



Union of Equality: European Commission presents Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030

Brussels, 3 March 2021

Today, the European Commission presents an ambitious [Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#) to ensure their full participation in society, on an equal basis with others in the EU and beyond, in line with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which establish equality and non-discrimination as cornerstones of EU policies. Persons with disabilities have the right to take part in all areas of life, just like everyone else. Even though the past decades brought progress in access to healthcare, education, employment, recreation activities and participation in political life, many obstacles remain. It is time to scale up European action.

The new strategy builds on its predecessor, the [European Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#), and contributes to the implementation of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) for which an Action Plan will be adopted by the Commission this week, which serves as a compass for employment and social policies in Europe. The strategy supports implementation by the EU and its Member States of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at both EU and national levels.

Vice-President for Values and Transparency Vera **Jourová** said: *"The protection of the rights of persons with disabilities has to be at the centre of our efforts, including in our response to the coronavirus. People with disabilities have been among those hit hardest by the COVID-19 crisis. We must strive to ensure that people with disabilities quality of life improves and their rights are guaranteed!"*

"Since its inception, the European project focused on removing barriers, in line with its vision of a Union in Diversity. However, many persons with disabilities continue to face obstacles, for instance when looking for a job or using public transport", said Commissioner for Equality, Helena **Dalli**. She added: *"People with disabilities should be able to participate equally in all areas of life. Living independently, learning in an inclusive environment, and working under appropriate standards are conditions that we need to ensure to all citizens to enable them to flourish and live life to the fullest."*

Enhancing equal participation and non-discrimination

The ten-year strategy sets out key initiatives around **three main themes**:

- **EU rights:** Persons with disabilities have the same right as other EU citizens to move to another country or to participate in political life. Building on the experience of the pilot project ongoing in eight countries, by the end of 2023 the European Commission will propose a European Disability Card for all EU countries that will facilitate mutual recognition of disability status between Member States, helping disabled people enjoy their right of free movement. The Commission will also work closely with Member States to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in the electoral process in 2023.
- **Independent living and autonomy:** Persons with disabilities have the right to live independently and choose where and with whom they want to live. To support independent living and inclusion in the community, the Commission will develop guidance and launch an initiative to improve social services for persons with disabilities.
- **Non-discrimination and equal opportunities:** The strategy aims to protect persons with disabilities from any form of discrimination and violence. It aims to ensure equal opportunities in and access to justice, education, culture, sport and tourism. Equal access must also be guaranteed to all health services and employment.

It is impossible to participate in society on an equal basis with others when your environment – physical or virtual – is not accessible. Thanks to a solid EU legal framework (e.g. the [European Accessibility Act](#), [Web Accessibility Directive](#), [Passenger rights](#)) access has improved, however, many areas are still not covered by EU rules, and there are differences in the accessibility of buildings, public spaces, and some modes of transport. Therefore, the European Commission will launch a European resource centre 'AccessibleEU' in 2022, to build a knowledge base of information and good

practices on accessibility across sectors.

Delivering the strategy: close cooperation with EU countries and mainstreaming in internal and external policies

Delivering on the strategy's ambitions will require a strong commitment from all Member States. EU countries are key actors in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Commission will establish the Disability Platform, bringing together national authorities responsible for implementation of the Convention, organisations of persons with disabilities and the Commission to support implementation of the strategy and to enhance cooperation and exchange on implementing the Convention. The Platform will have a comprehensive online presence and ensure continuity of activities throughout the year. Persons with disabilities will be part of the dialogue and part of the process of implementing the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030. The Commission will integrate disability matters into all EU policies and major initiatives. Because the rights of persons with disabilities do not end at Europe's borders, the Commission will promote the rights of persons with disabilities globally. With this strategy, the EU will reinforce its role as an advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities. The EU will use instruments such as technical assistance and financial programmes, support via EU delegation, political dialogues and work in multilateral fora to support partner countries in their endeavours to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and provide guidance to implement the SDGs in a disability inclusive manner.

Background

As announced by President **von der Leyen**, the [Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#) contributes to building the Union of Equality, together with the [LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#), the [EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025](#), the [Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#) and the [EU Roma Strategic Framework](#).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([UNCRPD](#)), adopted by the UN in 2006, was a breakthrough for the rights of persons with disabilities: all Member States are party to it, and it is the first human rights convention concluded also by the EU. Parties to the Convention are required to promote, protect and fulfil the human rights of all persons with disabilities and ensure their equality under the law. With this Strategy, the Commission provides the framework supporting EU and Member States' actions to implement the UNCRPD.

The [European Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#) paved the way to a barrier-free Europe, for example with directives such as the [European Accessibility Act](#), that requires key products and services such as phones, computers, e-books, banking services and electronic communications to be accessible and usable for persons with a variety of disabilities. EU passenger rights ensure that persons with disabilities have access to road, air, rail or sea travel. Through policies for international cooperation, the EU has also led the way globally in promoting the inclusion and full participation of persons with disabilities.

For More Information

[Communication: Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#)

[Easy-to-read version: Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030](#)

Q&A: [Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#)

Factsheet: [Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#)

[News in easy-to-read: The European Commission puts out a new strategy to protect the rights of persons with disabilities](#)

[More information on EU initiatives for persons with disabilities](#)

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