

**October 2018**

Estimates by the World Health Organization (WHO) suggest that 15 % of the world's population live with some form of disability. This makes people with disabilities the world's largest minority. EU-wide, some 80 million EU citizens have a disability. Disability is complex and multi-dimensional: it denotes impairments, limitations on activity and restrictions on participation – a combination of medical and contextual factors. Some people are born with a disabling condition, others develop a disability through injury, chronic disease, or in older age. The EU's disability policy strives for full inclusion of persons with disabilities in society, by respecting the key principles of non-discrimination, self-determination and unconditional equal treatment. The EU's disability policy framework is set out in the European Disability Strategy, which serves to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), to which the EU and its Member States are party.

The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020

Briefing by Irmgard Anglmayer, July 2017

The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (EDS) constitutes a comprehensive multiannual framework for implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) at EU level. The EDS and CRPD are thus closely intertwined. Given that the current strategy ends in 2020, preparatory work on the future disability framework has started. The European Parliament is providing input to it by means of an own-initiative report ('Implementation of the European Disability Strategy'), which was voted in plenary on 30 November 2017.

EU implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

In-depth analysis by Irmgard Anglmayer, February 2016

The CRPD is a legally binding instrument that aims to protect and promote the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. The comprehensive catalogue of rights for people with disabilities, enshrined in the Convention, seeks to pull down the barriers disabled persons are facing in their daily lives – barriers that often prevent them from enjoying their fundamental rights on an equal basis with others. The EU ratified the CRPD in 2010 in its capacity as a regional integration organisation. It entered into force for the EU in January 2011. Since then, the Convention's provisions have become an integral part of the EU's legal order. Accordingly, all EU legislation, policies and programmes must comply with the CRPD's established obligations. This in-depth analysis looks into the state of play of the EU's implementation of the CRPD, after the first round of the review process.

European Accessibility Act

'EU Legislation in progress' briefing by Marie Lecerf, November 2017

The European Commission has put forward a proposal for a European Accessibility Act. This proposed directive aims to ensure the full participation of people with disabilities in society and to reduce the fragmentation of legislation governing access to products and services. Many stakeholders welcome the European Union's wish to honour its responsibilities under the CRPD, but they have been divided on the means to reach this objective. In the European Parliament, the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) adopted its report on 25 April 2017. The report was then discussed in plenary on 15 September. At the same time, Parliament gave a mandate to start negotiations with Council. Although the Council has published three progress reports, in June and December 2016 and in June 2017, it has yet to agree on its position on the proposal.

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[Assistive technologies to support people with disabilities](#)

Briefing by Nicole Scholz, June 2015

The way disability is addressed has shifted from a purely medical approach to one that focuses on maximum functioning and well-being. Assistive technologies in support of people with disabilities have considerably evolved throughout the five broad categories of motor, vision, hearing, cognitive and communication disabilities. They now cover sophisticated ICT, software, cyber-physical and stem-cell applications. They include non-invasive and invasive brain-computer interfaces, wearable devices, stem-cell applications, neuroprosthetics, humanoid robots and applications (apps). The EU has funded several research projects on the development of assistive technologies under its research and innovation framework programmes.

[What if technology helped society to become more inclusive?](#)

At a glance by Philip Boucher, June 2016

There are already many assistive technologies available, which can help people with disabilities participate more fully in society. More advanced assistive technologies are under development, but is technology the key to a more inclusive society?

Further reading

[The obligations of the EU public administration under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

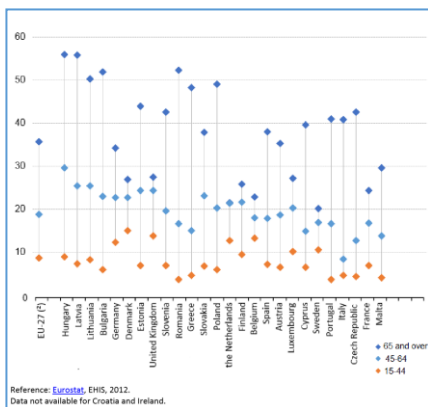
In-depth analysis by Irmgard Anglmayer, March 2016

[European disability policy: From defining disability to adopting a strategy](#)

In-depth analysis by Marie Lecerf, June 2017

[The employment equality directive](#)

Study by Jan Tymowski, February 2016



Graph 1 – Prevalence of disability by age of the respondents in 2012

Graph 2 – Gap in employment, education and poverty

Europe 2020 area	% Persons with disabilities	% Persons without disabilities	EU 2020 target
Employment			
- employment rate	48,7 %	72,5 %	75 %
Education			
- early school leaving rate	22,5 %	11 %	less than 10 %
- completed tertiary education	30 %	42,5 %	at least 40 %
Poverty			
- risk of poverty or social exclusion	29,5 %	21,5 %	lifting at least 20 million people out of poverty

Source: European Commission, EDS progress report 2017, p. 4 (ANED estimates for 2014, based on EU-SILC)

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