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WORKING DOCUMENT

Implementation of the European Disability Strategy (2010 - 2020)

Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

Rapporteur: Helga Stevens
Background

The EU acceded to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) in December 2010, as the first Regional Integration Organization. This was the first human rights treaty the EU ratified as a whole (and to date the only one); the Optional Protocol was not signed or ratified. With the ratification, the EU is now under an obligation to implement the Convention in full. This includes the EU institutions itself.

To ensure effective implementation at EU level and support national-level action, a European-wide strategy, namely the “European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe” was adopted. A progress report reviewing the strategy at mid-term was published early 2017.

The strategy is based on eight priority areas (“areas for action”):

1. Accessibility
2. Participation
3. Equality
4. Employment
5. Education and training (including access to quality education and lifelong learning)
6. Social protection
7. Health
8. External action

Aim of INI report

The INI report aims to give the Parliament’s view on the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 in response to the progress report published by the Commission. At the same time, it wishes to give an outlook to the new 2030 strategy expected to be published after the current strategy expires in 2020. The report wants to also give detailed insight into the gaps between the “Concluding observations on the initial report of the European Union” and the Commission’s progress report.

The rapporteur is of the opinion that there is no hierarchy of human rights and disability-based discrimination must be tackled in the same way as discrimination on other grounds, including discrimination on more than one ground. This is especially important for women and children with disabilities and those with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.

The own-initiative report is expected to generate a large number of Committee opinions, with at least four Committees having expressed interest to contribute so far:

- PETI
- ENVI
- FEMM (in the form of amendments)
- CULT

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1 Article 44 CRPD
3 http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16995&langId=en
4 CRPD/C/EU/CO/1
This report will seek to build on previous reports in the European Parliament; it is not the rapporteur’s intention to duplicate or repeat previous reports. The rapporteur will aim to focus on matters that fall within the EU competence, including particularly also policies and legislation that has an explicit European dimension. This does not preclude the rapporteur from addressing other issues where the EU has a coordinating or supporting role.

**General structure**

The rapporteur will divide the report into four main parts, loosely based on the progress report. The INI report will further follow the structure of the Disability Strategy and the first part will therefore be divided into eight sub-categories. The second part “Further areas for action” is based on articles in the Convention and was selected in co-operation with the European Disability Forum (EDF). The third part follows the chapter on the EU institutions’ compliance with the Convention in the Stevens’ Report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with special regard to the Concluding Observations of the UN CRPD Committee.

**Proposed structure of report (initial draft)**

1. **Key areas for action**
   1.1. Accessibility
   1.2. Participation
   1.3. Equality
   1.4. Employment
   1.5. Education and training (including access to quality education and lifelong learning)
   1.6. Social protection
   1.7. Health
   1.8. External action
2. **Additional areas for action**
   2.1. Women and children with disabilities
   2.2. Awareness raising
   2.3. Legal capacity and living in the community
   2.4. Statistics and data collection
   2.5. Implementation and monitoring mechanisms (article 33 CRPD)
3. **Obligations within the EU institutions**
   3.1. Accessibility vis-a-vis citizens
   3.2. European Schools and inclusive education
   3.3. Recruitment and support at the workplace for staff with disabilities
   3.4. Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme and social protection policy for EU staff
   3.5. Staff with disabilities and their consultation within the EU institutions
4. **Gaps in the progress report vis-a-vis the Concluding Observations**
5. **Towards a comprehensive and effective 2030 Disability Strategy**
   5.1. Horizontal issues
   5.2. Key areas for action
   5.3. Additional areas for action

Stakeholder consultation/methodology:

In the spirit of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the rapporteur will and has already worked closely together with disability organisations, primarily with EDF, the European Disability Forum, and its members.

To maximise the contributions by disability organisations, the rapporteur, jointly with EDF, has decided to hold a small series of “Expert Dialogues”. They will take place at the European Parliament in the form of eight small workshops (= eight key priority areas) of no more than 10-15 disability experts, MEPs, and other relevant stakeholders. The meetings will be hosted by the rapporteur and chaired by different NGOs and will be open to any EDF member organisation and interested MEPs (primarily the rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs in the different committees).

The experts will discuss targeted questions and are expected to come up with a small number of precise paragraphs that feed directly into the report.

In consultation with EDF, the following chairs were identified:

1. Accessibility
   - European Blind Union
   - European Union of the Deaf
2. Participation
   - European Network on Independent Living
3. Equality
   - Equinet: European Network of Equality Bodies
4. Employment
   - EDF
5. Education and training
   - Eurochild
   - Autism Europe
   - Inclusion Europe
6. Social protection
   - Social Platform: The platform of European Social NGOs
7. Health
   - European Patients’ Platform
   - Mental Health Europe
   - International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (IF)
8. External action
   - CONCORD: the European NGO confederation for Relief and Development
   - CBM

The dates will be circulated as soon as possible to all involved MEPs and disability organisations.

After the Expert Dialogues, the output will be presented at the EMPL exchange of views with stakeholders to take place on either 12 or 13 July.

Accessibility
The rapporteur has worked together with the EMPL Committee secretariat to ensure all Committee meetings are accessible for citizens with disabilities, a practice that the rapporteur pioneered with the Stevens CRPD implementation report in 2016. This includes speech-to-text, sign language interpretation, and accessibility cards.

The rapporteur welcomes any input to provide any further accessibility to the public EMPL Committee meetings and will do its best to support the Committee secretariat to provide the highest level of accessibility for all citizens wishing to attend the meetings.

Conclusion

This working document serves to initiate fruitful debate with Members and relevant stakeholders and therefore only represents the initial position of the rapporteur, which will be further elaborated in the draft report to be published mid-July.

The rapporteur intends to continue working closely together with the rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs from all Committees concerned and looks forward to further constructive dialogue.