

EPR Feedback on the Roadmap for the Disability Rights Strategy

12th November 2020

This contribution does not aim to be an exhaustive set of recommendations for the future strategy, but to highlight key issues that may not be addressed elsewhere or by other contributors, as well as to offer comments on the Roadmap itself.

EPR is a community of service providers working with people with disabilities committed to high quality service delivery. EPR's mission is to build the capacity of its members to provide sustainable, high quality services through mutual learning and training.

The Roadmap states that “*the new Strategy will aim at ensuring the social and economic inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in society*”. We believe that it would be helpful to stress their **active participation**.

The Roadmap states that “*Specific attention is required for health services, especially after the weaknesses and gaps demonstrated by the COVID-19 crisis.*” In addition, significant weaknesses and gaps in social services were also demonstrated, especially when it came to financial and other support for the provision of services to people with disabilities, and specific attention should be paid to them as well.

The roadmap states that “*Assistive technologies remain expensive and internal market opportunities are underused*”. Actions in the strategy should explore synergies with research programmes in this area and develop initiatives that facilitate the accessibility of AT solutions, in collaboration with AT developers and support service providers.

The strategy should:

Mainstream the issue of quality of services throughout its actions, in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights and Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services.. The Roadmap states; “*support for modernisation and consolidation of community-based support services is key*”. We consider quality to be a key dimension of modernisation and should be addressed in any actions regarding this topic, and would like to emphasise its importance. We call for “support for modernisation and consolidation of *quality* community-based support services”, including through stimulating mutual learning and exchange of good practices on the implementation of article 19 and how to empower people with disabilities to exercise their right to choose.

Ensure synergies with the Action Plan for the Social Economy and develop initiatives to support social enterprises employing people with a disability, helping them to adapt to changing demands and new opportunities, including the Green Deal.

Develop actions to support partnerships with employers and their engagement in the implementation of the future strategy, and collaboration with employment support services.

Promote evidence-based practices that support people with a disability in the open labour market, such as Supported Employment, IPS, Disability Management.

Take into account the specific challenges and needs of women and girls with disabilities in all initiatives, including those addressing education and the labour market.

Propose an initiative to address violence against women with disabilities, and address their right to access sexual and reproductive health services

Develop initiatives relating to the ageing of PWD, involving support service providers, as well as feed into the Green Paper on Ageing and its subsequent actions.