

WRITTEN QUESTION E-5215/08  
by Philippe Busquin (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Support for innovation in the disability sector

The European Year of Equal Opportunities for All has further emphasised the European Union's commitment to people with disabilities and the principle of non-discrimination.

This commitment is reflected first of all in efforts to create a stronger European legal framework for combating all forms of discrimination.

This commitment should, however, also involve strong support from the European Union for innovative practices and new technologies to help anchor the rights of disabled persons on a day to day basis.

This type of support offers a tangible opportunity to support and underpin the work carried out at local level by all persons and bodies working on behalf of disabled persons to develop their life plans.

Innovative practices and new technologies are not just a challenge for disabled persons, but can also open the door to greater autonomy and a better quality of life.

Incentives are, however, required to get people working in the field of innovation interested in the needs of the disability sector.

In light of this, could the Commission clarify what actions are currently being taken as regards innovation in the disability sector, and more specifically:

1. with regard to new technologies and incentives for their introduction in the disability sector at an economically acceptable cost for disabled persons;
2. with regard to innovative approaches towards caring for the disabled, particularly through consensus conferences;
3. through the establishment of European incentive schemes (based on a European Prize) to promote innovation and the transfer of technology or know-how in the disability sector.