

Implementation of Council Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation in light of the UNCRPD

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The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs Committee adopted an own-initiative report by Katrin LANGENSIEPEN (Greens/EFA, DE) on the implementation of Council Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation in the light of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Persons with disabilities are overwhelmingly excluded from the labour market and are denied the right to work on an equal footing with non-disabled people.

The unemployment rate for persons with disabilities (17.1%) is nearly double that of the general population (10.2%). Only 50.6% of persons with disabilities are employed, compared with 74.8% of persons without disabilities in the EU. Women with disabilities continue to face multiple discrimination in all areas of life. Only 20.7% have full-time jobs.

Members called on the EU institutions and Member States to reaffirm their commitment to achieving inclusive equality for persons with disabilities and to step up their efforts to create an inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory labour market for people with disabilities. They considered that a revision of the Employment Equality Directive should take place as soon as possible with a view to harmonising it with the provisions of the UNCRPD and to implement a participatory process aimed at ensuring the direct and full involvement of representative organisations of persons with disabilities.

For an inclusive and accessible workplace

The report called on the Commission and Member States to adopt universal design standards and guidelines for accessible environments, programmes, services and products.

In particular, Member States are invited to:

- ensure reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities in the workplace without any cost being borne by workers, to prepare guidance material to this effect and to provide relevant training in accessible formats to employers and workers;
- use or consider the introduction of compulsory workplace diversity quotas with effective and proportionate sanctions for non-compliance, including fines, the amount of which should be invested in inclusion programmes;
- implement binding annual diversity plans with targets and periodic evaluations, and assist employers in recruiting people with disabilities, for example by establishing, on a voluntary basis, a list of job-seekers with disabilities from which new employees will be hired;
- accompany the introduction of quotas with training for employers on the content and scope of the applicable rules;

- adopt sustainable and inclusive employment policies, such as adapted recruitment procedures or flexible and customised jobs;
- use tax incentives and other financial support measures for companies recruiting people with disabilities, support inclusive enterprises through public procurement and promote corporate social responsibility in the employment of people with disabilities.

For a non-discriminatory workplace

Members called on the Commission and Member States to launch awareness-raising campaigns on the contributions of people with disabilities, in accessible formats and sign languages, to eliminate stigma and prejudice against people with disabilities and to combat harassment and exploitation.

In particular, Member States are invited to:

- take specific measures to ensure non-discrimination for all, including people with disabilities, in order to ensure the accessibility of workplaces, transport and the built environment, and to provide reasonable accommodation at all stages of work, from recruitment to promotion, healthy working conditions and employment rehabilitation;
- take appropriate measures to ensure that reasonable and accessible legal advice and assistance can be obtained and provided to victims of discrimination at all stages of the legal process;
- address the current pay gap based on gender, disability and ethnic origin, and thus combat pay discrimination and the risk of in-work poverty for workers facing barriers to work and who are subject to multiple discrimination, in particular LGBTI persons, women, Roma and refugees;
- not to deprive people with disabilities of their disability entitlements, which cover their disability-related extra costs when entering the labour market or when surpassing a certain income threshold.

The report called on the Commission and Member States to harmonise the definition of disability and to ensure mutual recognition of disability status across Member States to ensure free movement for persons with disabilities and the enjoyment of their EU citizenship rights.

Lastly, Members called for the collection of EU-wide disability-related data with a human rights-based approach, including on employment and VET, disaggregated by gender, age, disability type, race/ethnic origin, sexual orientation, including persons with disabilities, who have until now been left out of the statistics.