

# Implementation of the European disability strategy

2017/2127(INI) - 30/10/2017 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs adopted an own-initiative report by Helga STEVENS (ECR, BE) on the implementation of the European disability strategy.

The Treaty on the Functioning of the EU requires the Union to combat discrimination based on disability in the definition and implementation of its policies and activities and gives it the power to adopt legislation to address such discrimination.

There are an estimated **80 million persons with disabilities in the European Union**.

Members called for a **comprehensive strategy for people with disabilities by 2030** with the aim of fully implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in all areas of EU policy. This strategy should encompass accessibility, participation, non-discrimination and equality, have an adequate budget, a timeframe for implementation and a monitoring mechanism, and have the same legal value than the current strategy.

**Accessibility:** the Commission and the Member States have been called upon to ensure that accessibility - a core principle of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - is **given priority** and is better integrated in all areas relating to disability.

Members called on the EU's co-legislators to adopt the [European accessibility act](#) without delay. They recommended that the final text should enhance the accessibility of products and services for persons with disabilities and people with functional limitations while stressing the need to put in place European rules on the accessibility of public spaces and the built environment, as well as on access to all **modes of transport**.

**Participation:** Members suggested including all countries in a future long-term initiative with a view to achieving an identical scope to that of the European parking card and to include access to services allowing participation in cultural life and tourism.

Members are of the opinion that the **European Structural and Investment Funds** must, particularly in the next programming period, finance support services to enable persons with disabilities to realise the right to live independently in the community and respect accessibility rules following a universal design approach.

Concerned about the **barriers to participation** that persons under guardianship and those living in institutions face across Europe, Members called on the Commission to ensure that persons deprived of their legal capacity can exercise all the rights enshrined in European Union treaties and legislation.

**Equality:** the report invited Member States to contribute to the adoption of the [horizontal anti-discrimination directive](#) in order to move towards a pragmatic solution which should extend to the protection against discrimination in all areas of life of persons with disabilities.

Concerned by existing data on discrimination and abuse of persons with disabilities, Members recommended the development of a new method for gathering data collection, in particular with regard to cases of **denied boarding and refusal or unavailable assistance**.

**Employment:** the report stressed that **access to the labour market** was a global issue requiring support measures that involved: (i) accessible recruitment procedures; (ii) transport from and to the workplace (iii) career progression and on-going training, as well as (iv) reasonable accommodations and accessible workplaces.

Members encouraged the adoption of **positive discrimination measures**, including setting minimum employment percentages for people with disabilities in the public and private sectors. In addition, Member States should **remove all legal barriers to employability**, such as guardianship laws and laws that limit the legal capacity of persons with disabilities, preventing them from signing work contracts.

**Education and training:** Members called for the removal of barriers that all people with disabilities face to **ensure quality inclusive education and lifelong learning systems**. They called on the Member States to develop effective measures to combat the segregation and rejection of pupils with disabilities in schools, and to guarantee full access to Erasmus + and other youth programmes, such as the Youth Guarantee and the European Solidarity Corps.

**Health, social protection:** the report noted that persons with disabilities often suffer from a lack of support, protection communication and information about health care services and rights, protection against violence, childcare, and have little or no access to such services and information.

Members considered that **health services personnel should be properly trained** with a view to addressing the needs of persons with disabilities. They urged the Commission and the Member States to **make full use of the European Reference Networks framework** to develop, and expand access to, multidisciplinary and specialised healthcare for persons with disabilities in general and, in particular, for those with rare disabilities. Members called on the Member States to set a **social protection floor** for persons with disabilities that would guarantee their adequate standard of living.

The report emphasised that the 2020-2030 strategy should be based on a cross-cutting, **comprehensive review of all EU legislation and policy** in order to ensure full harmonisation with the provisions of the UNCPRD, and that it should include a revised declaration of competences.