Basic information

2010/2272(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Mobility and inclusion of people with disabilities and the European disability strategy 2010-2020 **Subject** 1.20.02 Social and economic rights 4.10.06 People with disabilities 4.10.08 Equal treatment of persons, non-discrimination	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	KÓSA Ádám (PPE)	22/10/2009
	Shadow rapporteur BLINKEVIČIŪTĖ Vilija (S&D) SCHROEDTER Elisabeth (Verts/ALE)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	ROSSI Oreste (EFD)	23/02/2011
CULT Culture and Education	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	MORIN-CHARTIER Elisabeth (PPE)	26/01/2011
PETI Petitions	CHICHESTER Giles (ECR)	01/02/2011

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs	3099	2011-06-17

European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner
	Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	ANDOR László

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
15/11/2010	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2010)0636	Summary
25/11/2010	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/06/2011	Vote in committee		Summary
17/06/2011	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
06/07/2011	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0263/2011	
24/10/2011	Debate in Parliament		
25/10/2011	Decision by Parliament	T7-0453/2011	Summary
25/10/2011	Results of vote in Parliament		
25/10/2011	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2010/2272(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/7/04568

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE460.981	24/03/2011	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE462.706	28/04/2011	
Committee opinion	ENVI	PE460.915	25/05/2011	
Committee opinion	PETI	PE462.744	25/05/2011	
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE462.715	01/06/2011	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0263/2011	06/07/2011	

Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0453/2011	25/10/2011	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2010)0636	15/11/2010	Summary

National parliaments

Document type	Parliament /Chamber	Reference	Date	Summary
Contribution	SE_PARLIAMENT	COM(2010)0636	18/03/2011	

Mobility and inclusion of people with disabilities and the European disability strategy 2010-2020

2010/2272(INI) - 15/11/2010 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to present a European Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

BACKGROUND: **one in six people in the European Union (EU) has a disability** that ranges from mild to severe making around 80 million who are often prevented from taking part fully in society and the economy because of environmental and attitudinal barriers. Over a third of people aged over 75 have disabilities that restrict them to some extent, and over 20% are considerably restricted. Furthermore, these numbers are set to rise as the EU's population ages.

The EU and its Member States have a strong mandate to improve the social and economic situation of people with disabilities.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU states that 'the EU recognises and respects the right of persons with disabilities to benefit from measures designed to ensure their independence, social and occupational integration and participation in the life of the community.' In addition, it prohibits any discrimination on the basis of disability;

The Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) requires the Union to combat discrimination based on disability when defining and implementing its policies and activities (Article 10) and gives it the power to adopt legislation to address such discrimination (Article 19);

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the first legally-binding international human rights instrument to which the EU and its Member States are parties, will soon apply throughout the EU.

Full economic and social participation of people with disabilities is essential if the EU's Europe 2020 strategy is to succeed in creating smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The economic downturn has had an adverse impact on the situation of people with disabilities, making it all the more urgent to act.

CONTENT: this Strategy is intended to harness the combined potential of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and the UN Convention, and to make full use of Europe 2020 and its instruments.

This Strategy **identifies actions at EU level to supplement national ones** and aims to empower people with disabilities so that they can enjoy their full rights, and benefit fully from participating in society and in the European economy, notably through the Single market.

The Commission has identified **eight main areas for action.** For each area, key actions are identified, with the overarching EU-level objectives.

(1) Accessibility: the aim is to ensure accessibility to goods, services including public services and assistive devices for people with disabilities. Following further consultations with Member States and other stakeholders, the Commission will consider whether to propose a 'European Accessibility Act' by 2012. This could include developing specific standards for particular sectors to substantially improve the proper functioning of the internal market for accessible products and services.

(2) Participation: there are still many obstacles preventing people with disabilities from fully exercising their fundamental rights - including their Union citizenship rights - and limiting their participation in society on an equal basis with others. The Commission will work to: (i) overcome the obstacles to exercising their rights as individuals, consumers, students, economic and political actors; (ii) tackle the problems related to intra-EU mobility and facilitate and promote the use of the **European model of disability parking card**; (iii) promote the transition from institutional to community-based care ;

(iv) improve the accessibility of sports, leisure, cultural and recreational organisations, activities, events, venues, goods and services including audiovisual ones;

(3) Equality: the Commission will promote the equal treatment of people with disabilities through a two-pronged approach. This will involve using existing EU legislation to provide protection from discrimination, and implementing an active policy to combat discrimination and promote equal opportunities in EU policies. The overall aim being to eradicate discrimination on grounds of disability in the EU.

(4) Employment: the rate of employment for people with disabilities is only around 50%. To achieve the EU's growth targets, more people with disabilities need to be in paid employment on the open labour market. The Commission will provide Member States with analysis, political guidance, information exchange and other support. It will also address the issue of self employment and quality jobs, including aspects such as working conditions and career advancement, with the involvement of the social partners.

(5) Education and training: in the 16-19 age group the rate of non-participation in education is 37% for considerably restricted people, and 25% for those restricted to some extent, against 17% for those not restricted.

With full respect for the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems, the Commission will support the goal of inclusive, quality education and training under the Youth on the Move initiative. EU action will support national efforts with a view to promoting inclusive education and lifelong learning for pupils and students with disabilities.

(6) Social protection: the aim is to promote decent living conditions for people with disabilities. They need to be able to benefit from social protection systems and poverty reduction programmes, disability-related assistance, public housing programmes and other enabling services, and retirement and benefit programmes. The Commission will pay attention to these issues through the European Platform against Poverty. This will include assessing the adequacy and sustainability of social protection systems and support through the European Structural Funds.

(7) Health: people with disabilities may have limited access to health services, including routine medical treatments, leading to health inequalities unrelated to their disabilities. The Commission will support policy developments for equal access to healthcare, including quality health and rehabilitation services designed for people with disabilities. EU action will support national measures to deliver accessible, non-discriminatory health services and facilities.

(8) External action: the EU and the Member States should promote the rights of people with disabilities in their external action, including EU enlargement, neighbourhood and development programmes.

EU action will support and complement national initiatives to address disability issues in dialogues with non-member countries, and where appropriate include disability and the implementation of the UN Convention taking into account the Accra commitments on aid effectiveness.

Implementation of the Strategy: this Strategy requires a joint and renewed commitment of the EU institutions and all Member States. The actions in the main areas above need to be underpinned by the following general instruments:

- **raise society's awareness** of disability issues and foster greater knowledge among people with disabilities of their rights and how to exercise them;
- optimise use of **EU funding instruments** for accessibility and non-discrimination and increase visibility of disability-relevant funding possibilities in post-2013 programmes;
- supplement the collection of **periodic disability-related statistics** with a view to monitoring the situation of persons with disabilities.

By the end of 2013, the Commission will report on progress achieved through this Strategy. his will provide an opportunity to revise the Strategy and the actions. A further report is scheduled for 2016.

Mobility and inclusion of people with disabilities and the European disability strategy 2010-2020

2010/2272(INI) - 17/06/2011

The Council adopted **conclusions** on the new European disability strategy 2010-2020.

To recall, the strategy provides a framework for action at European level and suggests actions at national level to address the diverse situations faced by women, men and children with disabilities. Its aim is to empower persons with disabilities so that they can enjoy their full rights and fully participate in society and in the European economy. The strategy identifies eight main areas for action: accessibility, participation, equality, employment, education and training, social protection, health, and external action.

The conclusions call for an appropriate use of existing funding to implement the proposed actions and for mainstreaming of disability within the Europe 2020 Strategy. In order to ensure greater inclusion of women, men and children with disabilities in the society, accessibility should be improved and equal access of disabled persons to quality education and training and quality health care should be ensured.

The conclusions may be summarised as follows :

Accessibility: the Commission and the Member States are invited to:

- support appropriate efforts to improve accessibility to goods and services, especially the built environment, transport, and information and communication, including technologies and services in all relevant areas, by considering stimulating the market through public procurement and by considering the possible need to develop coherent requirements based on European standards;
- encourage the incorporation of accessibility and universal design in educational curricula and training for all relevant professions and occupations, in particular in the fields of engineering and architecture.

Participation

- promote the independence of persons with disabilities and their inclusion in the community, in particular by developing a range of in-home, residential or other community support services responsive to their needs and in accordance with the opportunity to choose, on an equal basis with others;
- ensure equal access to political participation including the European elections;
- promote communication and information, including in accessible formats, so as to raise awareness and improve the participation and social inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Equality

- promote and protect the dignity of persons with disabilities, continue to combat discrimination against persons with disabilities and to review the existing legal framework on protection against discrimination on the grounds of disability, where appropriate, both at national and European level;
- promote the exchange of good practices within the High Level Group on Disability and, in this context, focus in particular on experience concerning the implementation of the UN Convention at Union and Member States level.

Employment

- promote the acquisition of transferable knowledge and skills by persons with disabilities, in an attempt to facilitate their integration and progression on the open labour market;
- promote the employment of persons with disabilities by utilising existing social provisions in public procurement as well as state aid in accordance with the applicable rules;
- support research into and promote the use of assistive technologies, with a view to promoting the employment of persons with disabilities;
- aim to increase the employment opportunities of persons with disabilities including persons with reduced working capacity and develop cooperation in the
- context of the labour market, including, for example, supported and, where necessary, sheltered employment, and in the context of social protection and educational systems.

Education and training

- support relevant initiatives aiming to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to quality education and training on an equal basis with others, so as to increase their knowledge, skills and qualifications in order to promote their mobility and employability;
- promote the exchange of good practices, including comparative studies, with regard to support and assistance for persons with disabilities, with a view to improving their access to the education system at all levels, including, for example, by using assistive technologies.

Social protection

- give particular attention to the needs of persons with disabilities in the context of the voluntary European quality framework for social services adopted by the Social Protection Committee on 6 October 2010;
- ensure social protection of persons with disabilities by developing and/or maintaining protective measures, taking into account the general economic situation and its effect on persons with disabilities.

Health

- improve equal and effective access to quality health care, including by removing inequalities as well as by supporting early screening for health condition in the prevention of disabilities, in accordance with the respective competences of the Member States, and by providing disability awareness training to health professionals and, where appropriate, by developing tailored health services for persons with disabilities.

External action

- promote the rights of persons with disabilities and enhance the visibility of disability matters as a human rights issue in external actions, including in EU enlargement, neighbourhood and development programmes as well as in emergency and humanitarian aid, and support the implementation of the UN Convention by third countries.

In this context, the Member States are called upon to closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including through their representative organisations, in the development and implementation of legislation and policies, when implementing the UN Convention, and to involve and to allow for the full participation of civil society, in particular persons with disabilities and their representative organisations, in the monitoring process.

The Commission is invited to support any measures taken by the Member States with the following actions:

- provide targeted support from existing European resources, especially by ensuring that non-discrimination and accessibility for all, including persons with disabilities, are applied as horizontal principles in European funding;
- review the existing framework aimed at ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities and protecting them against discrimination;

- promote exchanges of good practices at the European, national, regional and local level;
- **propose a governance framework for monitoring the implementation by the EU of the UN Convention**.

Mobility and inclusion of people with disabilities and the European disability strategy 2010-2020

2010/2272(INI) - 25/10/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Parliament adopted a resolution on mobility and inclusion of people with disabilities and the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

It notes that over 80 million people, or around 16% of the European Union's total population, are living with disabilities and that people with disabilities constitute a vulnerable group, among whom the rate of poverty is 70% higher than average (the rate of employment for people with disabilities is only around 45%).

Objectives and actions are therefore necessary to ensure the social inclusion of disabled people. To this effect, Parliament emphasises that the Europe 2020 Strategy target of 75% of the population aged 20-64 in employment cannot possibly be achieved unless this includes the population with some form of disability. It further stresses that **financial expenditure for the benefit of, and economic investment in, people with disabilities is a long-term return investment** in the well-being of all in a sustainable society and that it is unacceptable in the context of public austerity measures for unjustified cuts to be made to services for persons with disabilities or to projects for their social inclusion. In this context, it draws attention to the importance of the objectives of the new European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (EDS) and considers that the basic principle of ‘nothing about persons with disabilities without persons with disabilities’ should be observed, so that people with disabilities are involved in all measures which affect them.

Parliament regrets that the Commission Communication on the European Disability Strategy does not include an integrated gender perspective or a separate chapter on gender-specific disability policies. It stresses the need for an efficient new approach to disability starting with the creation of a European Disability Board, which would meet on a regular basis and with the active involvement of the European Parliament and the participation of representative organisations of persons with disabilities.

Civil and human rights: Parliament calls for full respect of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and support for the principles of Design for All and Universal Design. Full respect must also be ensured for the rights of children with disabilities. Generally, Parliament calls for all forms of discrimination towards people with disabilities to be combated whether it is with regard to the lack of equal recognition before the law, access to justice, participation in political and public life, access to, universally-designed goods and services, and special provision in the social protection systems for women with disabilities who are particularly vulnerable. Parliament draws attention to the fact that people with mental disabilities and intellectual impairments are exposed to the risk of abuse and violence and need to be protected. It calls on Member States to pay considerably more attention to the **social aspects of disability**: encouraging personal assistance and other services which support independent living in order to reduce institutional care in general in favour of other forms of support. It also stresses the importance of guaranteeing and ensuring equal access to public information with special regard to the public management of natural and man-made disasters. Measures need to be taken to ensure, by means of the Structural Funds, to support and promote the transition from institutional to **community-based care**.

Importance of data collection and consultation with stakeholders: Parliament stresses that consistent data on disability issues and disability-related services, including specific indicators and information regarding the number and quality of residential institutions and homes, are currently lacking.It calls on the Commission to speed up the process of monitoring, cooperation and exchange of good practice between Member States, especially with respect to the gathering of comparable gender-specific data and progress indicators. It recalls, at the same time, that registration of people with disabilities for services and public-budget-based support must not lead to violation of their human rights and privacy or the creation of stigmas.

Demographic changes and a barrier-free environment: demographic change will also lead to a growing number of elderly people with disabilities. It encourages alliances between the two groups in society, in order to contribute to innovative growth, based also on employment and social development in the Member States and in order to meet the new demands arising from the ageing society and demographic change. It calls on the Commission to strengthen both sanctions and positive incentives for Member States to implement Article 16 of Regulation 1083/2006/EC and to respect its legally binding requirements. It also calls on the Commission to promote the use of European Structural Funds, especially the European Regional Development Fund, to improve the accessibility of goods and services.

Free movement and barrier-free services: Parliament points out that accessible transportation enables people with disabilities to participate in the labour market more easily and therefore helps in the fight against poverty and social exclusion, and calls on the Commission and Member States to bring about accessibility of services more speedily via various strategies. Member States are asked to remedy shortcomings in accessibility legislation, especially as regards public transport and passenger rights legislation, including damage to mobility equipment, the services of electronic information communication systems and rules on public-built environments and services. It recalls that mobility is a core issue for the European Employment Strategy and that the specific obstacles to a life of dignity and independence for people with disabilities in the EU remain extremely significant. In this context, it recognises the importance of Council Recommendation 98/376/EC on a parking card for people with disabilities, which states that this card should exist in a standard format and should be recognised by all Member States. Overall, Parliament calls for improved **mutual recognition of status of the disabled** in the Member States.

Parliament recognises that innovative forms of free communication tools for the blind and the deaf, such as accessible information services with special regard to online services, are also essential for the full enjoyment of their rights. More generally, it calls for the creation by the Commission of a more informative website targeting people with disabilities, explaining their rights and providing additional specific information on travelling. It also calls for the necessary measures to promote access without physical barriers to workplaces and homes, accessible mass media services, online services for people using sign languages, smart phone applications and tactile and vocal aids in public media.

Parliament wants to encourage the integration and acceptance in society of people with disabilities in all fields of social life strengthening measures for integration and socialisation.

Equal opportunities: Parliament believes that people with different disabilities should have access to appropriate means of purchasing goods and services, creating real equal opportunities. It reaffirms the need to guarantee **universal, effective, non-discriminatory access for persons with disabilities to social protection, social advantages**, health care and education, and to the supply of the goods and services which are available to the public, including housing, telecommunications and electronic communications, information – including information provided in accessible formats – financial services, culture and leisure, buildings open to the public, modes of transport and other public areas and facilities. It stresses that integration into working life and economic independence are extremely important factors for the social integration of people with disabilities, and emphasise he exceptional importance of employing people with disabilities on the ordinary labour market. Parliament is aware of the great need for more flexible legal forms of employment relations and calls on Member States to improve and adapt their active employment policies to enable people with disabilities both to join the labour market and to remain on it, advocating the introduction of initiatives aligned with the needs of each type of disability, including plans and vocational guidance that operate from the moment individuals in need register with the services set up for this purpose. In this context, it calls on Member States to consolidate and improve active employment policies adopted with a view to integrating people with disabilities at the workplace, and for European public procurement legislation to be reviewed in order to make the accessibility criteria mandatory for enforcing selection criteria aimed at promoting accessibility for people with disabilities. To this effect, Parliament advocates the introduction of initiatives aligned with the needs of each type of disability, including plans and vocational guidance that operate from the moment individuals in need register with the services set up for this purpose.

The resolution stresses the need to adopt the proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Investing in people with disabilities: Parliament states that the present education and training systems are not sufficient to prevent a high drop-out rate of people with disabilities without additional public policies offering specific learning support, since the figure relating to the Europe2020 objective represents a reduction to less than 10%, which leads to significant social and employment disadvantages, and resulting poverty, among people with disabilities. It stresses the need to invest in and promote effective (including alternative) educational and (vocational) training programmes that are tailored to the needs and abilities of persons with disabilities. Inclusive education should be the focus, and it stresses that all children, including those with disabilities, need to be guaranteed the right to universal access to education in all institutions. Member States are urged to establish dedicated and accessible offices where information and administrative advice can be obtained. Efforts must also be made to address the issue of non-formal education and learning for young people with disabilities, including in areas such as social relations, the mass media (which should be subject to ever more stringent accessibility requirements, including in relation to subtitling and audio description systems). The Commission and Member States are asked to support rehabilitation services in the fields of health, education, training, employment, tools for independent living, transport, etc. Parliament believes that suitable funding needs to be channelled to organisations of people with disabilities; insists that for such organisations the co-financing rate should be no less than 10% of the value of the projects presented by them.

Lifestyles: Parliament calls for the introduction of aid and subsidies with special regard to EU funds and programming, which would vary according to the type of contract, for companies and individuals hiring workers with disabilities. It reaffirms that training of public officials in the EU Institutions and the Member States in receiving and informing people with disabilities should be the rule. It calls on the EU institutions to set an example as regards the employment of people with disabilities and urges Member States also to pursue this strategy. In the same way, it stresses the need for policies to support independent entrepreneurship and calls on Member States to introduce more suitable and effective aid for independent entrepreneurship policies. Parliament also encourages the creation of special forms of leave so that parents can take care of their children with disabilities.

The fight against poverty: Parliament calls on the Commission to secure adequate financial support for the EU umbrella organisation representing people with disabilities, as well as other European impairment-specific organisations, in order to enable full participation in policy making and implementation of legislation which builds on the commitments in the EDS and the UN CRPD and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to people with disabilities. Generally, Parliament points out that eliminating or seriously alleviating the poverty of people with disabilities would entail having more people with disabilities in work, which would increase net tax revenue for the state and would reduce the number of people needing benefits for reasons of extreme poverty. It calls on Member States to avoid unjustified cuts in social protection for people with disabilities under the austerity policies introduced in response to the economic crisis. It highlights the fact that the poverty rate of persons with disabilities is 70% higher than that of people without disabilities and emphasises that persons with severe or multiple disabilities and single parents with children with disabilities are in the most vulnerable position. It is important to guarantee their rights and take measures to improve their quality of life.

Parliament continues to demand a socially sustainable and human-rights-based approach: Parliament calls on Member States and the Commission swiftly to ratify and implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as its Optional Protocols. It also calls on the Council and the Commission to consider concluding an interinstitutional agreement with the European Parliament and to draw up within one year a specific recommendation for Parliament to be involved in monitoring the implementation of the UN CRPD. The Commission is asked to develop concrete, appropriate, more detailed measures and to set up a monitoring mechanism for all levels of governance in respect of the implementation of the EDS in line with the list of actions of EDS, in close cooperation with the European Parliament. Member States are urged to give as much support as possible to suitable measures and tools tailored (apart from the medical aspect) to a higher level of independent life in order to ensure equal opportunities and active life for persons with disabilities and their families.

Parliament also calls on the Commission to:

- **present a legislative proposal for a European Accessibility Act**;
- take the necessary measures to help the visually impaired to carry out business transactions;
- mention disability more explicitly in the context of the revision of the Green Paper on the reform of public procurement ;
- promote a cross-cutting policy on disability in the forthcoming white paper on pensions;
- assess whether further measures taken in the context of the European Structural Funds with special regard to the Rural Development Fund help people with disabilities to be active citizens living in rural areas in Europe;

- make every effort to draw up rules on personal screening when using transport services which will guarantee passengers' fundamental rights and dignity;
- increase efforts to achieve individually-tailored navigation-based services for the blind and those with serious visual impairments;
- improve access for people with disabilities in the field of copyright;
- prepare a study with people with visual impairments in mind analysing the characteristics of the digital displays (interfaces) of industrial and domestic products and alternative, equivalent information solutions for blind people and making specific legislative proposals;
- to make ICT access barrier-free to deaf people
- recognise sign language as an official language in the Member States;
- pay attention to the inclusion of the interests of people with disabilities, in accordance with the UN's Millennium Development Goals, when handling assistance for international relations and development.