

REGI 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 **Regional Development 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](#).

Regional Development – REGI Committee

The work of the REGI Committee has proven to be one of the most crucial for upholding the rights of persons with disabilities. The Committee has a say on how the Regional Development and Cohesion Funds are used across the EU. In the past, the Committee has been crucial in strengthening provisions ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities via EU funds and pushing Member States to divest from institutions and move towards community-based solutions.

Political Priorities

- **Common Provisions Regulation:** ensuring that the new CPR mentions accessibility for persons with disabilities as part of the mandatory criteria for the selection of operations, reinstates the promotion of non-discrimination and accessibility for persons with disabilities as a horizontal principle across Funds and includes NGOs and organisations of persons with disabilities in the partnership and multilevel governance.
- **Deinstitutionalisation:** Ensuring that EU funds prohibit investment in institutional care settings for persons with disabilities and prioritise funding and developing community-based services that promote inclusion and, wherever possible, independent living and personal assistance.
- **Accessible infrastructure:** Making sure that EU-funded physical structures, particularly through the European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Funds, fully apply with accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities, to ensure that they are truly useable by all Europeans, be they able-bodied or not.
- **Monitoring and implementation:** Putting pressure on the Commission to monitor the use of EU funds in the different Member States and intervene quickly in the case of misuses of funds that are not in line with the UNCRPD, including when it comes to ensure that Member States better monitor deinstitutionalisation programmes and gather data to ensure that persons with disabilities are benefitting from reforms and that the alternatives created



through these programmes actually support independent and community living, in line with Article 19 of the UNCRPD.

- **European Disability Strategy 2020-2030:** Over the past decade the Commission has been implementing its European Disability Strategy in order to mainstream disability issues into its policy making. Unlike when the first Strategy emerged, the EU and all of its Member States have now ratified the UNCRPD. In line with its obligations under the Convention, we are pushing for the EU to adopt a new, 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.

Useful resources

- [Your Rights in the EU](#)
- [Common European Guidelines on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care](#)
- [Mapping and Understanding Exclusion \(report\)](#)

Contact

[Haydn Hammersley](#): EDF Social Policy officer