

European disability card and European parking card

Over time, the European Union has come to pay increasing attention to the issue of free movement for persons with disabilities, which amount to one in four people in the EU. On 6 September 2023, the European Commission launched a legislative initiative to create a European disability card and European parking card, to be recognised in all Member States. The final text agreed in trilogue is to be voted during the April II plenary session.

Background

Around [101 million](#) people in the EU have some form of disability. People with disabilities still face significant barriers to accessing education, employment, healthcare, sport and culture. The current lack of [mutual recognition](#) of disability status creates additional barriers to free movement for people with disabilities – a key element of Union citizenship. In June 1998, the Council advocated the introduction of a [European parking card](#) for people with disabilities, to be valid throughout the EU. The recommendation, which was [amended](#) in 2008 after EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007, encouraged Member States to introduce national parking cards for persons with disabilities and to recognise cards issued by other Member States. A second milestone EU initiative came in February 2016: a European disability card scheme was launched as a [pilot project](#) in eight Member States. The project aimed to create a voluntary system of mutual recognition based on a single European model disability card associated with a number of benefits – mainly in the areas of culture, leisure, sport and transport – with Member States free to decide which.

European Commission proposal

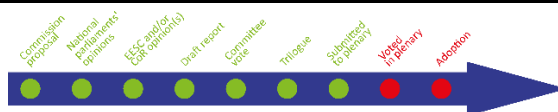
According to a [2021 study](#) by the European Commission, the initiative proved to be effective. On 6 September 2023, the Commission presented a [proposal](#) for a directive introducing a European disability card and enhancing the European parking card for persons with disabilities. The proposal attempts to remove barriers to mobility, ensuring mutual recognition of disability status through the European disability card and the European parking card, but only for those who travel for short periods (i.e. less than three months). In practice, the material scope of the proposal includes almost all areas, services, activities and facilities over a broad range of special conditions, benefits and concessions, except for social security benefits. The card will cover public and private services, including transport, cultural activities, museums, and leisure and sport centres. On 31 October 2023, the Commission published an [additional proposal](#) for a directive extending the European disability card and the European parking card to third-country nationals legally residing in a Member State, which has been negotiated along with the initial proposal.

European Parliament position

Through numerous [resolutions](#), Parliament has supported the creation of a European disability card for more than a decade. On 11 January 2024, the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) adopted its report [unanimously](#). Interinstitutional negotiations were launched on 17 January and, after two trilogue meetings, a [provisional agreement](#) was reached with the Council presidency on 8 February. The agreed text is due to be put to the vote during the April II plenary session.

First-reading report: [2023/0311\(COD\)](#); Committee responsible: EMPL; Rapporteur: Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová (Renew, Slovakia). For further information, see our 'EU Legislation in progress' [briefing](#).

[Outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe](#): This proposal is relevant for proposals 29, 14.



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