

EMPL Committee & the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



The aim of this document is to give general information concerning why and how the Parliament, and particularly the **Employment and Social Affairs Committee**, can improve the lives of persons with disabilities in the European Union and beyond.

There are **100 million persons with disabilities** (this number includes 99 million persons according to the [EU-SILC survey](#) of 2016 and [1 million persons estimated to be segregated in residential institutions](#) and therefore not counted on the survey). Persons with disabilities experience legal, physical and attitudinal barriers that hinder their independent living and full participation in all aspects of life on an equal basis with others.

European Disability Forum

The **European Disability Forum (EDF)** is an umbrella organisation of persons with disabilities that defends the interests of Europeans with disabilities. We are a strong, united voice of persons with disabilities in Europe that collaborates closely with the European Parliament in ensuring that the interests and needs of persons with disabilities are taken into account.

Disability Intergroup

The [Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament](#) is an informal grouping of MEPs interested in promoting the right policies for persons with disabilities within their work at Parliament and national level. It was established in 1980 and is an efficient network through which to communicate and coordinate work on disability policies. If you are interested in joining the Disability Intergroup, please contact alejandro.moledo@edf-feph.org.

UNCRPD

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** ([UNCRPD](#)) is an international human rights treaty ratified by the EU and all its Member States. It commits all who ratify it to implement and promote **the full realisation of all human rights for all persons with disabilities** through the adoption of **new political tools and review of existing policies**. In 2015 the CRPD Committee adopted specific recommendations to be followed by the EU in its [Concluding observations on the initial report of the EU](#).

The European Parliament is bound to take the UNCRPD into account in all its legislative work and processes. As a public entity, it is also obliged to ensure that citizens and personnel with disabilities have equal rights to their peers.

European Charter of Fundamental Rights

The **European Charter of Fundamental Rights** addresses EU institutions and national authorities when implementing EU law. Article 26 states that “the EU recognises and respects the right of persons with disabilities to benefit from measures designed to ensure their independence, social and occupational integration, and participation in the life of the community”. Article 21 prohibits any discrimination on the basis of disability. As such, the European Parliament has a double responsibility to ensure non-discrimination and promote the full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspect of life. [Read the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#)

Employment and Social Affairs - EMPL Committee

According to Eurostat, **only 50.6% of men with disabilities and 45.9% of women with disabilities are in employment**. For persons with disabilities with higher support needs, the employment rate drops to 28.6%, and these figures hide the reality of appalling working conditions, salaries and job security faced by countless persons with disabilities in the EU. Furthermore, the same dataset shows that on average over **30% of persons with disabilities in the EU are at risk of poverty and social exclusion**, 10 percentage points higher than the general population.

The figures are stark, and yet they only touch the surface of the real employment and social issues faced by persons with disabilities in Europe. It is for this reason that we at EDF see the EMPL Committee as being so crucial.

With the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, and the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs has the opportunity, and duty, to really advance the rights of persons with disabilities and improve their wellbeing and quality of life.

We also expect the EMPL Committee to work hand in hand with the PETI Committee in the [EU CRPD monitoring framework](#).

Political Priorities

- **European Disability Strategy 2020-2030:** Adopt a more ambitious strategy for the coming decade. We call on the support of this Committee for its adoption and for the strength of its subsequent implementation.
- **European Social Fund Plus:** Adopt a strong Regulation for ESF+ that will use EU funds to foster inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and improve opportunities.
- **European Pillar of Social Rights:** Concrete action on Principle 17 – Inclusion of people with disabilities.
- **Child guarantee:** Mainstream questions relating to children with disabilities into the Child Guarantee, ensuring that children with disabilities are all given the option of

accessing mainstream education with appropriate support for their needs, accessible and adapted healthcare, as well as adequate, accessible housing.

- **Freedom of movement:** Harmonise disability assessment recognition to allow persons with disabilities to enjoy freedom of movement and work abroad on an equal footing with others. Concrete EU-level action to ensure that all economically active persons with disabilities can exercise their freedom of movement, by coordinating national social security systems, including work-related benefits of people with disabilities who are or can be active in the labour market while exercising their freedom of movement.
- **Reasonable accommodation in the workplace:** Harmonise requirements across the EU for what employers are obliged to offer, and in turn what support governments must offer employers, in order to provide reasonable accommodations for workers with disabilities.
- **Fair salaries:** Put pressure on the Member States to ensure workers with disabilities are paid an appropriate/agreed wage on the same level as employees without disabilities, and never below minimum wages.
- **Working conditions:** Review health and safety regulations to adequately cover and address psychosocial risks factors in the workplace.
- **Social protection floor:** Promote inclusive social protection systems, such as guidelines for the Member States, on minimum levels of social protection needed to guarantee an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities.
- **EU Disability Card:** Adopt the EU Disability Card in all Member States, and extend its scope to include access to social services when moving to another EU country.

Useful resources

- [Your Rights in the EU](#)
- [Animated video on Article 27 of the UN CRPD \(reasonable accommodation\)](#)
- [Toolkit on article 27 of the UN CRPD](#)
- [Infographic: How to promote mental health in the workplace?](#)

Contact

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