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What is the aim of the Strategy?

- **Objectives:** It aims to ensure that persons with disabilities can experience **full social and economic inclusion on an equal basis** with others and live free from discrimination, in line with the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**
- **Approach:** It takes into account the **diversity of disability** (long-term physical, mental and intellectual or sensory impairments) addresses invisible disabilities, and promotes an **intersectional perspective** (multiple disadvantage, e.g. refugee children with disabilities)
- **Learning from experience:** the Strategy builds on the findings of the evaluation of the previous European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, taking into account **emerging and pressing policy needs**

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Why a (new) Strategy?

- The EU and all its Member States are a party to the UNCRPD
- The strategy **implements the obligations for the EU** under **the UNCRPD**
- Providing **support to EU Member States** in their national implementation of the UNCRPD
- It will help strengthen Europe's role as a **global partner** in combating inequalities
- EU institutions will **lead by example**



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Why a (new) Strategy?

- Disability policies high on the **EU agenda**
 - Building a Union of Equality in all of its senses – one of the EU priorities
 - Contributing to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights
- Many **EU citizens** affected
 - 87 million people have some form of disability, 1 in 2 of those aged over 65
 - Need for actions that promote an intersectional perspective, addressing specific barriers faced by persons with disabilities
 - Disability is a relative and evolving concept: disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers



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What is the current situation?



More than 1 million children and adults with disabilities aged less than 65 and **more than 2 million** aged 65 and over live in institutions



50.8% of persons with disabilities are in employment compared to **75%** without disabilities



20.3% young people with disabilities leave school early, but only **9.8%** of those without disabilities



28.4% of persons with disabilities are at risk of poverty and social exclusion compared to **18.4%** of persons without disabilities



64.3% of persons with disabilities aged 16+ have an internet connection at home compared to **87.9%** of persons without disabilities



National rules deprive **800 000 EU citizens with disabilities** of the right to participate in European Parliament elections justifying on the basis of their disabilities or mental health issues



4 times more persons with disabilities report unmet healthcare needs than those without disabilities



52% of persons with disabilities feel discriminated against



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What does the Strategy do?

- Combination of disability specific actions + disability mainstreaming
- 87 actions in total
- 7 Flagship initiatives:
 1. European resource centre **AccessibleEU** (2022);
 2. European **Disability Card** (by end of 2023);
 3. Guidance (2023) on **independent living** and **inclusion** in the community;
 4. European Quality Framework for **Social Services of Excellence** for persons with disabilities (2024);
 5. Package to **improve labour market** outcomes of persons with disabilities (2022);
 6. Disability **Platform** (2021);
 7. A renewed **HR strategy** to promote diversity and inclusion.



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How does the Strategy look?

It contains the following **priority areas**:

1. **Accessibility** – An enabler of rights, autonomy and equality;
 - The EU aims at building a barrier-free Europe in all kinds of environments
2. **Enjoying EU rights** (free movement, participation in the democratic process);
 - Persons with disabilities should enjoy all rights on an equal basis with others
3. **Decent quality of life and living independently** (e.g. independent living, skills, employment);
 - Persons with disabilities have an equal right to live independently and be included in the community
4. **Equal participation and non-discrimination** (e.g. access to justice, health, education);
 - Persons with disabilities have the right to protection from any form of discrimination and violence



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How does the Strategy look?

It contains the following **priority areas**:

5. **Promoting the rights of persons with disabilities globally**;
 - The EU will continue to uphold the human rights of persons with disabilities in all international relations
6. **Efficiently delivering the Strategy** (e.g. mainstreaming, EU funding);
 - The EU will systematically take into account the needs of persons with disabilities when designing policies
7. **The EU - Leading by example** as public administration (e.g. HR strategy, buildings);
 - The EU Institutions will step up their efforts towards a truly inclusive working environment
8. **Awareness, governance and measuring progress.**
 - The EU will work towards higher awareness and better monitoring



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European legislation on Accessibility

Thematic legislation

- Transport vehicles (low platform busses, rail, maritime)
- Rails TSI (built environment)
- Lifts
- Electronic Communication (ex 112, service information)
- Audiovisual media services
- Web Accessibility
- Terminals
- Electronic Signatures

Horizontal legislation

- European Accessibility Act
- Proposed: Draft Antidiscrimination legislation

Funding related legislation

- Public Procurement
- Public passenger transport services
- Structural Funds
- Trans-European Networks
- Common Implementing regulation External Action



- The Commission will:
- provide a practical guidance to MS to support the implementation of the accessibility obligations under the public procurement Directives;
- include accessibility and inclusiveness in the reinforced EU digital government strategy;
- review the passenger rights regulatory framework;
- launch an Inventory of Assets on rail infrastructure;
- review the Regulation on Union Guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network;
- revise the Urban Mobility Package to strengthen Sustainable Mobility Planning.



What is covered under the EAA?

- Accessibility requirements for carefully selected products and services
- Same accessibility requirements to be used in other EU law (for example Public Procurement)

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Products & services in the scope of the EAA

- Computers and operating systems
- ATMs, ticketing and check-in machines
- Telephones and smartphones
- TV equipment related to digital television services
- Telephony services – emergency communications & answer 112
- Access to audio-visual media services (AVMS) Air, bus, rail and waterborne passenger transport services
- Banking services
- E-books
- E-commerce
- Built environment

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Accessibility related standardization work at EU level

- **Mandate 376:** Accessibility requirements for public procurement of products and services in the **ICT** domain
- **Mandate 554:** Web accessibility Directive (WEB + Mobile Apps)
- **(H) EN 301 549**
- **Mandate 420:** Accessibility requirements for public procurement in the **Built Environment** (including **transport infrastructures**)

EN 17210

- **Mandate 473** to:
 - include Accessibility following Design For All in relevant standardization activities
 - Develop standards addressing accessibility following Design for all in the manufacturing and service delivery processes.
- **EN 17161**



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Other elements related to the scope

- **-Answering emergency communications to 112**
- **-Built environment (optional)**
- **-Public Procurement for Products and services in the EAA**
- **- EU Acts containing accessibility obligations**



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Other issues:

- **Related to the scope**

- Exemption micro enterprises for services
- Mitigating measures for micro enterprises for product:
 - -Reduction of administrative burden
 - -guidelines

- **Safeguards:**

- Disproportioned burden criteria



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Key provisions for products and services

- **Accessibility obligations** **Free movement of products and services** meeting the accessibility requirements
- Obligations for **manufacturers, authorized representatives, importers, distributors**(Decision 768/2008)
- Obligations for **service providers**
- **CE marking** for products (Regulation 765/ 2008)
- **Self-declaration of conformity** (lightest option)
- **Market surveillance (compliance, safeguards)**
Authority responsible for compliance of services (check, safeguards)



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Other Key elements

- **-Standards and technical specification**
- **-Enforcement and Penalties**
- **-Timeline for implementation**
- **-Report**
- **Annexes:**
 - Annex I – accessibility requirements and Functional performance criteria
 - Annex II – examples
 - Annex III – accessibility requirements for built environment



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What are the next steps?

- Creation of a **European Disability Platform** to better coordinate the implementation of the Strategy
- Development of a **monitoring framework** for the objectives and actions of the Strategy
- Systematic **involvement of persons with disabilities** and their representative organisations in the decision-making process.



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Thank you for your attention



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Further information

- European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0636:FIN:EN:PDF>
- European Accessibility Act Final text in OJ
- http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2019.151.01.0070.01.ENG
- European Accessibility Act - European Commission Proposal <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1202>
- EAA EUR-LEX texts
- <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/HIS/?uri=COM:2015:0615:FIN>
- Web Accessibility Directive
- <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/web-accessibility>



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