

Workshop

“Free movement and access to employment for persons with disabilities”

13 November 2023 – 12:30 to 17:00

Place: Ministry of Social Security, Floor: -2, Room: Saman & Microsoft Teams



Context

Belgium holds the Presidency of the Council of the EU during the first half of 2024. As the Belgian Presidency coincides with the end of the EU legislature and the term of office of the Von der Leyen Commission, this is the ideal time to take stock of the implementation of the European Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030 and identify opportunities for the upcoming legislature. To achieve this, the Belgian Presidency will organise a conference **“Towards full inclusion of persons with disabilities – the European Pillar of Social Rights and beyond”**. The conference will take place on the 19th of March at the Charlemagne Building of the European Commission in Brussels.

During the conference three topics will be discussed. A first panel “Linking national and European strategies for implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” was discussed during another workshop on the 24th of October. The other two panels addressed during this workshop will discuss the following topics:

- **“The right of free movement for persons with disabilities”**: This panel will explore practical obstacles that persons with disabilities face to move freely within the EU. We will look at how provisions for persons with disabilities are included in internal market legislation. Civil society will be a key player in this discussion. The panel will include a short presentation on the Commission’s proposal for a directive introducing the European Disability Card and discuss how accessibility requirements can enable free movement for persons with disabilities.
- **“Access to employment for persons with disabilities”**: Persons with disabilities have the right to work on an equal basis with everyone else. In addition, the 2021 action plan on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights set out the target that at least 78% of the population aged 20 to 64 should be in employment by 2030. This target cannot be reached without the inclusion of persons with disabilities. However, persons with disabilities face many obstacles in finding qualitative and sustainable employment, as well as retaining their employment. The barriers they face and policy options to address these will be discussed in this panel in the context of the Disability Employment Package. In 2024 the last deliverable of the package will be put forward by the Commission: the study on sheltered employment and pathways to the open labour market.

Objective

To further develop the topics of the three panels during the conference in March, the FPS Social Security organises two workshops with stakeholders and experts at Belgian and European level. The workshops will be held under Chatham House rules. The output will be used to further develop the panels of the conference in March.

During this preparatory workshop we will gather feedback on the initial draft of the background notes by Dr Angelina Atanasova (European social Observatory); An-Sofie Leenknecht (Consultant in disability rights) and Dr Julie Vinck (KU Leuven).

The final version of these document will serve as the background notes for the panels on free movement and access to employment during the conference in March. We encourage you to read through the note and look forward to your input during the discussion with regards to these topics. The notes are attached to the invitation.

Practical Information

Address: FPS Social Security, Finance Tower, Kruidtuinlaan/Boulevard du Jardin Botanique 50, 1000 Brussels (see map below how to get there). Someone will meet you at the reception and guide you to the room (Saman, level -2)

Teams meeting link: [Klik hier om deel te nemen aan de vergadering](#)

Agenda: see below.

Wi-Fi: If you are attending the workshop in person and would like to access the Wi-fi, you need to register to our Guestroam Wi-Fi on beforehand (see the access procedure attached to the invitation mail).

Lunch: For those attending in person we offer a lunch before the workshop, please let us know any dietary restrictions by filling out the form: <https://forms.office.com/e/yL3MrJVMkm> The lunch starts at 12:30.

Agenda

12.30-13.30	Registration & lunch
13.30-13.40	Introduction & Welcome
13.40-14.00	Presentation of the background note: <i>“Accessibility and freedom of movement for persons with disabilities”</i> + Q&A Dr. Angelina Atanasova, European Social Observatory An-Sofie Leenknecht, Consultant in disability rights
14.00-14.10	Presentation European Commission
14.10-14.20	Key points European Disability Forum
14.20-15.05	Discussion
15.05-15.20	Coffee Break
15.20-15.40	Presentation of the background note : <i>“Employment of persons with disabilities: indicators, reasonable accommodation and inactivity traps”</i> + Q&A Dr. Angelina Atanasova, European Social Observatory Dr. Julie Vinck, KU Leuven
15.40-15.50	Presentation European Commission
15.50-16.00	Key Points European Disability Forum
16.00-16.45	Discussion
16.45 – 17.00	Closing remarks and next steps

Financial Tower – How to get there?

