



UNION OF EQUALITY: STRATEGY FOR THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES 2021-2030

Building a Union without barriers

3 March 2021

#EUDisabilityRights



“Everyone has a right to a life without barriers. And it is our obligation, as a community, to ensure persons with disabilities can fully participate in society, on an equal basis with others.”

Commission President Ursula **von der Leyen**



50.8% of persons with disabilities are in employment compared to **75%** without disabilities.



28.4% of persons with disabilities are at risk of poverty or social exclusion compared to **17.8%** of persons without disabilities.



Only **29.4%** of persons with disabilities attain a tertiary degree compared to **43.8%** of those without disabilities.



52% of persons with disabilities feel discriminated against.

Full participation of people with disabilities: rights, autonomy and equality

87 million persons in the EU have some form of disability. They all have the following rights:



Enjoy EU rights

- Be able to move to another EU country.
- Participate in political elections.



Live independently and autonomously

- Participate in the labour market.
- Learn new skills for new jobs.



Participate and be protected from discrimination

- Receive an education.
- Access justice and legal protection.

To foster the inclusion of persons with disabilities the Commission will propose several flagship initiatives, for example:



AccessibleEU

- AccessibleEU will be a knowledge base providing information and good practices on accessibility across sectors.
- Thanks to AccessibleEU persons with disabilities will have better access to transport, buildings, information, audio-visual media and communications.



European Disability Card

- Free movement of persons is a right of every EU citizen.
- The Commission will propose a European Disability Card recognised by all Member States, that will make it easier for persons with disabilities to exercise their right to move freely.

Working together

Fulfilling our obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires a strong commitment from Member States and EU institutions.

- **Member States** are encouraged to reinforce actions for persons with disabilities, including those launched through this strategy, to make best use of EU funds in a disability inclusive manner, and progress on the implementation of the UN Convention.
- The **European Commission** will reinforce the mainstreaming of disability matters in all EU policies and promote the rights of persons with disabilities globally.
- **Persons with disabilities** will be part of the dialogue and part of the process.



As a person with disabilities, it is very difficult to find a job. Without any help it is even harder. I hope that, for the next generation of young people with disabilities, things will not be as difficult as they were for me.

*Luminița,
woman with a learning disability,
living in Romania*

I voted more than ten times in my life. [...] If I could have one thing, it's accessible voting machines – they exist, but not where I live. Then I could finally go and vote alone.

*Loredana,
partially sighted woman,
living in Belgium*

My family has to pay €1000 per month for support so that I can go to class and have a normal life without my parents, like any young person of my age. This affects our daily life enormously and puts us in a precarious position.

*Joncour,
young man on the autism spectrum,
living in France*

Testimonies are excerpts from publications by the European Disability Forum – thanks to all who have shared their stories.

© European Union, 2021

Reuse of this document is allowed, provided appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated (Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license). For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the EU, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective right holders. Images © Getty Images (header, page 2) and © European Union (portrait of President von der Leyen). Icons © Flaticon – all rights reserved.