring mechanisms, and civil society organisations, from the EU and its Member States.

In its Resolution of 20 May 2015 on the List of Issues, the European Parliament called on the Commission, *inter alia*, to present an ambitious proposal for a European Accessibility Act, with the full involvement of persons with disabilities.

Other salient issues highlighted included:

- **Equal treatment**: the Commission also noted that in 2008, it proposed an Equal Treatment Directive to extend the existing EU anti-discrimination legal framework beyond employment to social protection, healthcare, education and access to goods and services available to the public, including housing. The proposal is still being considered by Council.
- **Health**: in its proposed 2008 Directive, the Commission proposed to extend protection from discrimination in the provision of health care services on different grounds, including disability. In 2015, with financial support from Parliament, the Commission will launch a pilot project to develop strategies to address the health needs of vulnerable groups. A particular focus will be on those living in geographically and socially isolated communities, including the elderly and persons with disabilities.
- **112 emergency number**: in the Parliament's resolution the need to highlight the Europe-wide emergency number 112 was stressed. The document noted that in 2015, 22 Member States reported

the implementation of an alternative access to 112. 18 Member States reported the take-up of SMS to 112; while three Member States reported the deployment of similar alternative means to contact emergency services.

- **Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies**: the document recalled that the Commission's mandate in humanitarian aid includes the provision of needs-based assistance in particular to the most vulnerable, which often includes persons with disabilities; the needs of persons with disabilities are expected to be mainstreamed in operations within all sectors of humanitarian aid. The Commission is working on humanitarian guidelines on shelter and settlements, where the needs of persons with disabilities will be considered. In 2015, the Commission and the Latvian Presidency of the Council organised a conference to raise awareness of disability among those responsible for response to emergency situations.