



Brussels, 20.11.2020  
SWD(2020) 291 final

**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION**

**of the European disability strategy 2010-2020**

{SWD(2020) 289 final}

## CONTEXT

The European disability strategy 2010-2020 ('the Strategy') set out the political framework and priorities of the EU disability policy. It aimed at empowering persons with disabilities to enjoy their full rights and to benefit from participating in society on an equal basis with others. It also aimed at implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) at EU level. The Strategy covered eight areas of action: Accessibility, Participation, Equality, Employment, Education and Training, Social Protection, Health, and External Action.

The Commission launched the evaluation of the Strategy in 2019 to assess its implementation in terms of **effectiveness**, **efficiency**, **relevance**, **coherence** and **EU added value**. A wide range of stakeholders was consulted, including Member States' competent authorities, experts in the field of disability, civil society organisations, and citizens.

## EVALUATION

In terms of **effectiveness**, the evaluation found that the Strategy gave a significant contribution to the implementation of the UNCRPD at EU level and to the implementation of several important legislative and policy instruments, especially in the areas of accessibility, participation and awareness raising. On the other hand, the strategy has been partially effective in achieving its objectives, and not all the actions of the Strategy have been fully implemented. The areas where the Strategy was less effective are equality, health, and external action.

The evaluation found that the Strategy was designed and implemented **efficiently**. EU funds were effective to promoting and implementing de-institutionalisation. Grants to organisations representing persons with disabilities and funds for organising public events dedicated to disability have proven effective in stimulating debate around disability issues. According to a number of stakeholders, greater efficiency in the use of funds would be welcome.

The Strategy has been **relevant** and continues to be relevant in addressing the needs of persons with disabilities. The EU's ratification of the UNCRPD made the Convention become part of the EU legal order. The Strategy, as the main instrument to implement the UNCRPD at EU level, helped to ensure that EU policies and initiatives relevant for persons with disabilities were designed and implemented in line with the UNCRPD provisions.

There was **coherence** among the eight thematic areas of the strategy and its implementation instruments. The Strategy was also in line with other social policies at EU and Member State level. However, from an operational perspective, some of its actions were not fully coherent with the related objectives, as achieving those objectives would have required actions with a much wider scope, funding and strength than those of the Strategy.

The main **EU added value** of the Strategy was to provide for a coherent implementation of the UNCRPD at EU level. The Strategy has also supported implementation at Member State level, for example through accessibility legislation, support to de-institutionalisation, and EU Funds for employment of persons with disabilities.

## MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

The strategy positively contributed to a change towards a human rights-based approach in disability policy and in placing the **disability agenda higher among the EU policy priorities**. The Strategy has **supported the implementation of the UNCRPD** by translating its principles into practical objectives and actions.

The Strategy has **improved the inclusion of disability issues in EU legislation and policy**. Its impact was particularly visible in the areas of accessibility and passengers' rights, with the adoption of the [European Accessibility Act](#), the [Web Accessibility Directive](#) and legislation on the [Rights of Passengers with Reduced Mobility](#). There was also visible impact through EU funding in the area of support to de-institutionalisation and to accessibility, as well as to social inclusion. Key outputs included awareness raising and civil dialogue events contributing to the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities.

The Strategy was a driver for helping in **mainstreaming** disability-related issues at EU institutional level. Examples include development cooperation, standardisation, State Aid, copyright legislation, education programmes. Disability was also mainstreamed throughout the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the disability-related Country Specific Recommendations under the European Semester.

The Strategy facilitated the **involvement of persons with disabilities** and their representative organisations in the EU decision-making. The resulting exchange of opinions contributed to a better understanding of issues at stake, and to the development of more inclusive policies and legislation.

## SHORTCOMINGS

The Strategy did not include a **comprehensive set of indicators** for measuring the extent to which its actions were carried-out and its objectives achieved. It was also missing an **operative framework for regularly monitoring its implementation**. The absence of these two elements, together with the limited availability of regularly collected and disaggregated data in all areas of disability, prevented the regular evaluation of the Strategy's progress, the early detection of delivery gaps and the identification of possible mitigating actions.

Despite increased awareness, knowledge about disability issues at EU institutional level remains uneven. As a result, UNCRPD provisions and needs of persons with disabilities were **not always sufficiently considered** during the policy-making process.

Actions, particularly in the area of accessibility, **mostly focused on visible disabilities**, whereas the needs of persons with intellectual disabilities, non-visible disabilities, and children with disabilities have been taken into account to a lesser extent.

The lack of binding links between the Strategy and EU funds was sometimes **detrimental to their use for disability-related initiatives**. In fact, initiatives having a clear purpose (such as, for example, funding de-institutionalisation) were more effective in addressing disability issues than those focusing on general social issues.