

EU Disability Rights Strategy 2021-2030

The European Commission presented the new 10-year Disability Strategy in March 2021.

The strategy is divided in 8 areas. In each area, the Commission sets:

- **Flagship initiatives;**
- **Other initiatives**, such as guidance to Member States;
- **Calls to Member States** to implement actions in line with the UNCRPD and the disability strategy.

Inclusion Europe wanted to see an ambitious disability strategy with clear targets, **fostering change with a concrete impact on the quality of life of people with intellectual disabilities and families**, for instance:

1. Address the importance of the right to make decisions;
2. Establish clear targets to end segregation;
3. Address violence against women with intellectual disabilities;
4. Recognise the role of families in fulfilling rights and providing support to their relatives with disabilities;
5. Connect to peoples' experiences and be easier to understand.

With a particular attention throughout the strategy to:

- Children with intellectual disabilities and their families;
- Women with intellectual disabilities;
- People with complex support needs and their families.

We believe there are many areas where the EU can and should implement direct and profound change, for example:

- Employment of people with disabilities in EU services and agencies;
- Education (Erasmus programmes, European schools);
- Accessibility of information and procedures.

More on what we asked for: [Contribution to the European Commission Roadmap consultation](#), 2020



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Accessibility



64.3% of persons with disabilities aged 16+ have an internet connection at home compared to **87.9%** of persons without disabilities



Millions of persons with disabilities experience barriers to use transport, to access buildings or to receive information

YEAR	ACTION
2021	Public procurement directive Guidance to Member State to implement the directive
	EU digital government strategy include accessibility and inclusiveness
	Review the passenger rights regulatory framework
	Review the Regulation on Union Guidelines Sustainable Mobility Planning Revise the Urban Mobility Package
2022	Accessible EU Resource centre in accessibility policies, cooperation framework
	Web Accessibility Directive Evaluate the application
	Assets on rail infrastructure Inventory

It will be important to ensure accessibility is understood as accessibility of information and procedures, especially regarding the proposed Accessible EU resource centre.

- [Information for all – European Standards](#)
- [Easy-to-read checklist](#)
- Podcast : [Soufiane El Amrani on employment, accessibility and living with intellectual disability](#)



“Easy to read is very important information for all people with intellectual disabilities, whether you go see a doctor or need to pay a bill, it should be in easy to read.”

Soufiane El Amrani, Easy-to-read editor and self-advocacy officer at Inclusion Europe

EU Rights



National rules deprive **800 000 EU citizens with disabilities** of the right to participate in European Parliament elections justifying on the basis of their disabilities or mental health issues

YEAR	ACTION
2022	Democracy Action Plan Aim of reflecting diversity in candidates lists
2023	European Disability Card Guide of good electoral practices Address participation of citizens with disabilities
GENERAL	Accessibility of European Elections (both as voter and candidate) Democracy Action Plan Compendium on E-voting to address the needs of citizens with disability Citizenship, Equalities, Rights and Values programme Support inclusive democratic participation

It is important that the strategy recognises democratic rights not only as voting rights, but also the right to stand for election.

“Many self-advocates are treated as secondary citizens and are deprived of their right to vote. I hope that the actions in the Strategy will help to change this. It is crucial that during the implementation of the Strategy, the Commission will consider the barriers persons with intellectual disabilities face, for example guardianship.”

László Bercse, Chair of the European Platform of Self-Advocates and Vice-President of Inclusion Europe.



- [Good Practices for Accessible Elections in Europe](#),
- [Recommendations for Accessible Elections in Europe](#),
- [Voting for all Guide](#)
- [“Because I have difficulties in managing money, people say I should not vote. How wrong is that?”](#)
- [“For me it is very important to vote in the European elections”](#)
- [Why are the European Elections so important](#)
- [Voting rights & accessibility: Problems Solutions](#)

Decent quality of life and living independently



More than 1 million children and adults with disabilities aged less than 65 and **more than 2 million** aged 65 and over live in institutions



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



37.6% of persons with disabilities are inactive compared to **17.6%** of persons without disabilities



28.4% of persons with disabilities are at risk of poverty and social exclusion compared to **18.4%** of persons without disabilities

YEAR	ACTION
2021	EU Employment Equality Directive Report following up legal proposal if appropriate
2022	Action Plan on Social Economy Package to improve labour market outcomes of persons with disabilities Support Member States in the implementation of Employment Guidelines Study on social protection and services for persons with disabilities
2023	Independent living and inclusion in the community Guidance to Member States
2024	Framework for Social Services of Excellence for persons with disabilities Increase employment rates Calls on Member States to establish targets
GENERAL	Deinstitutionalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Calls on Member States to implement good practices - Promote and secure financing for accessible and disability-inclusive social housing Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set targets for the participation of adults with disabilities in learning - Inclusive and accessible VET programmes Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Calls on Member States to strengthen capacities of employment services - Calls on Member States to facilitate self-employment and entrepreneurship Social Protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide guidance to support Member States in further reforms of social protection - Calls on Member States to tackle gaps in social protection

It will be of critical importance to ensure people with intellectual disabilities and family members are properly involved and heard during the work on **independent living** guidance; people with intellectual disabilities and with complex support needs continue to be neglected in deinstitutionalisation efforts.

“Many persons with intellectual disabilities still depend on institutions, support services and parents. Self-advocates complain that support services and staff still have much control over them. They often do not respect self-advocates’ opinions and wishes. This is because the old ways of thinking, common for institutions, are still present in support services.”

Senada Halilčević, former Chair of the European Platform of Self-Advocates and Vice-President of Inclusion Europe.



- [Common European Guidelines on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care](#)
- [Draft General Comment on Article 19 \(Living independently and being included in the community\)](#)
- [Fact Sheet: Independent Living for People with Intellectual Disabilities](#)
- [Checklist to ensure EU-funded measures contribute to independent living by developing and ensuring access to family-based and community-based services](#)
- [10 YEARS TOWARDS INCLUSION](#)
- [Briefing on lack of data and housing](#)

The same applies to **employment**, especially given its role as not only a source of income but also of social integration.



“Having a job is important. If you have a job and a salary, you can be financially independent. You also have colleagues and friends at work.”

László Bercse, Chair of the European Platform of Self-Advocates and Vice-President of Inclusion Europe.

- [EU instruments to foster employment of people with intellectual disabilities](#)
- [Better future scenarios: How to improve law and policies for inclusive employment](#)
- [European Research and the Lessons Learnt](#)
- [Employment and Covid-19 report](#)
- [Having a job means having freedom to make your own choices and to control your own life](#)
- [Briefing: Social protection and employment of people with intellectual disabilities](#)
- [Briefing on poverty of people with intellectual disabilities and their families](#)

Equal access and non-discrimination



52% of persons with disabilities feel discriminated against



4 times more persons with disabilities report unmet healthcare needs than those without disabilities



20.3% young people with disabilities leave school early compared to **9.8%** of those without disabilities



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

YEAR	ACTION
2021	Toolkit for inclusion in early childhood education and care
2024	Ensuring safety and protection
GENERAL	Victims of violence Guidance to Member States and practitioners on support
	Justice, legal protection, freedom
	2000 Hague Convention - Implementation - Study on the protection of vulnerable adults in cross-border situations , notably those with intellectual disabilities.
	Procedural safeguards for vulnerable adults in criminal proceedings Launch a study and assess the need for legislative proposals strengthening the support and protection of vulnerable adults
	Access to justice Guidance to Member States
	Participation of persons with disabilities as professionals in the justice system Develop measures to support Member States
	Supported decision-making Collect good practices
	Equal access to social protection, healthcare, education and goods and services including housing
	Calls on Member States to: - Enable the adoption of the Commission proposal for a horizontal directive - Support cooperation between the EU and the national UNCRPD frameworks
	Education
	Teacher education system Support Member States to address shortages of teachers in Special needs education and competences of all professionals
	European Schools Implement the Action Plan Educational Support and Inclusive Education Calls on Member States to: - Support the development of inclusive schools - Implement art 24 CRPD in European Schools

- Advance on **supported learning** in inclusive mainstream settings

Healthcare

Steering Group on Promotion and Prevention

Share validated health-related good practices

Mental health

Support stakeholders to address and alleviate the burden of Covid-19

Cancer prevention and early detection and care

Address access inequalities

Calls on Member States

- Improve access to **healthcare portfolio**
- Raise awareness and develop support strategies for **rare diseases**

Arts, culture, leisure, sport

Article 30 UNCPRD

Study to evaluate its implementation

International Paralympic Committee

Partner

Accessible Tourism

Develop (Capital of Smart tourism award)

Calls on Member States:

- Encourage **arts** of persons with disabilities and raise awareness
- Improve **accessibility**

Safety and protection

Institutions

Calls FRA to examine the situation of persons with disabilities living in institutions

Member States

- Implement **CEAS acquis**
- Facilitate **training of protection officers and interpreters**

This area is important for several reasons.

First, to ensure the guarantee of these rights, **supported decision-making** is of essence.

- [Key Elements of a System for Supported Decision-Making](#)
- [Safeguards in measures relating to the exercise of legal capacity](#)

To ensure safety, protection and justice, **training of practitioners** on support needs of people with intellectual disabilities, and **education to their rights** of people with intellectual disabilities is fundamental. A particular attention should be paid to women with intellectual disabilities victims of violence, including structural violence.

- [Violence against women, a study on how women with intellectual disabilities cope with violence they experienced in institutions](#)

For education, the progress towards **inclusive education** is welcome but no more EU funds should be invested towards segregated education.



“Special schools mostly teach professions that nobody in the open labour market needs. Special schools separate persons with disabilities from their peers with very little opportunities for personal growth and independence in future life.”

Senada Halilčević, former Chair of the European Platform of Self-Advocates and Vice-President of Inclusion Europe.

- [Inclusive Education and Legal Capacity Paper](#)
- [Lack of education for children with intellectual disabilities made worse in the Coronavirus emergency](#)

Improving **healthcare** is urgent, and so is making sure it is available for people with intellectual disabilities.

- [How to get easy to understand information about health care](#)
- [Neglect and discrimination. Multiplied. - How Covid-19 affected the rights of people with intellectual disabilities and their families](#)

Lastly, **arts, culture sports and leisure**: accessible information to enable access to culture and inclusion of people with disabilities' art is elementary.

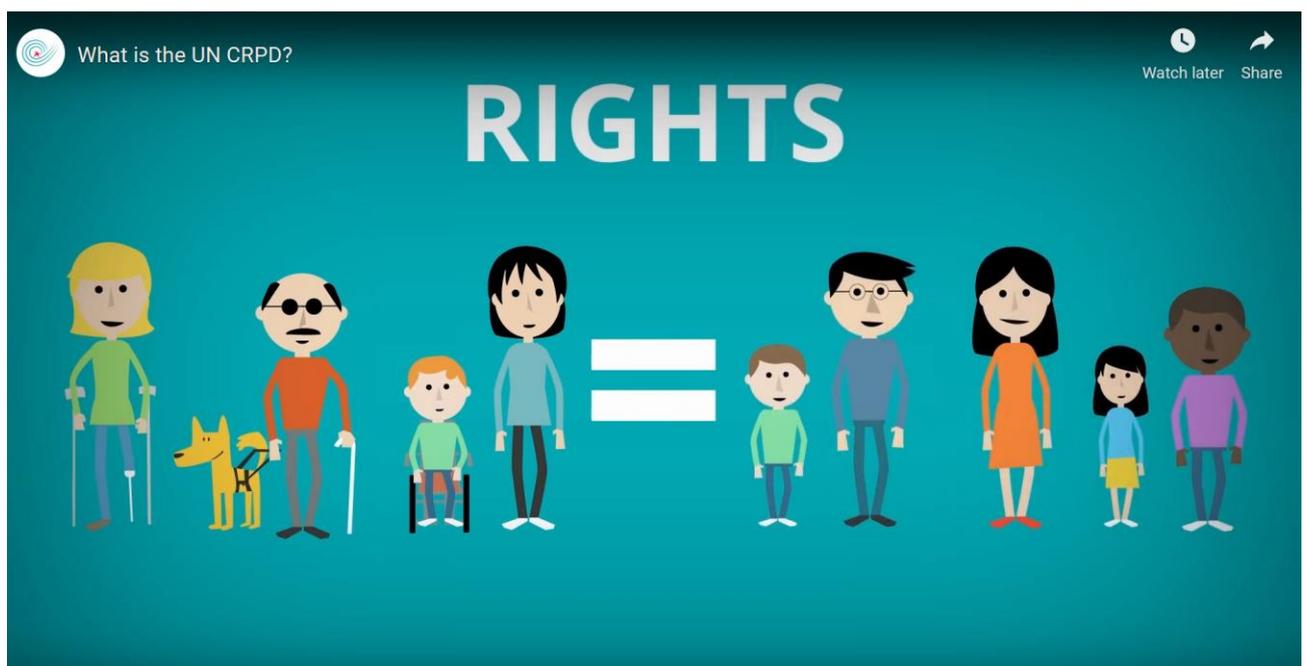
Promoting the rights of persons with disabilities globally



An estimated **1 billion people** live with disabilities in the world

YEAR	ACTION
2021	Toolbox on the “Rights Based Approach, encompassing all human rights for EU development cooperation”
GENERAL	<p>Ensure EU delegations play active role in implementation of UNCRPD</p> <p>Track disability inclusive investments (OECD Development Assistance Committee)</p> <p>Technical Assistance</p> <p>Enhance cooperation</p> <p>Organise regular dialogues during COSP with a focus on accessibility and employment.</p>

- [Excluded from the Excluded: People with Intellectual Disabilities in \(and out of\) Official Development Assistance](#)
- [What is the UN CRPD – easy to understand video](#)



Efficiently delivering the strategy

YEAR	ACTION
2021	<p>Disability Platform Will bring together national UNCRPD focal points, organisations of persons with disabilities and the Commission</p>
GENERAL	<p>Better Regulation toolbox Reinforce</p> <p>Impact assessment and evaluations Ensure the coherent inclusion and assessment of disability matters</p> <p>Disability coordinators Designated in EU institutions, bodies, agencies and delegations</p> <p>Exchange of views With EESC and Committee of Regions</p> <p>Networks of local and regional authorities Establish dialogue</p> <p>Engagement of citizens with disabilities Explore funding opportunities through the new CREV</p> <p>EU Funds Support Member States to use them in compliance with the UNCRPD Calls on Member States to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mainstream disability: take into account needs of persons with disabilities in policies and conclusions at Council level. - Adopt ambitious national strategies - Partnership with regional, local authorities, representative DPOs, civil society, fundamental rights bodies - Encourage the UNCRPD focal points to support the fulfilment of the relevant enabling conditions throughout the programming period.

Funding and project opportunities at EU level should be used at their full potential.

- [Explainer on EU funds](#)
- [Checklist to ensure EU-funded measures contribute to independent living by developing and ensuring access to family-based and community-based services](#)

Leading by example

YEAR	ACTION
2021	Web accessibility Develop an Action Plan
2023	Accessibility of audio-visual communications and graphic design, events, publications Ensure accessibility, including where relevant sign language interpretation and documents in 'easy-to-read' format.
2030	Commission buildings All follow European accessibility standards
GENERAL	Renewed Human Resources strategy Promote diversity and inclusion of persons with disabilities Barriers Ensure their continuous removal and prevention Reporting Strengthen it by the management of all Commission services on diversity Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none">- For all newly occupied buildings of the Commission- For all venues where events are organised

Accessibility of events and webpages for people with intellectual disabilities will be looked out for.

- [Recommendations for organisers of events and meetings](#)
- [Accessibility of online events](#)

*"We will use the power of peer support to promote community living and to promote a Europe where people with intellectual disabilities are included – **equally deserving, equally entitled and equally human**. We will use it to encourage and support the families to live like any other family."*

[Jyrki Pinomaa](#), president of Inclusion Europe



Awareness, governance, measuring progress

EU Framework: the European Ombudsman, the Committee on Petitions of the European Parliament, the Fundamental Rights Agency and the European Disability Forum.

YEAR	ACTION
2021	Monitoring Framework Develop and publish
2022	EU framework Examine its functioning and propose actions
2023	Disability Indicators Develop + roadmap for implementation
2024	Report of the strategy Assess progress and if necessary update objectives + actions
GENERAL	Dialogue Organise annual dialogue between Commission as EU focal point and EU framework Data collection Develop a strategy and provide an analysis of existing data.

Disaggregation by type of disability and research on data representing the living conditions of people with intellectual disabilities to ensure their representation in policies is essential.

- [Video on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#)



Let's keep talking!



Inclusion Europe

European movement of people with intellectual disabilities and their families



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