

EPR Study Visit to AFID ***Inclusion of people with disabilities***

16 - 17 October 2025 (two half days)

Lisbon, Portugal
AFID Diferença Foundation

Objectives of the meeting

The aim of this study visit is to raise awareness of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), learn from each other's good practices, discuss success and challenges and develop recommendations to address them. This study visit will focus on inclusion of people with disabilities and will also discuss the implications and relevance of actions planned in the European Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as other EPR activities on the topic.

AFID Diferença Foundation

AFID Diferença Foundation promotes the autonomy and social support of people with disabilities, including health, education and training. In line with the roots of the foundation, they also fight exclusion and are committed to and guarantee excellence in service provision. AFID promotes and supports quality and active life for people with disabilities and other target groups in an inclusive society.

Today, AFID is also Fundação AFID Diferença, a Social Solidarity Foundation, created in 2005 by Associação AFID, recognised as a Legal Person of Public Utility N° 13/06, by dispatch of the Secretary of State of Social Security, in 2006. AFID Diferença serves a wide population with numerous Social Responses and Services, essentially covering the area of Disability (AFID REAB) and, cross-sectionally, the greater needs in the social area, starting with Early Intervention, monitoring Children (AFID KIDS), youngsters at risk and culminating in the support to the elderly (AFID SENIOR).

Background

The European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR, also referred to as the "Social Pillar" or just the "Pillar") is a key social initiative launched by the European Commission in November 2017 aimed at improving the promotion and protection of social rights of EU residents. It is structured in 20 principles divided in three categories, referring to equal opportunities and access to labour market, fair working conditions and social protection and inclusion. The Pillar does not give the European Union more power or competencies but is designed to be a tool that promotes social rights with joint collaboration and responsibility of the European institutions together with governments and stakeholders.

Services play a key role in the success of the Pillar. Many of the pillar's principles directly relate to the delivery of services, employment, education and rights of persons with disabilities. For instance, Pillar 17 focusses on the inclusion of people with disabilities. Affordable, quality, and accessible services are needed for the rights to become a reality in practice but service providers also have a role in ensuring these social rights are met.

On the 4th of March 2021, the European Commission launched the Action Plan. The Action Plan is aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals to take firm steps in the implementation of the 20 principles included in the Pillar. It presents three targets to be achieved by 2030: equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, and social protection and inclusion. The targets are accompanied by clear actions and deadlines. The Commission adopted the Strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities for the period 2021-2030 together with the Action Plan.

Draft Programme

Thursday, 16 October

Session 1: 14:00 - 18:00h WEST (Portuguese time)

Meeting location: Fundação AFID Diferença (address tbc)

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| 14:00 - 14:15 | Welcome of participants |
| 14:15 - 14:30 | Official opening – Welcome remarks by AFID Management and EPR |
| 14:30 - 14:45 | Institutional Presentation of AFID |
| 14:45 - 15:45 | Guided tour: Vocational Training, Centre for Activities and Inclusion (CACI) |
| 15:45 - 16:15 | Institutional intervention - Representative of the European Commission (tbc) |
| 16:15 - 16:30 | <i>Coffee break</i> |
| 16:30 - 17:00 | Presentation of the Centre for Activities and Inclusion (CACI), Framework of Socially Useful Activities - Decree No. 70/2021 |
| 17:00 - 17:30 | Sharing and exchange of experiences among professionals |
| 20:00 | <i>Informal dinner, location TBA</i> |

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Friday, 16 October

Session 2: 09:30 - 13:00h WEST (Portuguese time)

Meeting location: Fundação AFID Diferença (address tbc)

09:30 - 10:00	Welcome and recap of the previous day
10:00 - 10:30	Presentation of the Vocational Training
10:30 - 11:00	Sharing and exchange of experience among professionals
11:00 - 11:15	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:15 - 11:45	Focused discussion and exchange of ideas on employability and inclusion
11:45 - 12:15	Summary and conclusions of the event
12:15	<i>Official closing of the study visit</i>
12:30	<i>Lunch</i>

Practicalities

EPR has subsidies per member organisation on a limited number and on a first come, first served basis. Please indicate if you wish to take the subsidy in the registration form and contact Alicia Gómez Campos for further information.

To attend, please register [here](#) by 1 October. For more information, please contact Alicia Gómez Campos, agomezcampos@epr.eu, or Clara Beser Ramada, cbeser@epr.eu.

Hotel recommendations (tbc)

For more information about the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Disability Strategy:

- [Short Briefing on the EU Disability Strategy \(2022\)](#)
- [Short Briefing on the EU Disability Employment Package \(2023\)](#)
- [Summary of EPR Key Inputs to the European Commission's Study on Alternative Models of Employment for Persons with Disabilities \(2024\)](#)
- [Position Paper of Social Services Europe 'The Role of Social Services in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights' \(2018\)](#)
- [The European Pillar of Social Rights and service delivery for persons with disabilities – EPR Analytical paper \(2017\)](#)
- [European Pillar of Social rights Action Plan \(2021\)](#)
- [Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 Guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies \(2022\)](#)