

**“L’Europa dei diritti e dei doveri
nell’ambito delle opportunità”**

**“FOR DIVERSITY,
AGAINST DISCRIMINATION”**



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FOR DIVERSITY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

1. Premise :

This project provides information on discrimination and diversity issues as part of the 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination.' information campaign. The campaign is run by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and is funded through **PROGRESS**, the EU's employment and social solidarity programme.

The campaign's work focuses on the five grounds of discrimination which are covered by two EU Directives:

- The **Employment Equality Directive** protects everyone in the EU from discrimination based on age, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief in the workplace
- The **Racial Equality Directive** prohibits discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin in the workplace as well as in other areas of life such as education, social security, healthcare and access to goods and services

Measures to combat discrimination based on a person's gender are covered by other EU initiatives funded through **PROGRESS**.

Aims of the campaign

The campaign aims to raise awareness of discrimination and increase understanding of the EU laws which exist to protect us all. It also strives to generate debate on the themes of diversity and discrimination and in particular on how people in Europe stand to gain from greater equality. Through its activities, the campaign works to convey the message to as many people as possible that a diverse Europe is something to be valued, and that a life free from discrimination is a fundamental right in the EU. In addition it aims to inform and empower people to combat discrimination wherever they see it in their everyday lives.

Working across the EU

The campaign works with all stakeholders engaged in the fight against discrimination by creating partnerships between representatives from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), business, employee associations, trade unions and regional and national authorities. This cooperation leads to the sharing of expertise and the development of new ways to fight discrimination and promote



2. We and diversity:

Diversity and also helps to ensure that awareness-raising activities reach the right audience. Along with European-wide activities, the campaign links up with events taking place in all EU Member States, such as business and job fairs, cultural festivals, conferences and seminars.

Since its launch in 2003, the campaign has brought together around 500 organisations and organised hundreds of informative, creative and entertaining activities.

Europe is home to a wide variety of people. This diversity brings **richness** to our cultures, economies and societies. The EU laws prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of **racial or ethnic origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief** in the workplace and on the **grounds of racial or ethnic origin** in all areas of life provide protection for all members of society.

Some people may be discriminated against on more than one of these grounds at the same time which is known as **multiple discrimination**. For example, someone who is older and disabled, young and from a racial or ethnic minority, or gay and catholic may be more likely to face discrimination on multiple grounds.

Despite the existence of European laws, a Eurobarometer survey, *Discrimination in the EU* in 2009, published in late 2009 showed that many Europeans believe that discrimination is still widespread, with people most likely to be discriminated against on the grounds of :

- Racial or ethnic origin (61%)
- Age (58%)
- Disability (53%)
- Sexual orientation (47%)
- Religion or belief (39%).

Ensuring that all members of society have equal opportunities is not just a legal requirement or a moral argument but a **necessity for a thriving and cohesive society** in the twenty-first century.

3. Legislating against discrimination in the EU:

The EU has long been active in the fight against discrimination, especially in its promotion of equal opportunities for men and women in the workplace. In 1997, the Amsterdam Treaty brought new, far-reaching powers for the European Union to act to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin,



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religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. In 2000, shortly after these new powers came into force, the EU adopted groundbreaking laws making it illegal to discriminate in the workplace on the grounds of racial and ethnic origin, religion and belief, disability, age and sexual orientation.

The law prohibiting racial and ethnic discrimination covered not only employment, but also education, social security, healthcare and access to goods and services, including housing.¹ To support the new anti-discrimination legislation, the “Community Action Programme to Combat Discrimination” was launched in 2001.

This 6-year funding programme, with an annual budget of around € 20 million, aimed at increasing awareness of existing laws, supporting organisations working in the field, and carrying out research to try to deepen public understanding of the complex nature of discrimination.

4. Building a network of national partners

In line with the European Commission’s communication strategy “Plan D” (democracy, dialogue and debate), all campaign activities were designed to be adapted to the Member State in question. All campaign measures were developed in close co-operation with partners in each EU Member State. The slogan, logo and design were tested and discussed in focus groups and then reworked accordingly. The national steering committees brought together more than 500 member organisations to discuss how best to conduct the campaign in their respective countries. This included seeing how various organisations could be involved in campaign activities and how they could also use the campaign to help promote their own work. The Austrian working group decided that advertising at film festivals and cinemas would be the most effective way to reach a broad audience. The Cypriot group agreed that the campaign should go through important multipliers, such as the media, and, as a result, organised a series of seminars and workshops for journalists in cooperation with the Association of Journalists in Cyprus.

The national partners were vital to provide advice, input and expertise. They also used their own contacts and networks to spread awareness of events and activities taking place as part of the campaign. A survey taken of the National Working Groups in 2007 showed that 80 % believed that the campaign was successful in helping raise awareness of anti-discrimination issues. 82 % of partners surveyed regularly participated in national meetings and distributed campaign information and promotional material at their own events as well as to members

5. Fighting Discrimination

Laws exist throughout the European Union to protect everyone against discrimination on the grounds of **religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation** in the workplace and on the grounds of **racial or ethnic origin** in all areas of life.

Despite this legal safeguard, discrimination still exists in Europe. The recent Eurobarometer survey, *Discrimination in the EU in 2009 (2009)*, reveals that:

- **Around 1 in 6** Europeans have been discriminated against in the last 12 months;
- **Over 1 in 4** have witnessed someone else being discriminated against in the last year;

Experiences of discrimination can take **overt** forms such as job adverts which explicitly exclude older or disabled people, or attacks on people which are motivated by racism or homophobia. More often though they take more **subtle** forms, such as when unnecessary requirements are included in a job advert, or older workers are overlooked for training.

Some people are discriminated against because of a combination of several grounds, known as **multiple discrimination**. For example, someone who is older and disabled, black and female, or gay and religious may be more likely to face discrimination on more than one ground.

This section will provide you with information on **what is discrimination, your rights and responsibilities** under EU law, where to **get help** if you or someone around is being discriminated against and how the EU works to combat discrimination through **projects, training and other activities**.



"DIVERSITY IN THE EU :

DISABILITY "



1. Equal rights, equal opportunities:

European added value:

Around 80 million people in the EU, a sixth of its population, have a disability. They are often prevented from full social and economic participation by barriers linked to attitudes and their environment. Moreover, poverty rates amongst people with disabilities are 70% higher than average. Over 30% of over 75s are restricted to some extent, and over 20% are severely restricted. The percentage of people with disabilities is set to rise as the EU population ages. Although Member States are mainly responsible for disability measures, the EU complements their actions and creates conditions for further progress. EU action begins with analysis of relevant policy areas from the perspective of the disabled. This fosters understanding of the needs of people with disabilities, which are taken into account when developing policy and legislation. The EU thus aims to ensure that all disabled people can use their basic human right to active inclusion and full participation in society.

The UN stance on disabilities

People with disabilities have the same entitlement as anyone else to dignity, independence and full social participation. Enabling them to benefit from this is at the centre of both EU action and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which the EU is a signatory.

The purpose of the Convention, which along with its Protocol entered into force on 3 May 2008, is to promote and protect full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities. In terms of content, it is a significant step forward: it establishes disability not only as a social welfare issue but also as a human rights and legal matter.



The Convention reflects the core elements of the EU Disability Strategy 2010- 2020, which combines anti-discrimination, equal opportunities and active inclusion. The rights recognised by the Convention cover almost all policy fields and the EU Disability Strategy aims to ensure its full implementation.

Accessibility

Accessibility is essential for participation in society. Accordingly, the EU Disability Strategy aims to eliminate barriers to access facing people with disabilities. Key areas for action include the built environment, transport, information and communication, and services. The EU uses instruments such as research, policy and legislation, and standardisation to ensure provision of accessible products and services across the Union. Furthermore, it takes steps to improve the functioning of the assistive technology market so as to ensure that it works to the advantage of the disabled. The European Commission promotes a “Design for all” approach in order to benefit as wide a scope of the population

as possible. It is also working towards a European Accessibility Act setting out a general framework for goods and services.

Participation

People with disabilities and their families should be able to participate on an equal basis with others in all aspects of social and economic life. They need to be able to exercise their rights as citizens, including the right to free movement, to choose where and how they live, and to full access to cultural, leisure and sport activities.

The Commission works to eliminate obstacles that people with disabilities face in everyday life as individuals, consumers, students, and economic and social actors. Examples of this work include: promotion of the European disability parking card; supporting the transition in Member States from institutional to community-based care; and promoting participation in sport such as through organisation of disability specific sporting events.





2. Areas for action

Equality

53% of Europeans consider discrimination on grounds of disability or age to be widespread in the EU. The EU promotes equal treatment of people with disabilities through a two-pronged approach comprising anti-discrimination legislation and strategies, and promotion of equal opportunities in other policies. The EU also pays close attention to the impact on people with disabilities of discrimination on grounds such as age, gender and sexual orientation. The Commission ensures full implementation of the EU Directive banning discrimination in the job market on the grounds of disability. It also promotes diversity and combats discrimination through awareness-raising at EU and national level, and supports the work of NGOs in the area. The Commission also made a proposal for another Directive dealing with equal treatment but this time outside of the area of employment, covering access to goods and services.

Employment

Quality jobs ensure economic independence, foster personal development and offer the best protection against poverty. The Commission seeks to improve the employment situation of people with disabilities.

It pays special attention to difficulties of young disabled. Working conditions and career advancement are taken into account, in consultation with social partners. Other measures include making workplaces more accessible, supporting on-the-job training and increasing access to the open labour market for disabled people in sheltered employment. As many people with disabilities need assistance, there is a growing need for carers and service providers. Member States set their own employment policies in line with European guidelines. The Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth has set a target of a 75% employment rate in Europe. To reach this, labour market inclusion of people with disabilities must be increased and this will also help to achieve the aim of lifting 20 million Europeans out of poverty by 2020.



Education

The EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020 emphasises equal access to quality education and lifelong learning. These are key factors in enabling the disabled to participate fully in society and improve their quality of life. However, this has not yet been achieved and much segregation remains in European education. The EU respects national responsibility for content and organisation of education. At the same time, it supports national efforts to promote inclusive education and lifelong learning for pupils and students with disabilities. It also promotes their mobility across the EU via the Lifelong Learning Programme.

Social protection and inclusion

People with disabilities need to be able to benefit from services such as social protection, poverty reduction programmes, disability-related assistance and public housing. Member States are mainly responsible for these matters but fix common objectives and indicators through a framework called the Open Method of Coordination. National efforts are assessed by the Commission and Council in a joint report, which outlines achievements of EU-level initiatives in individual countries. The Commission also helps EU candidate and applicant countries to reform their social welfare systems. Joint Inclusion Memoranda are drawn up to set out priorities. The EU supports national measures to ensure high quality, sustainable social protection for people with disabilities, notably by facilitating policy exchange. Furthermore, it promotes design and implementation of social innovation programmes.





Health

People with disabilities need equal access to high-quality, gender-sensitive healthcare, including preventative care, rehabilitation and other specific services. Member States are primarily responsible

for organising and delivering health services. The Commission supports policies to improve access to mainstream care and specific services for people with disabilities. It also promotes health and safety at work so as to reduce the risk of disabilities arising due to accidents in the workplace and to help people with disabilities to return to the job market.

External action

The EU and its Member States promote the rights of people with disabilities in their external policies, including enlargement and international development. The EU highlights the status of disability as a human rights issue by raising awareness of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as part of its humanitarian aid activity. It will continue to promote disability issues in international bodies such as the UN, the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. The Commission also oversees progress by candidate and potential candidate countries in promoting rights of people with disabilities and uses pre-accession financial assistance instruments to this end.



3. The EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020 :

The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 provides a framework for concerted EU and national-level action to improve the situation of people with disabilities. It aims to:

- 1) • **Make goods and services accessible and promote assistive devices;**
- 2) • **Ensure that people with disabilities Enjoy full benefits of EU citizenship;**
- 3) • **Promote provision of high-quality community- based services;**
- 4) • **Combat disability-based discrimination;**
- 5) • **Enable many more people with disabilities to access the open labour market;**
- 6) • **Promote inclusive education and lifelong learning for pupils and students with disabilities;**
- 7) • **Combat poverty and social exclusion by ensuring decent living conditions;**
- 8) • **Promote equal access to health and related services;**
- 9) • **Promote the rights of people with disabilities through EU enlargement and international development programmes;**
- 10) • **Raise awareness of disability issues and make people with disabilities more aware of their rights and how to use them;**
- 11) • **Improve use of EU accessibility and anti- discrimination funding instruments.**

4. EU instruments:

Involving citizens

Every 3 December, the European Commission, in conjunction with the European Disability Forum, holds a conference to mark the European Day of People with Disabilities. These conferences bring together policymakers, people with and without disabilities, academic experts, the media and other stakeholders. They form part of the EU's efforts to promote disability issues, as set out in its Disability Strategy. They also stimulate exchange of good practice in crucial areas for active inclusion of people with disabilities, as well as encouraging networking. Each year has a different disability-related theme. Past themes have included independent living, local action, the internal market, design for all, education, and employment. The findings of these conferences feed into Commission disability policy and support the Disability Strategy.