

UNIT 5 DISABILITY RIGHTS

EU COMMISSION'S DISABILITY STRATEGY

Justice Commissioner Vivianne Reding Unveils EU Commission's Disability Strategy For The Next Decade

Disabled Europeans must receive equal treatment and have equal access in all spheres of life is the main thrust of the European Commission's new disability strategy which was unveiled in Brussels earlier today.

One in six people in the European Union – around 80 million – have a disability that ranges from mild to severe. Over one third of people aged over 75 have disabilities that restrict them to some extent. These numbers are set to rise as the EU population grows progressively older. Most of these people are all too often prevented from fully participating in society and the economy because of physical or other barriers, as well as discrimination

While ambitious, doubts persist over the impact the strategy would have on the ground. Nevertheless, it is a comprehensive strategy that sets out how European institutions and member states should look to empower Europeans with disabilities. A key goal of the Commission's strategy is to align the EU with the United Nations Convention on disability. So far the track record for Europe has been rather poor. Even though all 27 member states signed up to the convention in 2007, only 16 have ratified it so far.

“To fully participate in our society and economy, people with disabilities need to have easier access to public buildings, public transport and to digital services,” Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding said.

According to the Commission, this new strategy would not only address societal challenges but also have a significant economic impact - the current estimated annual market for assistive devices and services in the EU is 30 billion Euros which would grow considerably, the Commission expects.

The EU strategy focuses on empowering people with disabilities to enjoy their rights on an equal basis with others and on removing obstacles in everyday life. The main actions are:

- Accessibility initiative: considering how to use standardisation, public procurement or state aid rules to make all goods and services accessible to people with disabilities while fostering an EU market for assistive devices (“European Accessibility Act”). This market is expected to grow

considerably in the coming years, following the experience in the United States;

- Participation: making sure that persons with disabilities and their families exercise their EU citizenship rights on an equal footing through the mutual recognition of disability cards and related entitlements; facilitating the use of sign language and Braille when exercising EU citizens' electoral rights or dealing with EU institutions; promoting an accessible format of websites and copyrighted works, such as books;

- Funding: ensuring that EU programmes and funds in policy areas relevant to people with disabilities are used to promote sound working conditions for professional and informal care providers and develop personal-assistance schemes;

- More cooperation between Member States (through the High Level Group on Disability) and civil society: providing a forum for the exchange of data and policy coordination, in particular on the portability of rights, such as the right to personal assistance;

- Awareness-raising: raising public awareness of disability and accessibility, such as through the European award for accessible cities;

- Data collection and monitoring: improving knowledge about the situation of people with disabilities in Europe and the barriers they face in their everyday lives while also identifying and promoting successful support structures put in place by Member States at national level.

Commissioner Reding added: "A very effective option for achieving this is to develop standards for accessible goods and services at European level and to use public procurement to promote accessible public buildings. Similar measures have been both a societal and an economic success in the United States. We also need to ensure that people do not face additional hurdles when they cross a border: a person with a recognised disability who decides to move to another country should be able to enjoy the same benefits as in his home country, such as a free or reduced-cost public transport. My goal is a truly barrier-free Europe for persons with disabilities by 2020."

e-Gov Monitor

<http://www.egovmonitor.com/node/39432>

GLOSSARY

| | |
|---|---|
| thrust = senso, significato | to exercise = esercitare, far valere |
| to unveil = presentare | entitlement = diritto |
| to be set to = stare per | copyrighted = protetto da copyright |
| to set out = illustrare, esporre | funding = finanziamento |
| so far = finora | sound = solido |
| track record = precedente | to raise awareness = sensibilizzare |
| device = dispositivo, congegno | award = premio |
| procurement = approvvigionamento | barrier = barriera |
| aid = aiuto | hurdle = ostacolo |
| to foster = incoraggiare | |

LANGUAGE NOTES

The prepositions *over* and *under* are used to indicate age: *As many as 7.5 million Facebook users are under the legal age of 13.*

All too often. This expression is used to express sadness or regret because something happens more often than you think it should: *All too often parents leave their children at home alone* (fin troppo spesso).

An *assistive device* is any device designed or adapted to help people with physical or emotional disorders to perform actions, tasks, and activities.

The phrase *on an equal footing* means “in the same state or condition”: *The new law puts women on an equal legal footing with men.*

The adjective *social* refers broadly to interpersonal relationships: *He’s got no social skills.* The adjective *societal* has a more restricted meaning and refers to the structure, organization, or functioning of society: *The common factors that contribute to societal collapse are economic, environmental, social and cultural.*

COMPREHENSION

Say whether the following statements are True or False.

1. The main aim of the Strategy is to remove all barriers for the disabled in the next 2 decades.
2. The number of disabled people in the EU is increasing.

3. All members of the EU respect the UN Convention on disability.
4. The introduction of the strategy could favour the economy in the EU.
5. The US is expected to follow the EU's example.

VOCABULARY

Exercise 1 Find words in text that mean the following:

1. major
2. past performance
3. promoting
4. prerogatives
5. native

Exercise 2 Complete the sentences with the adjective form of the word in brackets.

1. The company made their website _____ for people with impaired vision. (*to access*)
2. Poverty is a serious _____ problem in the US. (*society*)
3. There are many _____ relationships which exist within an organisation (*to work*)
4. These websites can provide you with _____ information on disability insurance. (*to add*)
5. A lawyer will make a _____ disability claim more likely. (*to succeed*)

Exercise 3 Morphology. The suffix *-free* is added to nouns to form an adjective: *a barrier-free Europe*. Complete the sentences with the most appropriate word from the box.

| | | | | |
|------|----------|------|-------|------|
| duty | interest | rent | sugar | work |
|------|----------|------|-------|------|

1. They agreed to let us live in the flat _____-free.
2. Many banks are now offering _____-free overdrafts to students.

3. Food marketers spend millions to attract the health-conscious consumer by launching _____-free food.
4. At _____-free shops everyone can discover fantastic savings compared to high street prices on a wide range of products.
5. More than 70 organisations are urging EU authorities to ensure that Sunday is a _____-free day.

PARALYMPICS

In 1948, Sir Ludwig Guttmann organized a sports competition involving World War II veterans with a spinal cord injury in Stoke Mandeville, England. Four years later, competitors from the Netherlands joined the games and an international movement was born. Olympic style games for athletes with a disability were organized for the first time in Rome in 1960, now called Paralympics. In Toronto in 1976, other disability groups were added and the idea of merging together different disability groups for international sport competitions was born. In the same year, the first Paralympic Winter Games took place in Sweden.

Today, the Paralympics are elite sport events for athletes with a disability. They emphasize, however, the participants' athletic achievements rather than their disability. The movement has grown dramatically since its first days. The number of athletes participating in Summer Paralympic Games has increased from 400 athletes from 23 countries in Rome in 1960 to 3,951 athletes from 146 countries in Beijing in 2008.

The Paralympic Games have always been held in the same year as the Olympic Games. Since the Seoul 1988 Paralympic Games and the Albertville 1992 Winter Paralympic Games they have also taken place at the same venues as the Olympics. On 19 June 2001, an agreement was signed between the IOC and the IPC securing this practice for the future. From the 2012 bid process onwards, the host city chosen to host the Olympic Games will be obliged to also host the Paralympics.

GAMES PRINCIPLES

1. Quality

The essential principles with respect to grade of excellence; accomplishment and/or attainment.

Elite – Representing the highest athlete performances in the context of the specific sport.

Exciting – Providing a vibrant and energizing atmosphere that is entertaining in the context of each sport, yet creates a collective motivational atmosphere that is attractive to spectators and media.

Inspirational – Creating a distinct opportunity for personal experience/reflection that acts as a catalyst for change through showcasing the extraordinary perseverance of the human spirit through athleticism.

Fair Play – Driving collective values of the IPC ensuring that the spirit of fair play prevails, that the health risks of athletes are managed, that fundamental ethical principles are upheld, that prejudice and discrimination are not tolerated and that all forms of cheating are discouraged and dealt with sternly.

2. Quantity

The principles that establish parameters and/or conditions necessary for success.

Viable – Ensuring operational and programmatic capability in the context of the IPC's obligations to its relationship with the IOC and considering the impact on the POC/OCOG (e.g. financially, cost effective, manageable, number of training and competition venues, safety, risk management).

Sustainable/Dynamic – Ensuring a healthy and stable programme (components of the sport) that allows forecasting (foresight) and ongoing evaluation. – “Stable enough to be sustainable, and dynamic enough to meet the needs of the present and the future.”

3. Universality

The collective principles or conditions that ensure and reflect a diverse movement.

Equitable – ensuring that gender representation and the type and extent of disabilities represented at the Games are taken as a fundamental factor in establishing the Games framework.

Global – Establishing a framework that strives to ensure regional representation and global nature of the Games.

Balance – Weighing and positioning the types of sports and competitors included based on the nature of the sports/disciplines (e.g. individual versus team; power versus precision; speed versus endurance, combat versus artistic).

International Paralympic Committee

http://www.paralympic.org/Paralympic_Games/

GLOSSARY

| | |
|--|--|
| *injury = infortunio | to drive (drove, driven) = trasmettere |
| to join = unirsi a | |
| to merge = fondere, incorporare | to manage = gestire, amministrare |
| to emphasize = sottolineare | to uphold (upheld, upheld) = difendere, sostenere |
| achievement = successo | cheating = imbroglio |
| to take (took, taken) place = avere luogo | to deal (dealt, dealt) with = trattare |
| venue = luogo, sede | sternly = severamente |
| to host = ospitare | viable = fattibile |
| accomplishment = risultato | forecasting = previsione |
| attainment = raggiungimento | foresight = lungimiranza |
| performance = prestazione, rendimento | equitable = equo, giusto |
| entertaining = divertente, piacevole | to strive (strove, striven) = cercare, sforzarsi |
| to showcase = mettere in mostra | to weigh = soppesare |
| athleticism = atleticità | speed = velocità |

LANGUAGE NOTES

A *host* is a person who receives or entertains other people as guests; *hostess* is the feminine form (padrone/a di casa). It is also the presenter of a radio or television programme (conduttore/conduttrice). An *air hostess* works on an airplane, although the term *flight assistant* is more commonly used today (assistente di volo). A *guest* is a person who is invited to visit someone's home or attend a social or official function (ospite, invitato).

Note the difference in pronunciation between the adjective *able* (to be able): /'eɪbl/ and the suffix *-able*: /əbl/.

The verb *to drive* (guidare) can also be used to mean "to propel, to force to move in a particular direction" (spingere, condurre): *He was driven by ambition; a data-driven study.*

The Latin word *versus* is used in English to link two or more opposing or contrasting elements. The abbreviated forms *v.* or *vs.* are often used: *Roe v. Wade was a landmark controversial decision by the United States Supreme Court on the issue of abortion.*

Note the difference between *security* "a feeling of being safe and free from worry": *He loves the security of a loving family* and *safety* "the state of being safe from harm": *Your personal safety is at risk with your violent husband.*

COMPREHENSION

1. Who were the first competitors to take part in a competition for the disabled?
2. When were athletes with different disabilities first grouped together?
3. When and where are the Paralympic games held?
4. What is meant by “viable” as regards the Paralympics principles for quantity?
5. What is the Paralympics framework as regards equitable principles?

VOCABULARY

Exercise 4 Reasonable adjustments

Under the Equality Act 2010, service providers have to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people in the way they deliver their services. Match the adjustments with the person they are designed to assist.

1. A person who is deaf or hard of hearing _____
 2. A person with a mental health condition _____
 3. A person with a learning disability _____
 4. A person with a mobility impairment _____
 5. A person who is blind or has vision impairment _____
- a. ‘To do’ lists or checklists
 b. Additional training, supervision and support
 c. Larger, well-defined signage
 d. Ramp at the entrance to a building which has steps
 e. Text telephone

Exercise 5 Verbs and sports

The verb *play* is used with ball sports or competitive games where we play against another person; *do* is used for a recreational activity or a non-team sport that does not use a ball; *go* is used with activities that end in *-ing*.

Complete the sentences with the correct verb: *play, do* or *go*.

1. I like to _____ bowling.
2. Jim likes to _____ basketball.
3. Mary likes to _____ skiing.
4. We like to _____ hiking.
5. They usually _____ karate.

Exercise 6 Match each icon with the sport it represents.



Archery Boccia Equestrian Rowing Shooting
 Swimming Table Tennis Wheelchair Basketball

Disabilities and Political Correctness

When referring to people with disabilities, it is important to avoid terms that may cause offence. Here is a list of a few terms to use and not to use:

Do not use

cripple
 handicap
 mental handicap
 confined to a wheelchair
 deaf and dumb
 victim of, suffering from
 amputee
 blind

Preferred Use

disabled person, differently abled person
 disability
 person with learning difficulties
 wheelchair user
 deaf, partially deaf, hard of hearing
 person who has, person with
 person who has lost a limb
 person with impaired vision

Exercise 7 Match these light-hearted politically correct terms:

- | | |
|-----------|----------------------------|
| 1. bald | a. differently weighted |
| 2. dead | b. mental explorer |
| 3. dwarf | c. biologically challenged |
| 4. insane | d. comb-free |
| 5. fat | e. vertically challenged |

DISCUSSION

Consider the following questions, and discuss them with a partner.

How can we ensure disabled people are safe and feel like they fully belong in their communities?

How can disabled people be equipped with the skills to play an active role in society?

How can we ensure that disabled people are in control of their own lives?

How can we reform the welfare state so that it supports independence rather than creating dependence?