Resolution on the European Disability Strategy post2020

2019/2975(RSP) - 17/06/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the resolution on the European Disability Strategy post-2020.

As full citizens, all persons with disabilities have equal rights in all fields of life (including access to an open labour market and education) and are entitled to inalienable dignity, equal treatment, independent living, autonomy and full participation in society, respecting and valuing their input to the social and economic progress of the EU.

There are an estimated 100 million persons with disabilities in the European Union, who are still deprived of their basic human rights and are hindered on a daily basis from leading an independent life. Women account both for over 60 % of persons with disabilities and for the large majority of caregivers for people with disabilities. The number of children with disabilities is unknown owing to a lack of statistics, but may be in the region of 15 % of the total number of children in the European Union.

A more ambitious post-2020 European Disability Strategy

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is the first international human rights treaty to be ratified by the EU and all its Member States. The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (the Strategy) has served as a framework for policy and legislative proposals to implement the CRPD both within the EU and beyond.

The Strategy has not been adapted to emerging policy areas, such that it has not been aligned with either the Agenda 2030, which the EU and all its Member States are committed to implementing, or with the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The Strategy does not cover all the provisions of the CRPD. The Commission to date has not undertaken a cross-cutting, comprehensive review of its legislation in order to ensure full harmonisation with the provisions of the CRPD and the Strategy is said to have achieved limited progress. There has been a lack of mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities in a large number of EU policy areas.

In addition, during the COVID-19 crisis, persons with disabilities have experienced serious challenges and rights violations.

Up-scaled commitment

Parliament called on Commission to put forward a comprehensive, ambitious and long-term post-2020 European Disability Strategy, which:

- includes clearly designated priority areas, including definitions of key terms, in particular a common definition at the EU level of ‘disability’;

- contains ambitious, clear and measurable targets, including a list of planned actions with clear time frames and allocated resources;

- mainstreams the rights of all persons with disabilities into all policies and all areas;

- includes a child-sensitive approach;

- allocates an adequate budget for the implementation and monitoring of the post-2020 Strategy;

- includes a revised declaration of competences that includes all policy areas in which the EU has legislated or adopted soft law measures that have an impact on persons with disabilities, and should propose legislative proposals with implementation and monitoring measures.

Review of the strategy

The Commission is called on to include a review of the Strategy every 3 years with a clearly defined role for the EU CRPD Framework and to systematically and actively involve persons with disabilities and their representative organisations (at EU and national levels) in such a review. It should ensure that the post-2020 Strategy promotes guaranteed access to employment, and vocational and professional training, inclusive education, affordable quality healthcare services, digital services, and fair pay.

Members called on the Commission to create mechanisms to coordinate the portability and adaptability of benefits and services for persons with disabilities between the Member States and to expand the pilot project of the EU Disability Card to all Member States, extending it beyond culture and sport and to ensure that the EU parking card for people with disabilities is fully observed in all Member States. Such measures are crucial to ensure that persons with disabilities across the EU can access disability support without the need for separate assessments in each Member State. Member States are called on to incorporate into their legislation the recognition of specific disabilities in order to address and cover their specific needs (e.g. deaf-blindness).

Lastly, Parliament recommended that the EU structurally integrate the European Disability Strategy within the European Semester process.