

Enhancing the strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities up to 2030

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Where do we currently stand?

2021

**EU Strategy for the
rights of persons
with disabilities
2021-2030**



2026

Mid-way through the
implementation,
Progress Report and
Enhancement of the
Strategy around its 8
objectives

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Achievements of the Strategy 2021-2030 so far

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Actions achieved through the Strategy 2021-2030 so far

- **European Accessibility Act** to make accessible products and services key for persons with disabilities, such as computers, smartphones, and e-commerce.
- **AccessibleEU**, a European resource centre to facilitate access to relevant knowledge for an effective implementation accessibility policies.
- **European Disability Card and European Parking Card** for persons with disabilities to be recognised in all Member States and to facilitate free movement.
- **Guidance** recommending to Member States improvements on independent living and inclusion in the community.
- **Disability Employment Package** to bring and maintain persons with disabilities in quality and sustainable jobs: guidelines, toolkits and a catalogue of positive actions.

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What this Enhanced Strategy is about?

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What is 'enhancing the strategy' about?

- Renewing and reinforcing commitments under the strategy 2021-2030
- Better implementation of existing actions and new initiatives
- Several new flagship initiatives across different areas
- Calls to Member States in areas under their competence
- Improved monitoring and increased attention to national developments

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Priority areas in line with the 2021-2030 Strategy

- ❖ Accessibility – an enabler of rights, autonomy and equality;
- ❖ Enjoying EU rights;
- ❖ Decent quality of life and living independently;
- ❖ Equal access and non-discrimination;
- ❖ Promoting the rights of persons with disabilities globally;
- ❖ Efficiently delivering the Strategy;
- ❖ Leading by example;
- ❖ Awareness raising, monitoring and measuring progress.

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How did we get there?

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How did we get there?

- Outcome of broad consultation work
- Input from other EU institutions, UNCRPD Committee, evidence from mid-term assessment
- Included in the Commission Work Programme 2026
- Adopted on 6 May 2026
- Part of the Social Package
- Accompanied by [mid-term progress report](#) and [synopsis report](#)
- [Factual summary report](#) on the public consultation published in April

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Consultation process: main conclusions (1/3)

Implementation and enforcement gaps:

- Legislative and policy progress at EU level widely acknowledged, but tangible improvements in the everyday lives of persons with disabilities perceived as insufficient and uneven.
- No need for a new strategic framework, but for stronger implementation, governance, and accountability mechanisms.

Core priorities:

- Independent living, employment, and accessibility identified as key priorities for future action.
- Reducing poverty and ensuring effective social protection as areas where limited improvement is reported.

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Consultation process: main conclusions (2/3)

Emerging areas

- Systematic integration of accessibility and non-discrimination requirements in digitalisation, AI, and crisis management and preparedness.

Value of EU action

- EU's added value broadly recognised for harmonising standards, promoting rights, strengthening legislative frameworks, and leveraging funding instruments, to support Member States.
- Disability Platform identified as a potential structure for enhanced cooperation and exchange.

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Consultation process: main conclusions (3/3)

Monitoring and data collection

- Further strengthening required, combining EU and national efforts.
- Calls for clearer benchmarks, improved data collection and disaggregation, more robust monitoring mechanisms and systematic monitoring of alignment of EU funding with UNCRPD.

Intersectionality

- Emphasis on embedding intersectionality in the Strategy's implementation, addressing compounded barriers related to age, gender, socio-economic vulnerability, etc.
- Particular attention to women and girls with disabilities, children and older persons with disabilities.

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Why it matters

In the EU:

- **90 million people in the EU live with a disability**, whether from birth, acquired later in life, or due to ageing.
- **1.4 million persons** with disabilities still live in institutions.
- **Only 55% are employed** – vs 77% of people without disabilities.
- **44% of young persons with severe disabilities are early school leavers** – vs 9.3% of those without disabilities.
- **29% are at risk of poverty** – vs 18% of those without disabilities.

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New flagship initiatives and actions

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Accessibility – an enabler of rights, autonomy and equality

Digital accessibility and assistive technologies

- **Flagship initiative – Assistive technologies and AI: from lab to market**
- Implementation of European Accessibility Act (expert group, standardisation request M587, AccessibleEU support)
- AI guidelines and Digital Services Act codes of conduct, monitoring and revision of other relevant legislation, including on Audiovisual Media Services and Web Accessibility

Safe and accessible products and services

- **Flagship initiative – Better access to transport for persons with disabilities**
- Accessibility and safety for consumers with disabilities (labelling, General Product Safety Regulation, Alternative Dispute Resolution, ...)

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Enjoying EU rights

Facilitating mobility within the EU

- **Flagship initiative – European disability and parking cards in your (digital) wallet**
- Mutual learning on disability assessment

Fostering participation in democratic processes

- **Flagship initiative – Inclusive democracies across the EU**
- Encouraging persons with disabilities to vote and run for office in the 2029 European elections

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Decent quality of life and living independently (1/2)

Improving access to sustainable quality jobs

- **Improve implementation of the Disability Employment Package**
- Work with Member States to set national targets
- Consider occupational and health risks for persons with disabilities under Quality Jobs Act
- Consult European social partners on possible direction of EU action to support activation of persons excluded from the labour market

Developing independent living and reinforcing community-based services

- **Flagship initiative - EU Alliance for independent living**
- Framework for social services of excellence for persons with disabilities

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Decent quality of life and living independently (2/2)

Ensuring adequate social protection

- Analytical work and collecting data to quantify the extra cost of living with a disability
- Encourage discussions among Member States, including in the Disability Platform, on how disability is identified and addressed in different social protection systems

Affordable and accessible housing

- Consider accessibility in assessing national building renovation plans under the Directive on energy performance of buildings and disseminate good practices
- Report on the housing conditions of persons with disabilities across the EU

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Equal access and non-discrimination (1/3)

Inclusive education at all levels

- **Flagship initiative – Disability-inclusive lifelong learning**
- EU funding

Improving access to healthcare

- Partnership initiatives and research projects on rare diseases
- Revised Pharma Package and better access to orphan drugs
- Joint actions under the EU4Health programme (mental health, dementia, inequalities in cancer prevention, detection and care)
- Study on quality of life of cancer patients and survivors

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Equal access and non-discrimination (2/3)

Disability at the intersection: boosting voice and choice

- Initiative with the World Health Organisation to improve quality and accessibility of healthcare (physical, mental, sexual and reproductive) for women, including women with disabilities
- Study on violence against women with disabilities in the EU

Ensuring equal access justice, legal protection and safety

- Guidelines on procedural accommodation for victims with disabilities
- Judicial training on the UNCRC and disability under the Justice programme
- European Investigation Order Directive revision
- Increased frequency on disability reporting in the EU Justice Scoreboard
- Study on decision-making regimes, showcasing supported decision-making

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Equal access and non-discrimination (3/3)

Preparedness and emergency management

- **Flagship initiative - Prepared for anything, prepared for everyone**

Participation in cultural life, sport, travel and leisure

- Report on persons with disabilities' participation in cultural events and activities and consultation of disability organisations in the EU Artists Charter
- Support young persons with disabilities to participate in inclusion strands of DiscoverEU and #BeActive EU Sport Awards and European Week of Sport campaign

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Promoting the rights of persons with disabilities globally

External action

- Planned review of the EU action plan on human rights and democracy 2020-2027 with stronger emphasis on disability
- Reporting on disability mainstreaming and targeted actions using the OECD DAC disability marker to track disability-inclusive funded operations

Humanitarian aid

- Follow up to the evaluation of the operational guidance on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in EU-funded humanitarian aid operations

EU enlargement

- **Flagship initiative - ‘Nothing about us without us’ in Ukraine’s reconstruction**

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Leading by example

- Promoting diversity and inclusion in the EU institutions at all stages: from participation in traineeship programme and selection process to support to staff and anti-harassment policy
- Digital accessibility action plan (2026-2030)
- Improving physical accessibility under the infrastructure and building equality action plan (2021-2030),
- More accessible conferences and meetings, thanks to deployment of multilingual AI-tools

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Efficiently delivering the strategy

- **Upscaling the Disability Platform**
- Mutual learning sessions on key topics, such as legal capacity, disability assessment and labour mobility of persons with disabilities
- Disability mainstreaming, with raising awareness action across EU agencies.
- Proposal to reform the existing EU UNCRPD monitoring framework, building on relevant analytical work
- Support organisations working for disability inclusion under the Agora EU programme under the 2028-2034 MFF (pending adoption).
- Supporting Member States to identify challenges and remedial action in preparing and implementing disability plans and strategies feeding into national and regional partnership plans under the MFF after 2027 (pending adoption)

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Awareness-raising, monitoring and measuring progress

Raising awareness and disseminating good practices

- Access City Award – new community of practice
- Union of Equality campaign covering disability

Collecting data, monitoring and measuring progress

- Step up data collection, including in institutions, and publish data for new indicators
- Recommendation on equality data
- Eurobarometer on discrimination in the EU in 2027
- Forthcoming Union of Equality reporting, covering national developments
- Monitoring framework under the strategy

Thank you

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