



# 10 Disability Priorities for the Hungarian Presidency 2024

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**April 2024**



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## Introduction

The European Disability Forum is an independent umbrella organisation of persons with disabilities that represents the interests of more than 100 million Europeans with disabilities. EDF is a unique platform which brings together representative organisations of persons with disabilities from across Europe, run by persons with disabilities and their families. EDF is a member of the Social Platform and works closely to the European institutions, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. In this document, you will find a short summary of policy items that will be decided or discussed under the Hungarian Presidency. We are looking forward to continued discussions throughout the 6-month Presidency's term with the different services involved at national level and in Brussels, in order to contribute to advancing the rights of persons with disabilities.

## Glossary

**Concluding observations (of the CRPD Committee):** document adopted by the CRPD Committee as part of the review mechanisms of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in States Parties. The document contains areas of concerns and recommendations for improvement.

**Discrimination:** any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of one or several grounds (sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc.) which damage or nullify the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field (see Chapter 2).

**Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs):** Organisations comprising a majority of persons with disabilities that represent the interests and defend the human rights of persons with disabilities through self-representation and advocacy.

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD):** an international human rights treaty that reaffirms that all persons with disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It clarifies that all persons with disabilities have the right to participate in civil, political, economic, social and cultural life of the community just as anyone else.



## Top 10 Disability Priorities

### 1. Implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is ratified by the European Union and all its Member States. Disability rights must be therefore considered in the development, implementation, monitoring and review of all policies and legislation.

#### EDF Recommendations:

- Create a focal point within the Council for the implementation of the CRPD and a Disability Working Party in the Council preparatory bodies.
- Mainstream disability issues in all new and revised EU legislation and in relevant policies affecting the lives of persons with disabilities.
- Hold a joint preparatory meeting in COHOM with the Commission and European Parliament in advance of the EU review by the CRPD Committee (foreseen in March 2025), including to ensure that the Council effectively contribute to the process.

#### Additional information:

- [Text of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [2015 Concluding Observations of the CRPD Committee to the EU](#)



## 2. A new push for the EU Disability Rights Strategy 2025-2030

The EU Disability Rights Strategy 2021-2030 is almost at its halfway mark. The first half proved to be very successful and almost all initiatives have been implemented on schedule. Now it is time to think about the second half of the strategy and what can still be achieved. New actions have to be defined to push even further for inclusion of persons with disabilities in the EU.

### **EDF Recommendations:**

- nominate the Council's disability coordinator, as foreseen in the Strategy, and make it publicly known. Participate in the Disability Platform.
- call on the Commission to commit to and devise new flagship initiatives and actions for the second half of the Strategy until 2030
- call upon the Commission to focus not only on new actions, but also on the strict implementation of those from the first half of the Strategy, such as the EU Disability Card and Disability Parking Card.
- commit to follow-up on actions for Member States which are part of the Strategy
- make reference to the flagship initiatives, highlighting next steps from the Council to support their full implementation.

### **Additional information:**

- [EDF Position on the Disability Rights Strategy 2021-2030](#)



### 3. Promote equal rights

Persons with disabilities continue to face discrimination in their daily lives, in employment, education, access to health and good and services. Persons with disabilities are also victims of intersectional and multiple forms of discrimination. For example, the 60 million women and girls with disabilities in Europe can face intersectional discrimination based on both gender and disability. They are more likely to be marginalised and excluded in all fields of life, included education and employment, to live in poverty and become victims of crime, including violence.

#### **EDF recommendations:**

- Support the appointment of an EU Commissioner with a strong mandate for Equality and Fundamental Rights.
- Establish an Equality configuration within the Council.
- Adopt the Horizontal Equal Treatment Directive.
- Ensure disability is mainstreamed in the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy and Victims' Rights Strategy, and that intersectional perspectives, including the perspectives of women and girls with disabilities, are included in the implementation of the Disability Rights Strategy.
- Support the implementation of the Istanbul Convention on violence against women by the EU, add violence against women and hate speech and hate crime to the list of EU crimes and support the transposition of the EU Directive on combating violence against women, and adoption of the revised EU Directive on Victims' Rights.
- Ensure the next EU budget properly funds civil society organisations working on equality, non-discrimination and anti-racism.
- Oppose to the adoption by the Council of Europe of the draft additional protocol to the Oviedo Convention on involuntary treatment and placement, through an informed discussion in COHOM following the duty of sincere cooperation of EU Member States in implementation of the CRPD
- Ensure discrimination is also addressed in the work of the EU in external action, international cooperation and humanitarian action.

#### **Additional information:**

- [9 organisations joint statement: "Building an inclusive European Union of Equality"](#)
- [EDF position and recommendation on hate speech and hate crimes](#)
- [EDF position paper on violence against women and girls with disabilities](#)
- [EDF MHE campaign against the adoption of the draft additional protocol to the Oviedo Convention](#)





## 4. Transparent and participatory decision-making

Persons with disabilities are currently excluded from the decision-making procedure at the level of the Council. The lack of timely, accessible information and consultation is a breach of the CRPD and leads to non-compliant EU legislation. This needs to be fixed. Furthermore, all meetings and events of the Presidency both on-line and in person should be accessible for persons with disabilities.

### **EDF Recommendations:**

- Meetings and decisions of Working Parties and COREPER should be public, made immediately available in accessible formats. Live-stream meetings of all Council configurations; publish full agendas ahead of meetings; publish full meetings and decisions immediately after
- Actively involve Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) in the decision-making procedure. Invite civil society representatives to attend meetings and present policy positions
- Make all Presidency events, both online and in person, fully accessible (see our guidance below)
- Make all contact details of Council secretariat staff as well as staff of the Permanent Representations public on the "EU Who is Who" website
- Use our "Presidency Scorecard" system to raise awareness of inclusion and accessibility among staff and decision-makers

### **Additional information:**

- [EDF Guide on Accessible Meetings](#)
- [EDF Guide on Accessible Online Meetings](#)



## 5. Protect Social Rights

EDF is working to keep up the momentum of the Social Pillar and advocates in the areas of access to employment, inclusive education, social protection, fighting poverty and social exclusion, as well as de-institutionalisation and the right to live in the community. We would like the future Multiannual Financial Framework to be key in promoting these rights across the EU, with a particular focus on marginalised groups such as persons with disabilities.

### **EDF Recommendations:**

- Establish an “Employment and Skills Guarantee” that has a clear intersectional approach and also focuses on supporting and increasing the employment of women with disabilities
- Ensure that EU funds supporting social inclusion, particularly the European Social Fund Plus, do not suffer funding cuts in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and are able to be more easily useable for organisations across the EU, with less bureaucracy and co-financing.
- Promote the right to retain disability-related social rights, such as disability allowance, for persons with disabilities who take up paid work in the EU Member States.
- Work for better disaggregated data collection on persons with disabilities, including on people living in institutions.

### **Additional information:**

- [EDF Human Rights Report on Poverty and Social Exclusion \(2020\)](#)
- [EDF Human Rights Report on the Right to Work \(2023\)](#)
- [Disability and Gender Gaps: Addressing unequal employment of women with disabilities](#)





## 6. Make freedom of movement a reality

Freedom of movement of persons is one of the 4 pillars of the EU but for persons with disabilities, it only exists in theory. There are still too many obstacles to move freely between the different Member States to work or study.

The lack of portability of social security and disability benefits, the lack of recognition of disability assessment status, and lack of accessibility provisions under European exchange programmes are some of the problems persons with disabilities encounter every day.

The European Disability Card will play a part in improving freedom of movement, even though it will not solve the problem by itself. The same is true for inclusive ERASMUS+ and Solidarity Corps Programmes.

### **EDF Recommendations:**

- Officially adopt the European Disability Card proposals, including the one on Third Country Nationals, based on the provisional agreement reached under the Belgian Presidency
- Align the disability assessment procedures and certification, based on a holistic approach that takes into account the person's actual needs and includes them fully in their own assessment as prescribed by the CRPD, of disability status to allow mutually recognition between EU Member States
- Ensure that the proposal for a revised Regulation on ERASMUS+ and Solidarity Corps are disability inclusive
- Provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities under the ERASMUS+ and Solidarity Corps to access the programmes on an equal basis with others, and provide all the necessary information in accessible formats.

### **Additional information:**

- [EDF web page on the European Disability Card](#)



## 7. Accessible ICT and the Digital Single Market

Accessible technologies can enable access to the labour market, an independent life, and participation in all aspects of society. Accessibility is best achieved and most cost effective when incorporated from the outset, and it also represents a potential business opportunity. Guidelines and standards to address accessibility are already in place with benefits for all users. However, when they are available, affordable and accessible, persons with disabilities use ICTs to a greater extent than their peers to overcome some of the barriers they find in the offline world.

### **EDF Recommendations:**

- Support the implementation of the European Accessibility Act, and make sure to refer to it in other policy files which can benefit from having accessibility requirements
- Support the implementation of the Web Accessibility Directive
- Support the implementation of the Audio-Visual Media Services Directive
- Support the implementation of the European Electronic Communications Code
- Ensure any step forward in the Digital Transition takes into consideration accessibility for and the perspective of persons with disabilities.

### **Additional information:**

- [EDF Toolkit on the transposition of the European Accessibility Act](#)
- [EDF Position on the DSA and DMA](#)
- [EDF recommendations for Artificial Intelligence that does not discriminate](#)
- [Red Lines for the use of Artificial Intelligence](#)
- [“Plug and Pray?” – A Disability Perspective on Artificial Intelligence, Automated Decision-Making, and Emerging Technologies](#)

## 8. Accessibility of transport and Passenger' Rights

Accessibility of vehicles, stations, stops, and infrastructure is necessary. We already have EU legislation on rail accessibility and on passengers' rights, but there are still many gaps that need to be filled. Especially in urban transport there are currently hardly any EU level accessibility requirements or rights for passengers. Existing legislation also needs to be implemented and enforced more strictly to allow independent, spontaneous travel for everyone.

### EDF recommendations:

- Strengthen and expand the disability-related provisions in the two new Passenger Rights proposals to eliminate the denial of boarding and eliminate the liability restrictions on loss, damage, or destruction of mobility equipment (if there is no progress on revising Regulation 1107/2004). Attention should also be paid to ways of improving implementation, monitoring and enforcement of existing rights.
- Adopt the Air Passengers' Rights Regulation (261/2004) and waive the liability restrictions of airlines in case of loss, damage, or destruction of mobility equipment for persons with disabilities: We ask the Council to ensure that the liability restrictions of airlines in case of loss, damage, or destruction of mobility equipment are waived for persons with disabilities. EDF supports the requirement proposed by the European Commission to give persons with disabilities the possibility to fill out a special declaration of interest free of charge.
- Take the opportunity to use the upcoming TSI Revision Package to address big structural accessibility issues for rail transport.
- Establish a multimodal, seamless and accessible travel chain and ticketing system that will enable persons with disabilities to travel spontaneously and independently.
- Ensure that the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive makes accessible charging and refuelling of vehicles compulsory

### Additional information:

- [EDF position on the Multimodal Passenger Rights Regulation](#)
- [EDF position on the Enforcement of Passenger Rights Regulation](#)
- [EDF priorities for the revision of TSI – PRM](#)
- [EDF position on Air Passengers' Rights](#)

## 9. An inclusive Green Deal for Europe

Persons with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis, but the measures of the EU Green Deal also have the potential to benefit persons with disabilities directly. We need a “just transition” to make sure that the Green Deal brings about also social change and increases accessibility and affordability especially of transport and housing.

### EDF recommendations:

- Ensure that the revised Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) is implement with a view to improving accessibility of buildings in the Member States
- The Just Transition Fund and the Social Climate Fund need to live up their names and benefit persons with disabilities, for example in training and re-skilling initiatives, but also in designing and constructing sustainable and accessible infrastructure and buildings. Member States need to mainstream disability issues in the National Implementation Plans.
- The “Green Deal 2.0” has to become a Green **and** Social Deal – the impact of EU policies to improve sustainability also have to benefit EU citizens and should not create any new barriers for persons with disabilities.

### Additional information:

- [Joint Statement with the Just Transition Alliance on the Social Climate Fund](#)
- [COP 28 – the disability movement calls for inclusive climate action](#) (website article)

## 10. Champion the rights of persons with disabilities worldwide

The EU is the only regional body in the world to have ratified the CRPD. Globally, it is also one of the largest donors of overseas development assistance (ODA) and a major trade partner of numerous countries in the global south. The EU must lead by example and must apply its leadership as a champion of the rights of persons with disabilities where there is the greatest added value to generate substantial changes.

### EDF recommendations:

- Actively engage with persons with disabilities and OPDs i as experts to guide the work of the EU globally.
- Ensure that the EU's external delegations are inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities and include local OPDs in human rights dialogues.
- Ensure staff in EU external delegations receive training on disability issues, the CRPD and the human rights of persons with disabilities, including women and girls with disabilities, in the areas of international cooperation, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action.
- Invest in spreading awareness of disability rights in all countries beyond the EU where European funds are used.
- Ensure a strong engagement of the EU in all its international engagement including within the bilateral and multilateral donors network called the "Global Action on Disability (GLAD) network" as well as in the preparation of the next Global Disability Summit 2025, organised by Germany and Jordan.
- Ensure the full and effective implementation of the Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction (DRR) 2015-2030, by using the Sendai framework EU action plan and its four priorities.

### Additional Information:

- [Toolkit for EU Delegations – The inclusion of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities](#) (February 2023)
- [Toolkit for DPOs – Engaging with the Delegations of the European Union around the world](#) (February 2023)
- [EDF Guidance note on the role of European organisations of persons with disabilities in International Cooperation](#) (December 2019)



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