

Implementation of the European disability strategy

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OBJECTIVE: to present a Commission working document on the progress report on the implementation of the European strategy for disabled persons (2010-2020).

BACKGROUND: fundamental rights, inclusive growth and social fairness are at the heart of the European Commission's agenda. In this context, the elimination of barriers preventing people with disabilities from fully participating in society and enjoying their rights is therefore a priority for the EU. To this end, the European strategy for disabled persons 2010-2020 was the main instrument supporting the implementation by the EU of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([UNCRPD](#)).

As a reminder, the strategy identifies eight main areas of action:

- enhancing accessibility;
- improving the participation of people with disabilities;
- equality;
- access to employment;
- education and training;
- social protection ;
- the health ;
- external action.

This report presents the progress achieved in the first five years of the strategy and to assess its coherent and efficient implementation.

CONTENT: the report indicates that the implementation of the ten-year strategy has cemented the paradigm shift towards a **human rights approach** of disability policies.

In general, the actions carried out over the last 5 years have made **progress in the eight areas of the strategy**.

Significant progress was notably achieved in the area of accessibility with the adoption of the Directive on Web Accessibility and the proposal for a European Accessibility Act.

The successful efforts on external action were also recognised by the UN Committee on the rights of persons with disabilities.

However, the challenging economic situation has weakened the situation of people with disabilities in Member States. **They remain consistently disadvantaged in terms of employment, education and social inclusion.**

Maintaining the strategy's objectives: the report indicates that the objectives of the strategy remain relevant. In this respect, the Commission has committed itself to continuing its action by using the competences and instruments at its disposal to:

- raise awareness at EU-level,
- give financial support,

- collect data and statistics,
- monitor the situation of people with disabilities,
- act as the Focal Point for the UNCRPD.

The Commission continues to mainstream disability in all relevant EU policy areas. In this respect, tool #24 on Fundamental Rights and Human Rights and tool #25 on Employment, Working Conditions, Income Distribution and Inequality are of particular relevance in terms of addressing disability issues both in impact assessments and in evaluations.

Public consultation: the Commission launched a public consultation to collect views from a broad range of stakeholders on the current situation of persons with disabilities. The results of the public consultation clearly show that the **situation of people with disabilities remains challenging** in terms of participation in everyday activities, rights, employment, accessibility, discrimination and mobility within the EU.

While most of the concrete concerns expressed by stakeholders relate to actions and/or competences of the Member States, the Commission gathered some invaluable input on the views of persons with disabilities contained in the Annex to the report.

Main achievements: the report describes the implementation so far and lists some of the main achievements in each of the areas.

It also examines the role of the supporting instruments and the implementation of the UNCRPD within the EU institutions.

Lastly, it looks ahead at how the strategy will continue to deliver on its objectives, taking into account the UN concluding observations.

In addition, the report includes a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of EU legal acts that have an impact on disability matters.

Overall, **the objectives set out in all the eight areas of the strategy in 2010 remain valid, as well as the instruments underpinning them.** The strategy's instruments have been efficiently used and will continue to be in the coming years.

The financial support provided to disability-related projects and to disabled people and their organisations has contributed to progress in all the areas of the strategy.

Next steps: in conclusion, continued efforts need to be made in the main areas of the strategy, in particular:

- dissemination and **supporting actions** on the Employment Equality Directive, to raise public awareness in the EU and improve reporting of discrimination cases and access to justice;
- **adoption of the 2008 proposal for an Equal Treatment Directive** to fight discrimination on several grounds, including disability. The Commission continues the negotiations with the Member States to push the Directive forward;
- efforts to improve **accessibility** for all by carrying out the negotiations on the proposed EU legal instruments - including initiatives in the area of **transports, products and services** - and working on EU level accessibility standards;
- monitoring of the **EU programmes and financial instruments** to ensure their full potential for the implementation of the Strategy at the EU and national levels, in line with the UNCRPD, in key areas such as access to employment and education, support to young people or deinstitutionalisation;
- **cooperation with Member States in the implementation of the UNCRPD**, including through the Work Forum and the UN fora.

