



European Day of Persons with Disabilities 2020 and Access City Award 2021

Speeches in easy to read

In this booklet
you can find some speeches of the event
in easy to read.

Easy to read is a way to make information accessible
so people with intellectual disabilities and all people
can understand it.

If there are words you do not understand in the speeches,
do not worry.

On pages 10-11 of this booklet,
you will find an explanation of the difficult words.

First day: Tuesday 1 December 2020

**10:55 - 12:30 Discussion about the European Disability Strategy
2021-2030**

The discussion focuses on the European Disability Strategy.
The European Disability Strategy is the plan of the European Union
about its work for people with disabilities in the next 10 years.

Speech of Jonas Ruskus



Jonas is a member of 'the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities'. The Committee checks how well countries make use of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities'.

The Committee finds that countries in Europe do not do enough to make the UN Convention happen.

Many countries in Europe still face people with disabilities as people who have a disease, and not as people with rights as everyone else. Having a disability is not a reason to be left out.

Sadly, still too many people with disabilities in Europe do not have the right to live a free life and decide about themselves. They may be treated unfairly and be left out. They may not have a say for important things in their lives. They may be forced to go to the hospital and get medication or treatments against their will. This is against the UN Convention and must stop.

All countries in Europe should work to protect the rights of people with disabilities. They should make sure that all people with disabilities have the right to:

- Have a free and safe life.
- Be treated fairly and with respect.
- Live independently and make decisions about themselves.

In the coming years, the European Union and its countries should work harder to make the rights in the UN Convention happen.

Speech of Richard Smith



Richard is working for 'ICF'.
This is a company that made a study
for the European Disability Strategy
of the past 10 years.
They checked how the European Union
made use of the Strategy.

They found out that the Strategy:

- Helped the situation of people with disabilities in Europe.
- Helped the European Union to better focus on its work on the rights of people with disabilities.
- Was a useful tool for the European Union's work to make the UN Convention happen.
- Helped the European Union to take into account the rights of people with disabilities when they made important laws.
For example, it helped to make laws to make more things accessible for people with disabilities.
Or to make things easier for people with disabilities when they travel.

However, there is still much that needs to be done.
For example:

- The European Union should now make a new Strategy to plan its work for people with disabilities in the next 10 years.
- The European Union should use part of its money to make the Strategy happen and help people with disabilities.
- The European Union should work closely with its countries to make sure that the Strategy is used properly to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

Second day: Wednesday 2 December 2020

10:30 - 12:00 Discussion about COVID-19, recovery and people with disabilities

The discussion focuses on COVID-19, the European Union's recovery plan and people with disabilities. 'COVID-19' is a new disease that can pass easily from one person to another. You may also hear it as 'coronavirus' or 'pandemic'.

Sadly, too many people in the world are now ill from coronavirus. Most of the people recover but many people die from it.

To help countries fight COVID-19, the European Union will give them extra money. The countries have to make a plan saying how they will use the money to help their people. We call this plan 'Recovery Plan'.

Speech of László Bercse



László is part of 'Inclusion Europe', the organisation of people of intellectual disabilities in Europe. He is also part of 'the European Platform of Self-Advocates'. This is an organisation that speaks about the rights, abilities and needs of people with intellectual disabilities.

COVID-19 made things hard for all people. We need to stay at home and not meet our families and friends. We cannot go to work and meet our colleagues. Children cannot go to school and meet their friends. They must now study at home and talk with their teachers on the computer.

Things are even harder for people with intellectual disabilities. For example:

- Many people with intellectual disabilities live in institutions and they may feel lonelier than ever.
- In some countries, people with intellectual disabilities were left without support.
- Students with intellectual disabilities may not be able to follow their classes from home on the computer because things are not accessible for them.
- Many people find it hard to work from home and talk with their colleagues on the computer or over the phone. Some may not even have computers or phones to do that.
- Many people with intellectual disabilities have lost their jobs.
- Many feel that they are left out and that their countries do not think of them when they plan their actions against COVID-19.
- People with intellectual disabilities may not be able to understand important information about COVID-19 because the language used is very difficult. They may not get information in easy to read, as they should. This can make them feel very confused about what is going on, what they need to do and why.
- Many people with intellectual disabilities did not get proper health care when they got sick with COVID-19. Many of them died.

To help people with intellectual disabilities, countries in Europe must:

- Learn from this experience and not make the same mistakes.
- Listen to people with disabilities and think of their needs when planning their actions against COVID-19.

- Find out how many people with intellectual disabilities died from COVID-19, and if that happened because they did not get proper health care.
- Make sure all important information about COVID-19 is made in easy to read so people with intellectual disabilities can also read it and understand it.
- Use the money they receive from the European Union to help people with intellectual disabilities too. They should support them to be able to study, have a job, and live in the community like other people.

Speech of Sophie Rattaire



Sophie works for the French government and promotes accessibility and inclusion.

Protecting the rights of people with disabilities is a high priority for the French government. COVID-19 made it even more obvious that things and services should be accessible to people with disabilities and all people.

All people with disabilities have the right to:

- Get the support they need to have a good life.
- Go to the hospital and get proper health care when they need it.
- Get information in ways that they can read and understand it. For example, people with intellectual disabilities should get information in easy to read.

These are some examples that show how the French government takes into account the needs of people with disabilities in its work and its plan against COVID-19:

- They made a number that every person in need in France can call to ask for support during COVID-19.

This number is also useful for people with disabilities.

- They worked closely with organisations of people with disabilities to make sure all the actions they plan are helpful for people with disabilities too.
- They made a platform on the internet that helps people with disabilities get in contact with support people who could help them in their everyday lives.
- They tried to make information about COVID-19 accessible so people with disabilities can read it and stay informed too.
- They decided to spend part of their money to support people with disabilities to get a job. They try to make it easier for companies to hire people with disabilities, and make more offices accessible for them.
- They gave money and other help to poorer families including families of people with disabilities.
- They have an important meeting every year to discuss what has been done for people with disabilities in all areas of life and what can be done better in the future. This year, they also focused on how they can help people with disabilities during the hard times of COVID-19.

In 2021, they will continue working to make information, health care, places and other things accessible for people with disabilities.

Their goal is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same chances to take part in the community as everyone else.

Speech of Thomas Bignal



Thomas works for 'the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities'. This is an organisation that works to make sure that people with disabilities get good support and services to take part in the community like everyone else.

The European Union gives money to its countries. This money is called 'European Funds'. The countries should spend this money to make things better for the good of their people. This money is very important for people with disabilities too. It can be used to make things accessible for them and help them to be part of the community like everyone else.

COVID-19 made things harder for people with disabilities and all people. Now the European Union is making a plan of action to recover from COVID-19. They will spend extra money to make things safe and help people in need. For example, people who lost their jobs during this period. We call this plan 'Recovery Plan'.

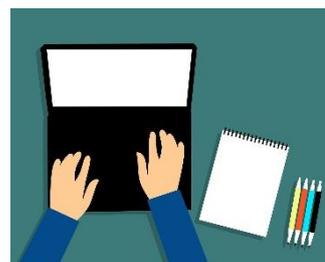
When they make this plan, they should not forget people with disabilities. They should take their needs into account too and use this plan to protect their rights.

For example, the European Union should:

- Make sure people with disabilities get good support and services to be able to live in the community like everyone else.
- Work to make things and services accessible for all people with disabilities.
- They should support people with disabilities to be able to get a job and be independent.
- They should listen to organisations of people with disabilities and understand their needs.

More information

You can find more information about the European Day of Persons with Disabilities on our website here: <https://bit.ly/39dkJf4>. If you have questions, you can send us an email at: EMPL-EDPD-ACA@ec.europa.eu.



Explanation of difficult words

▪ **European Union**

The European Union is a group of 27 countries in Europe that work together to make things better for their people.

▪ **European Commission**

The European Commission is the body of the European Union that suggests laws that can make a big difference in people's lives. It also does all the day-to-day work of the European Union.

▪ **European Commissioner**

The European Commissioner is a person who is responsible for a specific field of work at the European Commission and manages a lot of people.

For example, the European Commissioner for Equality works to make sure all people in Europe have the same chances in life.

▪ **Office of Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion**

This is the office inside the European Commission that works to improve employment and inclusion for all people in the European Union.

It also works to promote the rights of people with disabilities in the European Union.

Its full name is

'Directorate-General on Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion'.

In short, we also call it 'DG EMPL'.

▪ **European Parliament**

The European Parliament is the body of the European Union that makes laws and decisions in Europe.

▪ **Council of the European Union**

The governments of all the countries of the European Union come together and make 'the Council of the European Union'.

Together with the European Parliament, they discuss and decide which laws will happen in Europe.

▪ **Presidency of the Council of the European Union**

Every six months, the Presidency of the Council passes to another country of the European Union.

Right now, Germany holds the Presidency.

That means that Germany is leading the discussions

among the countries in the European Union about new laws and other important actions.

- **European Disability Strategy 2021 - 2030**

The European Disability Strategy is the plan of the European Union about its work for people with disabilities in the next 10 years.

- **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

This is an agreement that many countries in the world have signed.

It says what rights people with disabilities have and how countries can protect these rights.

In short, we call it 'the UN Convention' or 'the CRPD'.

The European Union and all its countries have signed the UN Convention.

That means that they have agreed to work to make it happen and to protect the rights of all people with disabilities.

- **UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

This Committee is a group of experts

that look at how well countries make use of

the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

- **UN Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

It is an expert on the rights of people with disabilities

that writes on problems that people with disabilities face all over the world.

- **Access City Award**

It is a prize the European Commission gives every year to cities that work hard to be more accessible.

A city is accessible when all people can live in it and use all things and services without problems.

- **COVID-19**

'COVID-19' is a new disease

that can pass easily from one person to another.

We also call it 'coronavirus' or 'pandemic'.

Sadly, too many people in the world are now ill from coronavirus.

Most of the people recover but many people die from it.

To help countries fight COVID-19,

the European Union will give them extra money.

The countries have to make a plan to say

how they will use this money to help their people.

We call this plan 'Recovery Plan'.