Basic information

1996/0216(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Equality of opportunity for people with disabilities **Subject** 4.10.06 People with disabilities	

Key players

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Fisheries	1983	1996-12-20
Social Affairs	1948	1996-09-24
Social Affairs	1974	1996-12-02

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
30/07/1996	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1996)0406	Summary
24/09/1996	Debate in Council		
11/11/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
02/12/1996	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
20/12/1996	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
06/02/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
06/02/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0044/1997	
11/04/1997	Debate in Parliament		
11/04/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
28/04/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1996/0216(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/4/08174

Documentation gateway				
European Parliament				
Document type	**Committee**	**Reference**	**Date**	**Summary**
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0044/1997 OJ C 085 17.03.1997, p. 0005	06/02/1997	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0189/1997 OJ C 132 28.04.1997, p. 0303-0313	11/04/1997	Summary
European Commission				
Document type		**Reference**	**Date**	**Summary**
Non-legislative basic document		COM(1996)0406	30/07/1996	Summary

Equality of opportunity for people with disabilities

1996/0216(COS) - 30/07/1996 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: This communication summarizes the developments that have taken place with regard to equal opportunities for disabled people at both Member State and Community level. It is also aimed at proposing a number of specific initiatives in line with the proposal for a Council Resolution on the same subject, to be implemented at the Community level. SUBSTANCE: The communication states that one in ten Europeans has a physical, sensory, mental or intellectual disability, which represents a total of approximately 37 m people, of whom half are of working age. It notes that, despite the efforts made by the Member States and the Community, the disabled are confronted with blatant inequality, in particular in the following areas: - in education: many young people continue to encounter problems in being accepted in mainstream schools and are excluded from receiving appropriate, good-quality training; - at work: unemployment amongst the disabled is two to three times higher than the average rate, and they are likely to remain unemployed for longer.; - mobility and access: serious problems exist as regards transport and access to public buildings; - in housing: residential buildings are not adapted to the needs of the disabled or housing is too expensive for them; - in welfare systems: such systems provide the minimum required level of support, which is often inadequate. The communication sets out to demonstrate that everyone must take responsibility for changing our societies so as to fully integrate people with disabilities in active life. Primary responsibility rests with the Member States, but the Commission believes that the Community also has a role to play in this area. For that reason, it proposes: - that the Council should confirm a new approach by adopting the proposal for a Resolution on Equality of Opportunity (cf. file on Procedure CNS96216) as a token of the Member States' political commitment to pursuing the aim of equal opportunities and non-discrimination for the disabled. The resolution would serve a reference framework for the structured exchange of information between Member States, as a platform for the clarification of common goals and the identification of best practice for the development and assessment of appropriate measures within the Member States and the Community. - and that the Community should also commit itself by drawing up a series of specific measures in line with the proposed resolution, including the following initiatives: * mainstreaming: the strengthening of the work of the Commission's inter-service disability group so as to take more account of disability issues when formulating Community policies and measures; * cooperation: a high-level group of Member States' representatives on disabilities will be set up to keep under review Member States' latest policies and to pool information and experience; * encouraging the action of NGOs: the Commission wishes to build on the cooperation developed under Helios II and intends to encourage the work of NGOs; * employment: in the Single Report to the European Council in Dublin, the Commission will strengthen policies for the prevention of long-term unemployment and for the integration of disabled people in working life whilst bearing in mind the opportunities provided by the Social Fund; * information and communication technologies: the Commission would like to exploit the development of such technologies and will set up an ad hoc group for that purpose; * the Structural Funds: a total of ECU 5.5 bn has been earmarked for combating social exclusion in the 1994-99 period. As part of the next medium-term re-evaluation of the Funds, the Commission will re-assess the scope and impact of such measures on disabled people. A new series of projects could be launched in late 1996 as part of the Community initiatives (such as Horizon).

Equality of opportunity for people with disabilities

1996/0216(COS) - 11/04/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mrs Barbara SCHMIDBAUER (PSE, D), Parliament expressed its deep concern about the absence of a new disability programme and therefore called on the Commission to present a new action programme after the evaluation of Helios II. It fears, in the meantime, that the absence of such a programme might damage the dialogue between organizations of disabled people and experts. It notes in this connection that NGOs want a follow-up to Helios II and believes that existing structures of cooperation built-up in recent years need to be further enlarged. Parliament

calls on the Commission, until such time, to implement pilot actions, which are to be developed with NGOs of disabled people. At the same time, it wants a distinction made as regards funding by the Union of projects for disabled people and priority to be given to disabled people's organizations, whose management boards are to be composed as to 51% of disabled people or parents of disabled people speaking on their behalf. Parliament calls on the Commission to base its actions on the Standard Rules established by the UN in this area and invites Member States to propose within the framework of the IGC an appropriate legal base for social programmes based on qualified majority voting. Member States are invited to include a clause prohibiting discrimination on grounds of disability in the new Treaty. Ever anxious to ensure that greater account is taken of disabled people's requirements, Parliament calls on the Commission to take active measures within its mainstreaming approach to enable disabled people to participate in all the Community programmes. In this connection, it believes that the best way to achieve a higher degree of involvement of such persons is to guarantee at least 51% representation by disabled people at all conferences, events or other activities organized by the Commission and to provide financial support towards their attendance at ONG events. Stressing disabled people's right to work without discrimination, Parliament also calls on the Commission to submit a proposal for a directive for improving the integration of handicapped people into the labour market. Parliament calls on the Commission: * to help improve the accessibility of new information technologies to disabled persons; * to launch a Europe-wide model project to establish an electronic information and communication platform for people with disabilities and their representative organizations (E-mail, Internet, etc.); * to create a High Level Group to ensure dialogue between the Member States on matters affecting disabled people; * to step up action designed to reduce the number of obstacles preventing people with disabilities from moving freely; * to improve employment conditions for disabled people and take action against their long-term unemployment; * to improve access to high-quality education; Lastly, Parliament calls upon the Community to set an example by establishing a quota for the appointment of disabled employees to the institutions and by giving priority to disabled applicants over people who are not disabled where candidates are of equal merit.