

European Disability Strategy (2010-2020)

The new European Strategy for people with disabilities aims at improving their social inclusion, their wellbeing and enabling them to fully exercise their rights. To this end, the Strategy provides for complementary action at European and national levels.

ACT

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 15 November 2010 – European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe [COM(2010) 636 final - Not published in the Official Journal].

SUMMARY

The Commission presents a strategy to increase the participation of people with disabilities in society and the economy, and enable them to fully exercise their rights.

The strategy is based on the effective implementation of the [United Nations Convention](#) on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Furthermore, the Commission's action forms part of the [Europe 2020 Strategy](#), and is based on the provisions of the [European Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) and of the Lisbon Treaty.

In order to foster the inclusion of people with disabilities, the Commission has identified eight **areas for joint action** between the EU and Member States. The areas were identified following an analysis of the results of the [EU Disability Action Plan](#) (2003-2010) and consultations carried out in Member States.

Accessibility

People with disabilities must have access to goods, services and assistive devices. Similarly, their access to transport, facilities, and information and communication technologies must be ensured in the same way as for able-bodied people.

Participation

People with disabilities must be able to fully exercise their fundamental rights as regards European citizenship. This Strategy must contribute to:

- overcoming obstacles to the mobility of people with disabilities – as individuals, consumers, students, and economic and political actors;
- guaranteeing the quality of hospital care and accommodation in residential institutions, financed by the Structural Funds;
- guaranteeing accessibility of organisations, venues and services, including those relating to sports and culture.

Equality

Active policies must be implemented in order to promote equality at European level and in Member States. Furthermore, the Commission must ensure that European legislation is strictly applied to combat discrimination based on disability, particularly [Directive 2000/78/EC](#) for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

Employment

European action must allow the number of disabled workers in the traditional labour market to be increased, in particular by introducing active employment policies and improving accessibility to workplaces.

Action is also required in collaboration with social partners to foster intra-job mobility (including in sheltered workshops), to encourage self-employment and to improve the quality of jobs.

Education and training

Disabled pupils and students must benefit from an accessible education system and lifelong learning programmes. The Strategy therefore supports the accessibility of general education systems, individual support measures, and the training of professionals working in education.

In addition, people with disabilities must be better informed about the possibilities of training and mobility, in particular as part of the [Youth on the Move](#) initiative and the [Education and Training 2020 strategy](#).

Social protection

Social protection systems can compensate for the income inequalities, risks of poverty and social exclusion to which people with disabilities are subject. In this context, the performance and sustainability of social protection systems should be assessed, including with regard to pension systems, public housing programs and access to basic services.

The strategy encourages the use of Structural Funds and the adoption of appropriate national measures.

Health

People with disabilities must benefit from equality of access to services and health facilities, including mental health facilities. In order to safeguard this principle of equality, services must be affordable and appropriate to people's specific needs.

Additionally, specific attention should be paid to the health and safety of disabled workers.

External action

The EU undertakes to promote the rights of people with disabilities at international level. Its action is carried out in the context of the enlargement, neighbourhood and development policies as well as within international institutions such as the Council of Europe or the UN.

Implementation

The Strategy is based on a **joint commitment** of the EU institutions and the Member States. Their joint actions are aimed at:

- raising society's awareness of disability-related issues and promoting the rights of people with disabilities;
 - developing European funding possibilities;
 - improving the collection and processing of statistical data;
- ensuring that the enforcement of the United Nations Convention is monitored in Member States and within European institutions.

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/disability_and_old_age/em0047_en.htm (February, 13th, 2014)