

Declaration of the EU Member States:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain

on Raising Awareness of Persons with Disabilities.

Poland

Warsaw, June 30, 2025.

Following the United Nations **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**, to which the European Union and all its Member States are party to and considering that the aforementioned Convention is an international human rights treaty that promotes and protect the rights of persons with disabilities with a view to ensure equality and inclusion of persons with disabilities;

Noting that since **the signatory countries** of this Declaration are Member States of the European Union that have ratified the aforementioned Convention, we wish to contribute to its promotion by raising awareness about persons with disabilities in accordance with Article 8 of the CRPD, according to which States Parties undertake to take immediate, effective and appropriate measures to raise public awareness of issues affecting persons with disabilities, as well as measures to strengthen respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities;

Following the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030¹ as the main tool to implement the UNCRPD at European level. The Strategy sets the priorities and the framework for the joint work of the EU and the Member States to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in the EU and beyond in line with the Convention. The implementation of this Strategy will be achieved through a strong commitment by the Member States, by promoting policies and actions that will bring about accessible environments, inclusive education systems as well as health care systems of high quality and effective pathways to fair employment for persons with disabilities. In addition, the strategy indicates the commitment that the Commission will work with Member States to complement and support national campaigns, to strengthen awareness-raising and to combat stereotypes around disability;

Referring to the European Parliament Resolution of 13 December 2022 towards equal rights for persons with disabilities², which stresses that the exercise of the right to work by persons with disabilities is closely linked to measures to combat direct and indirect

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2021%3A101%3AFIN#PP4Contents>

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0435_EN.pdf

discrimination, and therefore encourages the Commission and Member States to introduce effective and concrete measures to promote equality, diversity, including through awareness raising and a barrier-free environment;

We, the Member States of the European Union, during the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, hereby undertake:

1. Strongly encourage all national mainstream media to portray persons with disabilities in a way that is consistent with the purpose of the UN CRPD and thus respects the human rights of persons with disabilities while respecting the effective editorial freedom and independence of media service providers in the exercise of their professional activities.

Under the Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities, the European Commission and Member States committed to work together to combat stereotyping and prejudice and raise awareness about persons with disabilities, in line with the Convention;

2. Strive to ensure that disability in the mainstream media is portrayed as part of everyday life regarding persons with disabilities and to foster respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Efforts should be made to ensure that persons with disabilities regularly appear on television, radio and social media as well as in the written press in everyday circumstances, not necessarily related to disability, on an equal basis with others in order to raise awareness among the society.

It should be noted that stories presented in the media have a huge impact on public opinion, including those of persons with disabilities. There are still few persons with disabilities who regularly appear in the media, and when they do, they are often portrayed in inappropriate and stereotypical ways. Persons with disabilities are most often shown in the context of charity or medical treatment and are thus treated as people in need of help or support and not portrayed as integral participants of society. Television, written press, radio and social media are tools that can be crucial in raising awareness about persons with disabilities. The media can play a huge role in counteracting the stigmatization of persons with disabilities and are able to influence the change of societal misconceptions which will significantly contribute to the inclusion of persons with disabilities into society on an equal basis with others.

3. Declare their intention to conduct regular public campaigns, in particular in the public press, radio and television as well as on social media in their Member States to raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and their social and professional potential.

In accordance with Article 8 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and as underlined in Objective 9 “Awareness, governance and measuring progress” of the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, Parties undertake to adopt immediate, effective and appropriate measures to raise awareness, combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices and promote awareness of the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities. The measures to this end include, inter alia, initiating and maintaining effective public awareness campaigns designed to:

- nurture receptiveness to the rights of persons with disabilities.
- promote positive perceptions and greater social awareness towards persons with disabilities.
- promote recognition of the skills, merits and abilities of persons with disabilities, and of their contributions to the workplace and labour market.

4. Promote the Disability Employment Package, which is a set of guidelines and good practices, covering all stages of employment, from recruitment to retention, and targeting both policymakers and practitioners such as public employment services, employers and trade unions.

All the Disability Employment Package deliverables have now been published by the Commission³. The package aims to support Member States in improving the overall employment conditions for persons with disabilities in the EU. Increasing opportunities for persons with disabilities in the open labour market can be achieved by building awareness among employers of the career potential of persons with disabilities and among public employment services.

It is important to raise awareness of the potential of persons with disabilities and highlight their contributions in the workplace and labour market.

5. Promote the “Guidance on independent living and inclusion in the community of persons with disabilities in the context of EU funding”⁴, which provide a set of guidelines on how to promote the right of persons with disabilities to live independently and be included in the community.

The Commission adopted a notice “Guidance on independent living and inclusion in the community of persons with disabilities in the context of EU funding”, which recommends measures to promote independent living by improving and promoting support services for independent living. The guidance provides practical

³ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/disability/union-equality-strategy-rights-persons-disabilities-2021-2030/disability-employment-package-improve-labour-market-outcomes-persons-disabilities_en

⁴ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C_202407188

recommendations to Member States and stakeholders to accelerate the transition from institutional care to community-based services and independent living for persons with disabilities.

6. Support the implementation of the European Accessibility Act⁵, in particular, enforcing media providers must ensure that the services used to deliver the content, and their functions provide equal access for persons with disabilities.

The European Accessibility Act (EAA) is a Directive that aims to improve the functioning of the internal market for accessible products and services, by removing barriers created by divergent rules in Member States. The EAA covers the provision of access to audiovisual media services, which may include websites, web-based applications, set-top box-based applications, downloadable applications, mobile device-based services, including mobile applications and related media players, and connected television.

In our leadership capacity, we pledge a strong involvement in promoting national policies that are consistent with the EU Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32019L0882>