

FREEDOM *M* *GUIDE*

Paving the way towards
Free movement for persons
with disabilities





The European Disability Forum (EDF) is the European umbrella organisation representing the interests of 80 million persons with disabilities in Europe. The mission of EDF is to ensure persons with disabilities full access to fundamental rights in Europe through their active involvement in policy implementation. EDF is a member of the Social Platform and works closely with the European institutions, the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

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In 2011, EDF launched a Top Campaign on the theme 'Freedom of movement', focusing on the Free movement of persons, as well as goods and services within the European Union. This campaign aims at removing the main barriers to Freedom of movement that persons with disabilities daily face.



This publication uses data derived from a survey launched by EDF during the summer 2011. This survey intends to generate a clearer picture of the experiences for persons with disabilities in relation to Freedom of movement. It was completed by individuals with disabilities and/or family members of persons with disabilities who need support to represent themselves.

More information is available upon request.



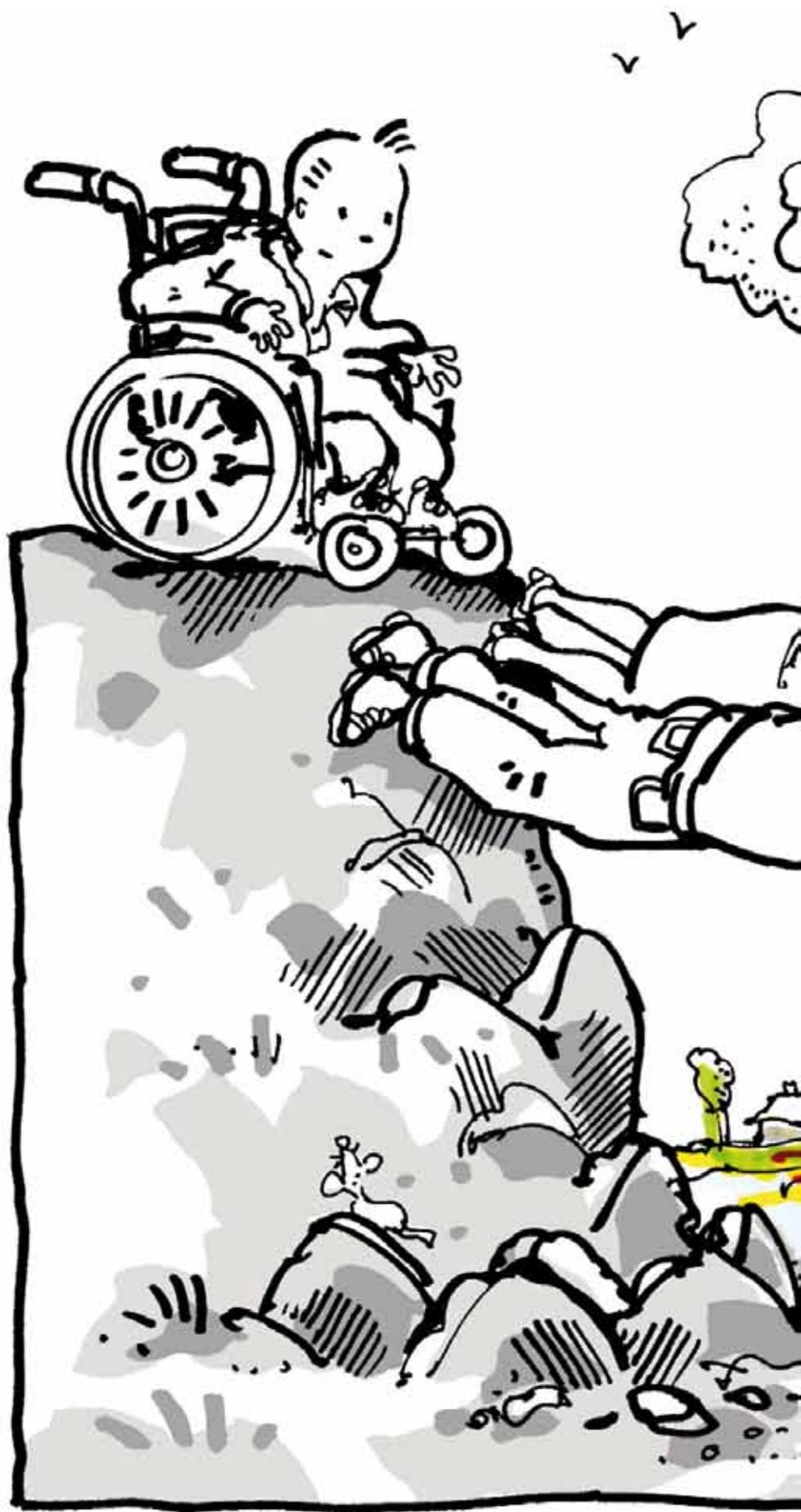
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FOREWORDS



Ms Viviane Reding

Vice-President of the European Commission

As Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, I believe that it is of the utmost importance to ensure that all EU citizens have equal access to their rights. For persons with disabilities, older persons and others with reduced mobility, a barrier-free environment is essential for their freedom of choice and it is the key to an autonomous and active social and economic life. Accessibility is a precondition to the enjoyment of fundamental rights.

Persons with disabilities often face accessibility barriers when they want to go to work, to attend school or, for example, go to vote. Such barriers also impede their full and equal participation in leisure, sports and cultural activities. Furthermore, lack of accessibility in Europe is limiting their ability to go shopping, to travel, or to surf on the Internet.

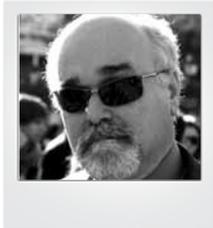
The European Treaties establish that citizens of the European Union should enjoy the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States. Freedom of movement for workers is a right for all of our citizens. We know that in practice this is far from being a reality for many persons with disabilities due to lack of accessibility.

We have already achieved meaningful progress in a number of areas but there is still more to be done. Allow me to just mention some of the improvements in accessibility resulting from the European Union initiatives aimed at the active inclusion of people with disabilities. Accessibility has been and remains one of the pillars of the European Union's disability policy. Since 2003, as part of the Disability Action plan 2003-2010, actions have been undertaken in the areas of the built environment, transport with regulatory measures in the areas of air, maritime and rail transport as well as measures concerning accessibility on buses and coaches. We have also worked to make services more accessible in particular in the area of information and communication including new technologies (ICT) and the Internet.

The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 is pursuing these efforts to prevent and eliminate obstacles and barriers for persons with disabilities and to ensure access on an equal basis with others. The European Union also makes use of a variety of instruments beyond legislation and policy, such as research and standardisation, to optimise the accessibility of the built environment, ICT, transport, and other areas, and to foster a European Union-wide market for accessible products and services. Furthermore, the European Union aims to improve the functioning of the assistive technology market for the benefit of persons with disabilities. The Commission promotes the use of a Design for All approach that also benefits a wider part of the population such as elderly people and those with reduced mobility. The 'European Access•City Award' is a reward for a city's commitment to ensure accessibility in all fundamental aspects of city living for everybody, regardless of age or ability.

I am convinced that we need to take another major step further to dismantle the remaining barriers and to prevent new ones. We are exploring the merits of adopting new regulatory measures after assessing the socio-economic impact of accessibility, consulting stakeholders: users, industry, service providers and public authorities.

This publication is an excellent contribution to raising the voice of persons with disabilities in Europe and to present their views as part of a process to which I am deeply committed. A process which is of great benefit to us all.



Mr Yannis Vardakastanis

President of the European Disability Forum (EDF)

It is a great pleasure for me to introduce you to the Freedom Guide. This publication is one of the most important outcomes of the EDF Top Campaign 2011, addressing Freedom of movement.

Freedom of movement is one of the cornerstones of the European construction. Thanks to the Free movement principles, millions and millions of European citizens have been able to work, establish themselves, study and travel abroad and have easy access to goods and services in all corners of Europe.

This is a fantastic achievement, but the reverse side of the coin is that 80 million European citizens – persons with disabilities – cannot yet fully enjoy or benefit from these freedoms due to a number of barriers. This not only hampers progress towards equal opportunities for those persons and their families, but it is also a missed market opportunity.

At the end of 2010, when the European Commission presented its Disability Strategy for the next ten years, the European Disability Forum (EDF) saw a great potential for progressing the rights of persons with disabilities at the European level in a number of areas. Many of the action points under this strategy, such as the forthcoming proposal for a European Accessibility Act, are specifically instrumental for dismantling the current barriers for persons with disabilities to benefit from Freedom of movement.

The United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is the first human rights Convention adopted and concluded by the European Union, in addition to its Member States. Parties to the Convention are required to promote, protect, and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities, including full equality under the law. I am convinced that this Freedom Guide will be a key tool for promoting the respect of the rights laid out in this Convention in practice, particularly for those relating to the Freedom of movement.

I am honored that a number of significant contributors have enriched this publication, and it is my wish and belief that the variety and complementarity of these articles will, whether you are new to, or already familiar with, the issues at stake, evoke your inspiration and renewed commitment. The authors voicing their aspirations reflect a range of perspectives covering industry, public authorities and civil society.

Individuals with disabilities and their families have also provided a significant input, by sharing their opinions and offering concrete examples – positive and negative - of their everyday experiences in relation to Freedom of movement. We received numerous examples of barriers, but also, and most importantly, examples of best practice and ideas for solutions to resolve the remaining difficulties.

I trust that this is the beginning of a long journey, during which the conclusions and recommendations of this Freedom Guide will be translated into ambitious, effective and concrete policy initiatives and actions at both European and national level. I encourage you - policy makers, industry representatives, services providers as well as all persons involved in the disability movement and elsewhere – to let the Freedom Guide serve as support for your future work.

By mainstreaming the disability perspective into all policies, together we will be able to create a society where discrimination no longer has a place, a society based on respect for the human and civil rights of all persons. Legal protection is a fundamental instrument to tackle discrimination.

The challenge is great, but it is necessary that we are successful. Modern society cannot afford to deny our call for inclusion and freedom.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Forewords

6 page

Executive summary

11 page



1. Executive Summary

Introduction

17 page



2. Introduction

Some voices from the disability movement

21 page



3. Disability movement

Freedom of movement for goods and services: the need for accessibility

31 page



4. Goods and Services

What does it mean?

What the following articles are all about

Accessible goods and services and the internal market

Standardisation, a powerful tool for accessibility

Fifty years of American accessibility experience

A Single Market - accessible for all

Creating a mobile Internet for all

The role of standards in Web accessibility

Freedom of movement for persons

53 page

What does it mean?

What the following articles are all about

The European Ombudsman: helping to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities

Where is the ‘Europe for the people’?

Studying without borders

Towards a European mobility card

Let’s make Europe a tourism destination for all



5. Persons

Above and beyond

71 page

All across the inclusive universe



6. Above and beyond

EDF’s Conclusion

77 page



7. Conclusion

Easy-to-read

83 page



8. Easy-to-read

Partners’ section

91 page



9. Partners

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



1. Executive Summary

This publication provides an overview of the implications of the rights recognised by the European Union Treaties linked to Free movement of persons, goods and services, for persons with disabilities. **The Freedom Guide** concretely aims to illustrate the fact that Freedom of movement is still not a reality for persons with disabilities. On the other hand, it also highlights that the internal market is still a place of exclusion due to the continued circulation of inaccessible goods and services. This must change, to ensure that all citizens can enjoy their human and civil rights. The UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) provides for an instrumental framework to establish a more inclusive society.

This Freedom Guide is the European Disability Forum's (EDF) contribution to the debate on how to guarantee the enjoyment of these rights through practical implementation. To support our arguments, and to show the various and sometimes complex aspects of Freedom of movement, including what it means, or should mean – not only for persons with disabilities but for all actors on the European market, goods and services - we have invited a number of eminent personalities from various arenas at the European level, to contribute to the content of the Freedom Guide. These were made either in the form of articles, interviews, concrete examples or illustrations. Owing to the variety of contributions, we hope that the Freedom Guide will provide its readers with some food for thought on how to move ahead towards a more inclusive and competitive Europe.

What is Freedom of movement?

The EU treaties, including the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union, guarantee fundamental rights, of which Free movement of persons is among the most important.

Free movement of persons means that all citizens of an EU Member State have the right to move, work, study, live and establish themselves in another Member State.

Free movement of goods means that goods produced in one EU Member State can be sold in another Member State, under certain conditions. Apart from a limited number of exceptions, no Member State should set any restrictions on the import of goods produced in another Member State. Manufacturers should have the right to market their products in any Member State and under the same conditions as domestically produced goods.

Free movement of services means that all EU citizens have the right to provide and receive services in another Member State than their own and under the same conditions as the citizens of that country. Services are understood as the particular service activities offered by providers, also termed 'provided for remuneration' according to Article 57 of the Lisbon Treaty.

What are the barriers for persons with disabilities?

Persons with disabilities do not have the same opportunities as other citizens in Europe: they face barriers when studying, looking for a job, travelling, purchasing mainstream goods and services or simply in accessing information.

There exist multiple and varied barriers, ranging from physical, attitudinal and communication barriers to legislative and administrative barriers, resulting from the discrimination of persons with disabilities.

Many persons with disabilities report that they are unable to access to services due to inaccessible buildings and infrastructures, or they are denied access because guide dogs are not allowed to enter certain facilities. For others, the specific accommodation needs at the working place or at university might not be satisfied.

Some persons with disabilities cannot access the necessary information needed to be able to use public transport, or to book their holidays. Furthermore, many encounter technical barriers when using websites, ICT and banking services.

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Some persons with disabilities cannot access the necessary information needed to be able to use public transport, or to book their holidays. Furthermore, many encounter technical barriers when using websites, ICT and banking services.

All too often, mainstream products are impossible to use due to an inadequate design that fails to integrate the needs of persons with disabilities. This means that many persons are obliged to stick to a severely restricted choice of adapted goods, often only available at an excessive cost.

These examples are only indicative of the amount and kind of barriers that exist – the numbers of barriers reported are alarmingly high, which makes exercising the rights of Free movement of persons, goods and services almost impossible.

What is needed to overcome barriers to Freedom of movement?

EDF wants the removal of all barriers for persons with disabilities.

We believe in an **inclusive society** in which all persons are entitled to participate in and contribute towards eliminating the possibility of discrimination. Unless we work together through a coordinated, ambitious and inclusive process, we will not be able to dismantle the barriers and find sustainable solutions.

In relation to Free movement of persons, EDF believes that a person with a disability will never be able to work, study or live abroad as easily as others can unless, society becomes more accessible.

Full accessibility is an essential step towards enabling Freedom of movement. There is a need for ensuring that transport, information and communication, the built environment and services are accessible, as otherwise people with disabilities will continue to face obstacles that make it difficult or impossible to take up a job, study or to simply go on holiday abroad.

In addition, there is a need to combat prejudices and stereotypes linked to disability. The media has a role to play in this. However, awareness raising and training is needed, beginning at early childhood and through all stages in life, including university studies and at all levels in society.

Especially important, is the need for Member States to allow for the portability of disability benefits and to enhance cooperation in relation to social security policies. Moreover, unless persons who need a personal assistant, sign language interpreter or support person can mobilise this support when travelling abroad, Freedom of movement remains an illusion for those that make use of this support.

Whenever the principle of subsidiarity prevents policy making in this area, at the European level, Member States need to proactively work on policy harmonisation through the benchmarking of good practices and ongoing discussions.

When it comes to Freedom of movement of goods and services, EDF believes that there is a need to establish common and legally binding accessibility requirements in all EU countries. European Standards can underpin legislation, but do not replace the need for legislation.

To the greatest extent possible, only accessible services and goods should be allowed to circulate within the EU. Accessibility is also a key principle mentioned in the UNCRPD. Article 9 aims to remove barriers and ensure access, applying this principle to information, transportation, the public domain, and the built environment.

The EU has concluded the UNCRPD and should therefore respect the requirements it sets out.

The importance of non-discrimination legislation

Freedom of movement will not be fully possible for persons with disabilities without **general non-discrimination legislation**. Indeed, only comprehensive legislation could address and cover all the aspects hindering the fundamental rights of persons with disabilities.



Two concrete short-term objectives to ensure Freedom of movement become possible for persons with disabilities

The most important proposal that EDF supports, is the adoption of a **European Accessibility Act**. In its Disability Strategy 2010, the European Commission states that it will propose such an act in 2012.

A legally binding European Accessibility Act can play a significant role in promoting accessibility for people with disabilities. It would also increase the possibilities for persons with disabilities to buy accessible products/services at a reasonable cost, and have a wider range of products/services to choose from. The European Accessibility Act must address both the accessibility of actual goods or services as well as the conditions, under which goods or services are provided. It is also vital that the general built environment (particularly in public spaces) fall within the scope of this act. EDF believes that a European Accessibility Act must be an ambitious and legally binding instrument in order to be effective.

Another concrete solution that EDF is currently working on is the adoption of a **European Mobility Card**.

In fact, persons with disabilities travelling abroad experience difficulties in benefiting from the same services, under the same conditions as residents of that country. As a means to facilitate travelling, EDF suggests the adoption of a European Mobility Card, based on the principle of mutual recognition of existing national disability cards, with a harmonized design. The entitlements linked to the card are to be defined by the Member States in question. The card should be provided to a person with a disability upon request. This card is a means by which persons with disabilities can receive support, compensating for the inadequacies in terms of accessibility of environments and the lack of choice over the purchase of products and activities available to them.

The future cannot wait

It is time to put our fundamental rights and principles into practice. For too long persons with disabilities have been waiting for equality. Current trends, policies and innovations often widen and increase the existing gap between persons with and without disabilities. Notably, the financial crisis has also led to the further marginalisation of excluded groups.

However, experience has shown that the market, and society as a whole, has a lot to gain from accessibility. We cannot afford to lose out on the competences of qualified persons with disabilities, simply because their needs are not adequately respected within the workplace or in education. Furthermore, the number of potential clients will increase substantially if the mainstream market offers accessible products and services. Last but not least, Design for All means quality and comfort for everyone, disability or no disability.

All this can greatly contribute to a more competitive European Union. One billion persons with disabilities across the world are waiting for improved accessibility. Additionally, we must not forget that our society is ageing and in future, this population will have similar expectations to those posed by persons with disabilities.

In brief, we have a win-win situation. So what are we waiting for? Should we let doubts and fears stand in the way of the fundamental rights and freedoms of our citizens and of the opportunity for increased competitiveness?

Do you remain unconvinced? Does this all sound too good to be true?

We hope that afterleafing through the Freedom Guide we will have captivated your attention and convinced you.

INTRODUCTION



4. Introduction



Mr Javier Güemes

EDF Acting Director

At the beginning of 2011, the European Disability Forum (EDF) agreed to devote this year to a campaign to promote the 'Freedom of movement' of people with disabilities in the European Union. EDF decided to include, among the main activities of this campaign, to produce this publication. The Freedom Guide aims at providing a disability understanding of the freedoms recognized by the Treaty of the European Union. This is one step along the long road that should bring us to a more inclusive Europe. The acknowledgment that the development of legislation and policy measures of the Freedom of movement for people, goods and services in the EU's internal market has historically neglected the needs of people with disabilities, should be a motivation for all of us to overcome this gap in the history of the European Union.

The conclusion, by the European Union, of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the European economic downturn highlight the need for concrete actions to ensure that people with disabilities are not left aside in these difficult times. Actors in the internal market are looking for new ways to stimulate growth and create a more competitive EU. EDF's response to this is clear; **Freedom of movement must be based on accessibility for people with disabilities.** Notably, fundamental rights and market interests fully converge on this strategy.

INTRODUCTION

The European Union cannot become a better place to live and a more competitive economy if concrete initiatives in the area of accessibility are not taken. These measures should include a twin-track approach, where anti-discrimination legislation is accompanied by concrete measures for the internal market to make it more accessible and, as a result, more inclusive and efficient.

The European Disability Strategy 2010 – 2020 includes an audacious step in the right direction: the European Accessibility Act. It is well worth reading, over these next pages, the testimonies of women and men with disabilities, as well as the analysis of disability and accessibility experts, to fully appreciate that Freedom of movement, through full access, is a rights-based and economically wise step.

I would like to thank all those that have contributed to this Guide, friends of the disability movement and professionals from the relevant policy fields. In their comments and articles they offer valuable insights and views on how to advance on the three main Freedoms in the EU.

Europeans with disabilities are committed to the European Union's goals. The EU should now show its commitment to Europeans with disabilities by working towards a more inclusive and accessible Europe. To this end, the Freedom Guide should contribute to a wider understanding of how to achieve this future for Europe's citizens.

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Mr Marcel Bobeldijk

Member of EDF expert group on ICT, President of the European Federation of Hard of Hearing (EFHOH)

ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

"ICT do not take into account the specific e-accessibility requirements of persons with disabilities. If not made accessible, this results in disabled people's inability from to perform simple actions everyone else is capable of, and in doing so limits their right to free movement. For instance, in case of an emergency while travelling abroad, a deaf or hard of hearing person will not be able to call everywhere 112, which is the single European emergency number, this could have serious and harmful implications. Deaf and hard of hearing people respectively require video- and text-relay services to be able to make a call from their mobile phone as any other citizen."

SOME VOICES FROM THE DISABILITY MOVEMENT



Mr Rodolfo Cattani

EDF Secretary, Vice-President of the Social Platform, Chairman of the Commission for Access with the EU of European Blind Union (EBU)

TRANSPORT

"Freedom of movement is an undeniable essentiality for persons with all kinds of disabilities but will never become a reality unless accessibility of transport services is guaranteed. As a blind person, I am particularly concerned about the lack of adequate support and of information available in accessible formats, required both prior and during a journey. The situation and rules in the different EU countries vary a lot, which makes it even more complicated for persons with disabilities to travel. Accessibility of transport services must be mandated through legislation, such as a European Accessibility Act. We urgently need effective and harmonised regulations."

DISABILITY MOVEMENT



5. Disability movement



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Ms Marily Christofi

Member of EDF expert group on Built Environment, Engineer, Accessibility Expert, Collaborator on accessibility issues of the National Confederation of Disabled People in Greece (ESAEA)

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

“In the built environment (places where we live, work or just pass through), a person with disability still has to overcome plenty of obstacles to movement and orientation, to information or to the use of elements and equipment that comprise their environments. These obstacles appear in both our everyday lives and emergency situations; they restrict his/her autonomy, safety, privacy and dignity and cause discrimination against him/her. Accessibility of the built environment constitutes a core principle to enabling persons with disabilities to benefit from Free movement of persons, goods and services.”



Mr John Patrick Clarke

EDF Executive & Finance Committee member, President of Down Syndrome International, Chair of EDF Youth Committee

YOUTH

“The European Union targets youth offering possibilities to study or work in different Member States. Many young Europeans with disabilities are willing to make use of their right to Free movement and the opportunities on the equal basis with their peers, to fully profit from the richness offered by intercultural experience. We need to make sure that EU programmes are accessible for all, covering cross border assurance of the same services for people with special needs and providing for accessible information about these opportunities. Do young people with disabilities really need to face additional barriers?”



Mr Ingemar Färm

EDF Board member, Member of the Swedish Disability Federation (HSO)

ACCESS TO HEALTH

“I am currently reading a book about the history of Human Rights. A lesson I have learnt is that people constantly have to fight for their rights, including their equal right to quality health services. Persons with disabilities often have a poorer health status than persons without disabilities. Appropriate measures, such as accessible information, user participation, compensation for disability-related costs and improvement of physical accessibility must be ensured to guarantee that persons with disabilities can benefit from cross-border health services on equal terms with others. Furthermore, persons with rare conditions would undoubtedly gain better increased access to proper treatment if European cooperation is enhanced with regards to the treatment and rehabilitation related to these conditions.”



Mr Alain Faure

EDF Executive Committee member, Member of French Council of Disabled People for European Affairs (CFHE)

ACCESS TO SERVICES

- “To be able to choose to lead one’s life in the city or in the countryside, where one has the right to enjoy qualitative, adapted and coordinated services, enable an independent life.
- To be able to participate in political, cultural life and sporting activities to ensure social inclusion.
- To be able to communicate due to the availability of texts, books, newspapers, announcements in Braille, audio and easy-to-understand language.

All of the above mentioned aspects are part of our everyday lives and are thus necessities for inclusion and participation in community life. Accessibility enables persons with disabilities to enjoy their Freedom of movement, in a safe, dignified and independent way. EU countries, in all their diversity, have to follow this principle urgently and with greater commitment.”



Ms Erzsebet Földesi

EDF Vice-President, Board member of the National Council of Federations of People with Disabilities (FESZT)

SOCIAL PROTECTION

“Mobility of persons with disabilities must address the issue of access to social protection systems, disability-related assistance, retirement and benefits programmes. In order to facilitate movement from one country to another, persons with disabilities should be allowed to bring along their rights, allowances and protection systems. This would enable them to access all the services and goods they need on an equal basis with others. However, differences between European countries in terms of recognition, definition and assessment of disability statuses are too wide and there is a lack of political willingness to harmonise social security systems across Europe. The European Mobility Card could be the first step towards a common minimum set of rights in all EU countries. Appropriate and accessible dissemination of information about the social protection systems in different Member States could also contribute to the enjoyment of Freedom of movement by European citizens with disabilities.”



Mr Bruno Gaurier

Member of EDF expert network on Transport, Policy Advisor for the French Council of Disabled People for European Affairs (CFHE)

Karine Lhemon ©

AIR PASSENGERS' RIGHTS

“Air transport for persons with disabilities has slightly improved during recent years due to the implementation of a European regulation in 2006. This regulation was supposed to make Freedom of movement for persons with disabilities possible, through improving the accessibility of air transport services. It is essential that flight attendants (and staff in direct contact with disabled travellers) are trained according to similar criteria so that the same quality of services is guaranteed all over Europe. Without such measures, Free movement of persons will remain an illusion and persons with disabilities will still be discriminated.”



Ms Ingrid Körner

*EDF Executive Committee member,
Board member of Inclusion Europe*

EDUCATION

“The greatest barrier to education of persons with disabilities is the immediate and negative judgmental attitude towards the necessities of inclusive education. Hence we can only observe minor efforts to remove the existing barriers such as accessibility of school buildings, inclusiveness of schools, adequate curricula, and methods of teaching, including individual support. All of these obstacles hinder the access to primary, not to mention secondary and tertiary education systems. Access to education systems is essential to be able to benefit from mobility and exchange programmes both at national and European level, such as the Erasmus programme. These programmes should include supports to students with disabilities.”



Mr Erik Olsen

*EDF Executive Committee member, Board member of
European Network of (ex-) Users and Survivors in Psychiatry
(ENUSP)*

DE-INSTITUTIONSALISATION

“The institutionalisation of persons with disabilities is in total contradiction with fundamental rights. All persons in the EU must have the possibility to benefit equally from Freedom of movement, but today this is far from the reality. One of the most extreme examples of barriers is that some persons with mental health issues are tied to a bed in an institution where they might live temporarily or permanently. Such degrading and violent measures can go on for hours. De-institutionalisation is an absolute precondition for Freedom of movement.”



Ms Ana Peláez

EDF Executive Committee member and Director of International Relations at the Spanish National Organisation of the Blind (ONCE)

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

“Both legal and practical circumstances limit the Freedom of movement for women with disabilities and mothers of children with disabilities to a greater extent than men. Given the high unemployment rates of this demographic, it is necessary to take special measures such as to promote their inclusion in the labour market, including certain social entitlements which are supposed to help support them when taking up a job or studying, either domestically or abroad. Adequately funded child and elderly care facilities should be promoted, in order to allow for women with disabilities and mothers of children with disabilities to use their right to Freedom of movement in practice.”

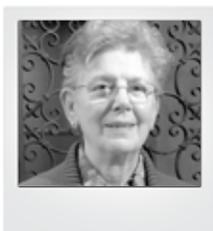


Mr Pekka Tuominen

EDF Treasurer, Chair of the Board of the Finnish Disability Forum (FDF)

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

“The latest statistics show that there are one billion disabled people in the world; 80% of them live in the so-called developing countries. Affected by natural disasters, armed conflicts and economic instability, many communities in the global south are struggling to live in dignity. The European Union is the world’s largest donor of development aid, but is the EU really facilitating the movement of people with disabilities in developing countries? The EU will enhance the Freedom of people with disabilities in developing countries by investing in an accessible environment and by funding and promoting the use of accessible products and services by the local communities. In countries experiencing post-conflict and post-disaster situations, of which the results often are: contaminated water, malnutrition and lack of access to basic health services, the number of people with severe disabilities will increase exponentially if accessible emergency services are not provided. The enhancement of Free movement of people with disabilities in developing societies and ensuring that only accessible goods and services are purchased by the EU, will result in the further inclusion of people with disabilities and will strengthen the capacity of society as whole, to foster economic, social and political development.”



Ms Josée Van Remoortel

*EDF Board member, Senior Policy Advisor,
Mental Health Europe (MHE)*

PERSONS WHO REQUIRE MORE INTENSIVE SUPPORT

“Due to the lack of adequate inclusive support adapted to their specific needs, persons with mental health problems and persons who require more intensive support, often have no access to the most fundamental rights and are therefore deprived of their freedom. Those persons still all too often have to spend their lives in institutions. Despite being EU citizens, Freedom of movement is only an illusion for them.”



Ms Donata Vivanti

*EDF Vice-president,
Autism Europe Vice-president*

EMPLOYMENT

“Persons with disabilities experience numerous barriers to accessing the open labour market. Persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and persons who require more intensive support are particularly subject to many stereotypes regarding the assumed lack of competence or productivity. When it comes to the right to Free movement of workers – meaning that you have the right to work in another EU country, - there are additional barriers to the equal treatment concerning access to employment and working conditions for persons with disabilities. At EU level, there are programmes, e.g. Leonardo Da Vinci, and instruments, including EURES, to facilitate the mobility of workers and their families. However, they should be reformed in a way as to be accessible for persons with disabilities.”

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?



6. Goods and Services

“Using public transportation in my city is dangerous for a blind or visually impaired person. During the last 30 years more than 30 visually impaired people have fallen from the platform onto the tracks, in the subway. At least one man has died from this incident and numerous visually impaired people have been injured. I, myself, have fallen twice. Accessibility and safety for all must be requirements for providing a service.”

Marianna, 45, Slovakia

“The staff

of the main services providers

should be sufficiently trained on disability

issues in order to avoid misunderstandings. For

instance, if the staffs working in the frontline of health

services are not trained to ensure that persons who are

hard of hearing understand the health related questions

they are asking, this could lead to wrong diagnosis and

misunderstandings concerning medication. Moreover, many

hospitals do not have a hearing loop installed, and do not

provide appropriate alternative means

for communication.”

Diogo, 67, Portugal

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES:

“I went to the local administration to change my ID card and the administrator in the office was very kind, spoke slowly and clearly, and was patient and helpful when I filled out the form. She also supported me by accompanying me to the photographer. The administrator had participated in a disability awareness training, organized by our national Down Syndrome Foundation.”

Adjordán, 17, Hungary

THE NEED FOR ACCESSIBILITY

“I recently wanted to buy a technical device adapted to my specific needs in another Member State. I did not do so in the end because if I had, I would not have been allowed to benefit from the compensation provided in my home country for the purchase of that device. I had to fall back on a product of lesser quality which does not completely meet my needs.”

Xevera, 23, Cyprus

68.9% of Europeans with disabilities believe that there are barriers to Freedom of movement.

— Good practice

••••• Bad practice

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?



“Using public transportation in my city is dangerous for a blind or visually impaired person. During the last 30 years more than 30 visually impaired people have fallen from the platform onto the tracks, in the subway. At least one man has died from this incident and numerous visually impaired people have been injured. I, myself, have fallen twice. Accessibility and safety for all must be requirements for providing a service.”
Marianna, 45, Slovakia

“The staff of the main services providers should be sufficiently trained on disability issues in order to avoid misunderstandings. For instance, if the staffs working in the frontline of health services are not trained to ensure that persons who are hard of hearing understand the health related questions they are asking, this could lead to wrong diagnosis and misunderstandings concerning medication. Moreover, many hospitals do not have a hearing loop installed, and do not provide appropriate alternative means for communication.”
Diego, 67, Portugal

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— Good practice

••••• Bad practice

One of the most important outcomes of the European Union is the creation of an **'internal market'**. The Internal market is defined as 'an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured' (Article 26 of the Lisbon Treaty).

- As for goods, the provision of Free movement relies on the general prohibition of quantitative restrictions on exports and imports between Member States or any measures that have an equivalent effect (cf. Articles 34 and 35 of the Lisbon Treaty), subject to a few precise exceptions. A wide range of goods is covered by this, on the condition that they have an economic value.
- As for services, the concept of Free movement implies that EU companies can freely establish themselves in other Member States. This also applies to services, understood as 'provided for remuneration', which can be provided on the territory of another EU Member State other than the one in which they are established (cf. Article 49 of the Lisbon Treaty).

The EU institutions have adopted several specific legislations in order to establish and complete this market.

As a means for achieving a Single Market that better includes persons with disabilities, the disability movement calls for a legislation regulating the **accessibility** of mainstream goods and services. As shown by the various concrete examples throughout this Guide, persons with disabilities still have difficulties accessing ordinary products, under the same conditions as any other EU citizen, instead they frequently have to rely on adapted products, where choice is limited and the prices are higher. Besides the obvious benefits for persons with disabilities, increasing the accessibility of goods and services will significantly contribute to a better functioning of the internal market.

One should bear in mind the provision of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in this regard which requires that all parties to the Convention, including the European Union, ensure accessibility.

Article 9 of the UNCRPD reads:

"To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to, inter alia:

- a) Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces;
- b) Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services."

According to the UNCRPD, accessibility therefore involves access for people with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, alongside the identification and elimination of any obstacles and barriers.

To better understand the concept of accessibility it is also useful to understand the concept of **Universal Design**. This term, according to the UNCRPD, means "the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Universal Design shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed."

On the other hand, it is also important to know what **standardisation** is, as this process can facilitate the realisation of accessibility. Standards are technical specifications that help to achieve the Single Market in the EU, removing trade barriers for European industries and consumers.



EDF believes that a **European Accessibility Act** would be one of the most important tools through which the European Union could fulfill its obligation to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities. Such an Act has to be strong, legally binding and ambitious in its scope. EDF wants this Act to take the form of a directive, underpinned by European Standards or complementary legislation which address the detailed technical specifications.

This Act should lead to common accessibility requirements across the EU, covering goods and services. The scope must be as broad as possible to ensure that persons with disabilities can participate in society on equal terms with other citizens. It should include a clear and extensive definition of accessibility. In addition to generic accessibility requirements, such an Act should also establish the requirement of accessibility in specific sectors, namely the built environment, transportation, information, the Internet, etc. For the areas where no relevant European standards have been adopted the generic and essential requirement to provide accessibility shall apply.

Finally, in addition to the accessibility requirements of mainstream products, there is a need for a European market for assistive technologies and devices. Such assistive products must be compatible with mainstream counterparts in order to facilitate their usage, instead of creating additional barriers and further exclusion. All new developments in assistive technology should strive towards acting upon the philosophy of the UNCRPD, thus putting the specific needs of the individual user in the centre.

What the following articles are about...

This part of the Freedom Guide gathers several testimonies from actors in different fields, but all in favour of accessibility as a means to enforcing the right to Free movement for persons with disabilities and interested in developing a more inclusive market, promoting the circulation of accessible goods and services. They illustrate that accessibility is instrumental in ensuring that persons with disabilities can fully enjoy their fundamental rights within the European Union. Moreover, they provide convincing arguments that accessibility is beneficial for the market itself. Indeed, Professor Lisa Waddington, EDF Chair in European Disability Law, Maastricht University (the Netherlands), lists and presents the many benefits that accessible goods and services will bring to the internal market ([Accessible goods and services and the internal market](#)). The President of the European Committee for Standardization (CEN), Mr Juan Carlos Lopez Agüí, explains how standardisation can play a key role in achieving accessibility and a more inclusive market ([Standardisation, a powerful tool for accessibility](#)).

Going beyond EU borders, the groundbreaking and successful American experience in accessibility is presented to us by the Executive Director of the U.S. Access Board in Washington, DC, Mr David M. Capozzi. This article is undeniably also a good source of inspiration ([Fifty years of American accessibility experience](#)). Additionally, we will discover the enlightened vision of accessibility the Chairman of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee, Malcom Harbour MEP has, as well as the European Parliament's heartening support for a European Accessibility Act ([A Single Market – accessible for all](#)). Finally, some promising examples of good practice linked to accessibility that can be found in the industry sector are outlined, on the one hand by the Vodafone Group Plc CEO, Mr Vittorio Colao ([Creating a mobile Internet for all](#)) and on the other hand, by representatives of the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), Ms Shawn Lawton Henry and Mr Shadi Abou-Zahra ([The role of standards in Web accessibility](#)). The lessons learnt from both articles is that binding standards introduced by a European Accessibility Act would not only contribute to the realisation of an increased Free movement but also would also commit and engage the private sector towards this goal, resulting in a better functioning of the internal market.

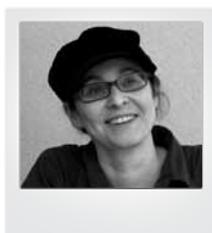


“The list of physical barriers that still exist today is endless: steps everywhere, lack of lifts or lifts requiring keys to function, inaccessible public transport, not enough time for people with reduced mobility at pedestrian crossings, impossible access to goods on the top or bottom shelves in supermarkets.”
Aneliya, 59, Bulgaria

“More and more services are carried out electronically using machines, especially basic transactions such as getting some cash or buying train tickets. I am deprived of using them as these machines are not accessible for visually impaired people, whereas it is only a question of standardisation, incorporating Braille, a touch screen or speech.”
Alexandru, 31, Romania

62.2% of Europeans with disabilities claim that existing barriers have already prevented them from travelling to another Member State.

Accessible goods and services and the internal market



Professor Lisa Waddington

EDF Chair in European Disability Law, Maastricht University (the Netherlands)

The availability of accessible goods and services is important for ensuring the economic and social integration of people with disabilities. Moreover, accessibility is a right that has been recognised in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, thereby underlining its importance. The Convention requires States Parties to take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others. However, accessibility is not only important for people with disabilities and their friends and families, but also from the point of view of achieving an internal market for goods and services in the European Union. Moreover, there are significant economic benefits to be gained from addressing accessibility within the framework of the internal market. This article seeks to explain the importance of disability accessibility for the internal market, and the need to address accessibility in European legislation and policy.

The achievement of the internal market, in which there are no obstacles to the Free movement of goods, persons, services and capital, is a fundamental objective of the European Union. Obstacles to the internal market can come from many sources and, where such obstacles make Free movement more difficult, or distort competition, the EU can intervene. One kind of obstacle to Free movement arises when Member States set national standards that must be met when goods and services are sold in that Member State. For example, a Member State may require that a product is designed in a certain way or incorporates certain features, is packaged in a particular way, that specific goods or services meet certain quality standards, or that specific information be given to consumers about a good or service. These requirements must be met whenever a good or service is sold in that Member State, including by manufacturers or providers that are based in other Member States. Now, imagine that each Member State has its own set of national rules that must be complied with – that means that manufacturers and suppliers will have to adapt their goods and services according to the rules of each Member State, with up to 27 different sets of rules to be met. That will be both highly expensive and challenging. Manufacturers and suppliers will find it much more difficult to sell their goods and services throughout the EU, and consumers will be faced with less choice (as some suppliers withdraw from the market) and higher prices. In this situation, it is easy to

see that obstacles to the internal market exist. This is the case even if the different national rules pursue an important aim, such as the health and safety of consumers.

Such national rules and standards can also exist with regard to the accessibility requirements that must be met by goods and services. This (potential) diversity of rules and standards can create barriers to trade. In such a situation, there are significant economic benefits, in terms of achieving the internal market, to be gained by EU intervention. Where one set of standards exist, manufacturers know that if they meet these common accessibility standards they can market their goods and services throughout the EU. Small markets (Member States), which were previously not attractive because a good or service had to be adapted before it was placed on that particular market, can now be entered easily. Where EU accessibility requirements also match requirements found in other parts of the world, such as the US, where (public) purchasers often require that goods and services are accessible, then EU manufacturers or service providers will find that they are able to sell their products much more easily in these markets as well.

In short, common EU-wide accessibility standards can help both people with disabilities, who gain greater access to accessible goods and services, and industry, which finds their market expand at no extra cost.

Benefits of an Accessibility Act

The European Union has the legal authority to adopt legislation to achieve the internal market. The legal basis for such action is currently found in Article 114 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. This competence was formerly found in Article 95 of the EC Treaty. The European Union has already used this legal basis to adopt a number of legal instruments that include mandatory accessibility standards, which must be met by manufacturers of specific goods throughout the EU. For example, one directive requires the mandatory fitting of certain accessibility features for persons with reduced mobility and people with visual impairments in vehicles that carry more than eight passengers. Another directive requires that lifts that are installed in the EU should be accessible to people with disabilities. Both instruments were adopted with a view to achieving the internal market.

Whilst the instruments mentioned in the previous paragraph are useful tools in achieving accessibility, they address very particular areas. To date there is no EU-wide legislation addressing the accessibility of goods and services in general. The potential barriers to achieving a Single Market with regard to accessible goods and services therefore continue to exist. For this reason, it is not surprising that the current European Disability Strategy specified that the Commission would consider proposing a “European Accessibility Act” in 2012.



“The prices, descriptions and warranties of goods are frequently written in a complicated way and the characters are too small, which is particularly problematic for persons with a visual impairment, concentration difficulties or an intellectual disability.”
Teresa, 29, Spain

“When I’m travelling outside my native country, I cannot rely on the fact that systems, like telephones, are accessible to the level of what I am used to where I come from. The lack of standardisation forces me to accept very different levels of living and being able to fulfill my needs across different Member States.”
Nils, 44, Germany

“In case of emergency, my partner can call 112 but I can’t. I have no access to this service as I need text relay to follow. What happens when I need an ambulance for my partner or for other members of my family?”
Zachary, 51, Malta

63.1% of interviewees do not believe that persons with disabilities can enjoy Freedom of movement under the same conditions as other European citizen.

Standardisation, a powerful tool for accessibility



Mr Juan Carlos Lopez Agüi

President of the the European Committee for Standardization (CEN)

The three European Standards Organizations (ESOs), the European Committee for Standardization (CEN), the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC) and the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI), provide a framework to prepare standards that help to develop the Single European Market for goods and services.

European Standards are drafted in technical bodies by representatives of all relevant stakeholders, including manufacturers, users, research organisations, national authorities, consumers and non-governmental organisations. Participation in CEN and CENELEC activities is ensured through delegations made up of the CEN and CENELEC national member bodies. The development of a European Standard is governed by the principles of consensus, openness and transparency and its drafting is performed by the experts in the relevant field.

Standards help to improve the quality of life for all and also provide state-of-the-art solutions to the challenges encountered by the elderly, or persons with disabilities. European standardisation is committed to ensure that each person in society has equal access to products and services which offers a solution to foster accessibility. A better inclusion of persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility is a major priority for Europe and beyond. Solutions are required from industry to address the accessibility needs of a large number of people with disabilities who still experience barriers to accessibility today. **Standards can make the world accessible for all.** European Standards provide significant support for industry to create products and services that allow the integration of people with special needs and as such they are of universal benefit.

Standardisation can be a powerful tool to integrate and strengthen accessibility in all areas by setting the same framework around the world for accessible products, devices, services, environments and facilities.

Standards and the principle of Design for All

CEN and CENELEC have integrated accessibility in multiple sectors and published a series of relevant documents such as guidelines for standards developers to include the principle of Design for all in relevant European Standards and to make information accessible through sign language on the internet. Furthermore, CEN has developed European Standards for pharmaceutical packaging in Braille, as well as on accessibility to lifts for persons with disabilities, to name a few. CENELEC is reviewing its complete range of safety standards on household appliances to align them to the new social climate that includes use by children and persons with disabilities. In response to a request from the European Commission, the ESOs are currently developing a set of standardised accessibility requirements for public procurement in the ICT domain. Further work is also being undertaken in relation to accessibility in the built environment and to include the principle of Design for All in relevant European Standards.

Accessibility is an important aspect of social inclusion. It is the responsibility of standardisation to help facilitate access to products and services for society as a whole. By driving the development of European and international standards, Europe can get a first mover advantage and increase the competitiveness of its enterprises. A strong European Standardisation System is essential not only for enhancing Europe's competitiveness but also to enhance its growing potential market giving the demographic shift in Europe and the correlation between disability and ageing. There is a clear demand for accessible products and services and the opportunity to create new innovative accessible mainstream products.

To summarise, European Standards facilitate trade between countries, create new markets and cut compliance costs. European Standards provide significant support for industry to create products and services that allow for the integration of persons with disabilities.

Further information, including a brochure on CEN-CENELEC, ETSI activities on Accessibility, is available on the CEN and CENELEC websites:



www.cen.eu
www.cenelec.eu



“How inclusive the US museums are! You are systematically presented with a visual display of subtitled guides and videos.”
Mathilde, 28, Luxemburg

“What a heartening surprise I had during my trip to the US, I could enter most restaurants, shops and public transport independently!”
Jiri, 75, Czech Republic

Fifty years of American accessibility experience



Mr David M. Capozzi

Executive Director of the U.S. Access Board in Washington, DC

The first nationally recognized accessible design standard in the United States was the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities (1961). These standards, which are voluntary until adopted by a jurisdiction, did not begin to be adopted until the late 1960s and early 1970s. By 1966, at least 30 states had accessibility legislation and by 1973, every state except Kentucky had laws for at least public buildings; 10 States expanded coverage to privately funded buildings.

Current accessibility requirements in the U.S.

Today, chapter 11 of the International Building Code (IBC) provides the ‘scoping’ for accessibility and then relies on the referenced technical standard from 1980, ICC/ANSI A117.1, for the technical specifications. ‘Scoping’ are provisions that specify which spaces and elements are required to be accessible and in what percentage. The IBC is in use or adopted in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The local code-enforcement process begins with an application for a permit to construct or remodel a building. The code official is responsible for issuing permits and reviews construction drawings for code compliance and does inspections during construction. If a deficiency exists or if the building or a component does not comply with code requirements, the official issues orders to correct the condition. These corrections must be completed and approved before the building may be occupied.

On the other hand, federal accessibility requirements are generally enforced after a building has already been constructed; enforcement is by individual complaints or lawsuits. There are four national laws that require accessibility of buildings and facilities. The Architectural Barriers Act (1968) applies to federal facilities designed, built, altered, or leased with federal funds. The Rehabilitation Act (1973) applies to programs or activities that receive federal funds. The Fair Housing Act Amendments applies to multifamily dwellings and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990) applies to State and local government facilities, places of public accommodation, commercial facilities, and transportation facilities. State and local government facilities include judicial, legislative, and regulatory facilities, detention and correctional facilities, residential housing, and public rights-of-way. Places of public accommodation include restaurants, hotels, theatres, doctors’ offices, pharmacies, retail stores, museums, libraries, parks, private schools, and day care centers. There is no accessibility coverage under these federal laws for private residences, private clubs, religious organizations, or places of worship.

Accessibility is required in new construction and planned alterations – and under the ADA, ‘readily achievable barrier removal’ is required in existing places of public accommodation. ‘Readily achievable barrier removal’ means easily accomplishable and able to be carried out without much difficulty or expense. Under both the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA (covering State and local government facilities), facilities are required to make their existing programs accessible. In some cases this can be done without resorting to construction, such as moving a classroom from the second floor of a building without an elevator to the first floor of the building.

The Role and Work of the U.S. Access Board

Most federal accessibility requirements are developed by the U.S. Access Board. The Access Board is an independent Federal agency devoted to accessibility for people with disabilities. Created in 1973 to ensure access to federally funded facilities, the Board is now a leading source of information on accessible design. The Board develops and maintains design criteria for the built environment, transit vehicles, telecommunications equipment, and for electronic and information technology. The Board’s authority only extends to the fixed items and equipment of a facility. Other agencies have authority over non-fixed or free-standing equipment. Also, the Board’s guidelines are not enforceable until adopted by a standard setting agency.

The Board’s most recent guidelines – the Americans with Disabilities Act and Architectural Barriers Act accessibility guidelines (2004) covers State and local government facilities, places of public accommodation, commercial facilities, and transportation facilities. It also addresses children’s environments, play areas, and recreation facilities. Guidelines under development include: outdoor developed areas; passenger vessels; public rights-of-way; transportation vehicles (update); information and communications technology (update); self-service transaction machines; emergency transportable housing; medical diagnostic equipment; shared use paths; and classroom acoustics.

Lessons from the American accessibility experience

In the 50 years since the first nationally recognized accessible design standard in the United States was developed, we have learned that in new construction, accessibility features are generally easier and less costly to implement than when renovating a structure.

Studies have shown that designing buildings for accessibility from the beginning adds less than 1% to the total construction cost of a new facility. This is a small price in relation to the economic benefits to be derived from full accessibility in the future, such as increased employment and consumer spending and decreased welfare dependency.

One study from 1979 developed a detailed cost data on the impact of the ANSI A117.1 – 1980 standards¹. The cost increases ranged from 0.01% of building cost for a shopping centre to 0.93% for garden apartments where accessibility did not require the addition of an elevator. The study concluded that benefits are almost always much higher than costs.

With the exception of a few elements such as grab bars at toilets, accessible parking signs or audible alarms, accessibility does not generally add features; it simply requires that features commonly provided have certain characteristics. Some of the characteristics add only marginally to the cost. In addition, accessibility adds little or no space to buildings.

The very low cost of making new buildings accessible

The costs of alterations to make existing buildings accessible vary widely, depending on the age and type of building, the extent of architectural and communication barriers present and other factors such as region or area of the country. Generally, renovations to make buildings accessible are estimated to vary between 1% and 3% of construction costs of an extensive renovation or of a building value.

In the United States, the federal government provides two tax incentives for businesses. All businesses,

¹. The State University of New York at Buffalo conducted a study about the Estimated Cost of Accessible Buildings.



regardless of size, that need to remove barriers may use section 190 of the Internal Revenue Code, which allows a tax deduction of up to \$15,000 each year for the removal of existing barriers. And, Internal Revenue Code Section 44 allows a small business to elect a non-refundable tax credit, up to \$5,000 for a taxable year \$5,000, to make their business accessible.

The burden of inaccessible buildings

Inaccessible buildings compromise the ability of persons with disabilities to function independently and to participate fully in society. In order to exercise the rights of citizenship or to secure services offered by government or the private sector, access to the built environment is essential. Environmental barriers impede mobility on streets, in getting in and out of buildings, in obtaining information in accessible formats, and in using transportation. Removal of these barriers opens opportunities to education and employment and enables people with disabilities to live more independently.

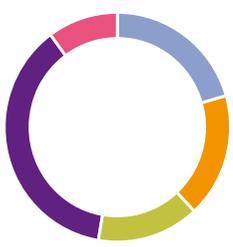
Every time a person is prevented from using the environment to his or her full potential, society incurs a cost.

The late Justin Dart, Jr. said it best when he stated:

“the economic cost of excluding two-thirds of Americans with disabilities from the mainstream is about \$200 billion annually, in public and private payments - \$300 billion when you include lost taxes and lost productivity. Our irresponsible status quo, the failure to invest in the empowerment of people to be productive is the cause of economic problems in rich nations and poor alike. Humanity is losing hundreds of billions of dollars by keeping human beings isolated from the productive mainstream of culture.”

“The buttons in the elevators are often placed in different orders. Before you find the button for the floor to which you want to go, you might have pressed the emergency signal and or the stop button. This could be solved either by standardisation or by labelling the buttons in Braille.”
Blenda, 38, Sweden

“I have an intellectual disability. I often get confused by the different signs I see during my trips. It is a necessity for me to have signs that are easy to understand and standardised at the European level.”
John, 20, UK



Do you know about the rights to Freedom of movement in the EU?

- 20,6 % - Absolutely not
- 17,7 % - Rather not
- 14,4 % - Almost true
- 37,3 % - Yes
- 10 % - I don't know

A Single Market - accessible for all



Mr Malcom Harbour

*Chairman of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee
MEP (ECR, UK)*

The European Single Market has brought tremendous benefits to the citizens of Europe, whilst opening up new opportunities for expansion for more than 21 million EU businesses. It has become the much needed growth engine within the European economy.

The Work of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee

The Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee (IMCO) focuses its efforts on delivering the full potential, and addressing the shortcomings of the Single Market for all citizens - including persons with disabilities. Developing the Digital dimension of the Single Market, in particular, will be the key to enable all citizens to participate in the internal market.

A major political programme to re-energise the Single Market was adopted in May 2011. The “Single Market Act – Twelve levers to boost growth and strengthen confidence” is a political, as well as a legislative programme between EU institutions and member governments. Emphasising its political dimension is crucial as many issues cannot be solved at EU level. Initiatives by enterprises, civil society, consumer organisations, local and regional governments are all critical to delivering the entitlements that citizens in a Single Market demand. The recent Commission publication on the Top 20 Concerns of Citizens in



the Single Market highlighted the interconnected nature of the Single Market ‘offer’. For citizens with disabilities, the Internal Market Committee will work to ensure that they can benefit from that ‘offer’ - the ability to live, work and establish an enterprise anywhere in the EU.

Where appropriate, special measures must be adopted to ensure that the entitlement of citizens with disabilities are delivered. For example, the Committee introduced, into the electronic communication package, specific requirements to enforce accessibility for disabled users.

It is crucial that new technologies improving access continue to be developed, and these provisions provide a clear incentive for innovation.

With the Commission’s planned modernisation of public procurement, we will also encourage the take up of pre-commercial procurement to develop innovative technical solutions to give back employment possibilities to entirely capable and qualified persons with disabilities.

The problematic lack of awareness

We are concerned that, while the Single Market is one of the EU’s main achievements, there is a perception gap between people’s everyday experiences. Citizens have very little knowledge about their entitlements and low expectations of the benefits, which undermines their confidence in EU policymakers.

This lack of awareness is especially evident for consumers. They remain reluctant to shop online, across borders as they believe that the enforcements of their rights and the possibility of redress for any problems are uncertain. Also, they often find that Web retailers in other EU countries will not deliver to their address.

When EU citizens spend holidays in another Member State, they also encounter high mobile telephone roaming charges, and consumer issues with services (such as rental cars) which are difficult to resolve on their return home). EU citizens with disabilities often face additional access obstacles, where EU Standards have not been fully implemented. The European Parliament is currently examining actions that could improve this unsatisfactory situation.

We need to communicate Single Market entitlements much better. There is no lack of EU supported programmes but they need to be better promoted. The ‘Your Europe’ Web portal should become an on-stop-shop information point on rights of citizens and businesses in the EU. We should have special information for disabled citizens as part of this reform.

The Single Market Act is a partnership for growth, with great promise for all citizens. But that promise must be truly accessible to all.

Policy-makers need to ensure that the actions taken to improve its functions must bring added value to people with disabilities.

What is the European Parliament's position about Freedom of movement and Accessibility?



On 25 October 2011, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on mobility and inclusion of people with disabilities and the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

It calls on the European Commission to present a legislative proposal for a European Accessibility Act as announced in the Commission Disability Strategy, stressing the need for strong, binding measures at EU level to improve the accessibility of goods and services for people with disabilities, with a clear roadmap.

This resolution calls for a “barrier-free environment” and “barrier-free services”. It recognises that inaccessible goods and services represent significant obstacles to persons with disabilities. Additionally, it highlights several areas where accessibility and/or equal access urgently need to be promoted, including:

- transportation
- information, including public information, health and health care
- communication technologies including Web, smart phone applications
- built-environment, for instance workplaces, home, cultural infrastructures
- services, such as online services, health services, media services

It also specifies that Design for All and Universal Design should be fully respected.



“Not all smartphones have incorporated inductive loop receivers, which sometimes makes a choice over the best equipment nearly impossible. On top of that, you don’t get the chance to try the equipment before buying it.”
Anton, 40, Slovenia

“The manual about activating Internet on my phone came in a pdf document. The document was readable but the settings to be entered were shown in a screenshot and not repeated in the text. So the manual turned out to be completely useless.”
Joëlle, 53, Belgium

Creating a mobile Internet for all



Mr Vittorio Colao

CEO, Vodafone Group Plc

45 million Vodafone customers across Europe are using the mobile Internet and benefiting from services as diverse as keeping a fitness schedule, checking train times or managing a bank account, whenever and wherever they want.

However, at Vodafone we don’t see the mobile Internet as being the privilege of the technorati. We believe that the real power of the smartphone lies in its ability to transform lives, not in its processor, and we are committed to tackling barriers of cost, geography and access to take the benefits of the mobile Internet to all.

In 2009, Vodafone commissioned research to identify the size of the market segment of users who required minor adaptations to use their mobile phone and those who need a specialist handset or services. We found that across 19 markets – with a total population of 1.76 billion – approximately 136 million people experience a moderate or minor disability or impairment, some 11% of the population.

These basic needs are starting to be addressed. The first wave of innovation in mobile telecommunication services opened up new ways to communicate for persons who are deaf and/or hard of hearing - via text and mobile email - and to persons with reduced functions in arms and hands, through voice-activated dialing and speakerphone functions. We are now seeing a second wave of innovation as smartphone platforms enable low-cost and widespread distribution of services which facilitate free movement, such as maps for people with reduced mobility which can show the optimal travel routes, either on foot or on public transport, tailored video calling services for hearing-impaired customers and so on.

As part of our drive to make the mobile Internet fully inclusive, we are very proud to have partnered with the European Disability Forum (EDF), and with AGE Platform Europe to run the EU-wide Vodafone Foundation ‘Smart Accessibility Awards’, a competition to create mobile applications specifically targeted at older people and persons with disabilities.

The EDF and the Vodafone Developer team have worked together to define requirements and users’ needs and to engage the mobile application developer community. We have seen great enthusiasm from developers to work in this space who see a great opportunity to widen the reach of their services.

We will continue our efforts to deliver a mobile Internet for all, and we will work with government bodies, NGOs and corporations to make it a reality.

I am confident that together we will overcome the barriers to the Freedom of movement of all European citizens.





"I am interested in technology and there is a Web magazine that I try to follow every day, but it is so difficult to read because of flashes and commercials that interrupt the text so it is hard for me to concentrate."
Annaliese, 16, Austria

"The use of Internet is restrictive as the majority of the Websites do not include an easy-to-read version."
Frederik, 22, Denmark

"The government has started to have open online seminars on topics that interest me, but there is no sign language interpretation² or even subtitling, so I cannot participate or even understand what is being said."
Carlota, 33, Spain

The role of standards in Web accessibility



Ms Shawn Lawton Henry

*W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)
Outreach Coordinator*



Mr Shadi Abou-Zahra

*W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)
International Program Office Activity Lead*

Web accessibility is essential for inclusion

The Web provides unprecedented access to information and interaction for people with disabilities. It enables more effective and efficient access — in some cases, where there was essentially no access before. It offers new opportunities for communication and participation throughout society — via voice, video, text, mobile; from home, from work, from anywhere. Thus, the impact of disability is radically changed on the Web because the Web removes many of the interaction and communication barriers present in the physical world.

Web accessibility is about making the Web usable by people with disabilities. It addresses Websites, Web applications, tools for creating Web content, and tools for using the Web. It addresses the requirements of users with different auditory, cognitive, neurological, physical, speech, and visual disabilities. For example, making Web products work with only a keyboard (not requiring a mouse) helps people with physical impairments who use speech recognition for input, or people who are blind and use a screen reader, and older people who cannot use a mouse because of a tremor. Web accessibility impacts us all, and it will impact us even more as we age.

2. For more information about sign language interpretation abroad, download the latest publication of the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters: www.efsl.org/whitedragon/documents/file/R1101.pdf

Standards are crucial for Web accessibility

Standards play a key role in Web accessibility for people with disabilities. They provide a clear benchmark for accessibility and they help developers know how to make their products accessible. **Accessibility standards are most effective when they address cross-disability requirements and when they are internationally harmonised.**

International standards provide a unified definition for making Websites and Web tools accessible. For businesses, governments, and organisations, international standards provide a single set of requirements that apply across borders, along with worldwide support, tools, and expertise. For regulators, international standards provide a consistent target for policies. For disability advocates, international standards provide a powerful tool for promoting Web accessibility locally and worldwide.

W3C WAI provides open, international standards

The Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) brings together people from industry, disability organisations, education, government, research, and others interested in accessibility to develop international standards. Individuals and organisations from around the world collaborate through the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Process designed to develop consensus and ensure broad community participation.

W3C WAI's open, royalty-free accessibility guidelines are the widely-regarded international standard for Web accessibility. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) addresses 'Web content', which are Websites and Web applications. Authoring Tool Accessibility Guidelines (ATAG) addresses authoring tools, such as content management systems (CMS) and blog software. User Agent Accessibility Guidelines (UAAG) addresses Web browsers and other tools used to access the Web. Along with these WAI standards is a wide range of knowledge, tools, and supporting material, some of which is already available in multiple languages.

Harmonised adoption of the WAI standards will accelerate Web accessibility throughout Europe and the world, which is essential to enable people with disabilities to participate equally in the information society.





6. Goods and Services

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?



7. Persons

“I am a single mother of a child with Rett’s syndrome. I have moved to another Member State where I would like to buy a house. However, I cannot benefit from the social credit system because the local authorities do not recognise the national official document recognising the disability of my child.”
Madeleine, 41, France

“Due to my chronic illness, in theory, I am entitled to a disability allowance during the course of my internship at the European Commission. It turned out to be very difficult for me to obtain the money. The procedure was not clear and my ‘disability status’ – officially recognised as such in my home country – was not accepted. It was only after several attempts (sending many documents and making many calls, etc.) that my specific needs were recognised. I was paid this allowance once my internship was over.”
Anastazyia, 21, Poland

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT FOR PERSONS

“One of my clients was recently refused permission to reside, as her husband did, in another Member State, because she was in receipt of a disability allowance. There is a clear hindrance to Free movement of my applicant.”
Connor, 50, Ireland

“For people who have difficulties communicating and interacting socially, often experienced by those on the autism spectrum, it is difficult to travel, especially abroad. The security checks at airports or borders are troublesome because of our difficulty with looking into people’s eyes. Plus, our appearance and behaviour, or our sensory hypersensitivity may even be suspicious for security staff. As a result we are often subject to more stringent controls, thereby increasing our stress levels and the difficulties we encounter.”
Adrianus, 68, the Netherlands

78% of Europeans with disabilities think that they would make more use of their rights to Freedom of movement, if there were no barriers.

— Good practice

••••• Bad practice

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78% of Europeans with disabilities think that they would make more use of their rights to Freedom of movement, if there were no barriers.

- Good practice
- Bad practice

The Free movement for persons corresponds to the right for all EU citizens to study, work, establish themselves and travel or live in another Member State (cf. Articles 45 and similar of the Lisbon Treaty). It is based on a general principle, extracted from article 21 of the Lisbon Treaty, of **non-discrimination** on the basis of nationality; which supposes an **equality of treatment** between EU citizens.

This Freedom raises many practical questions such as: What is the status of family members of EU nationals exercising his/her Freedom? What social security scheme applies in the host Member State? What about the recognition of diplomas? EU legislation has already tackled some of these concerns. Nevertheless, for persons with disabilities, there are a number of issues (mainly linked to the portability of entitlements) that still need to be resolved before they can fully benefit from this important right.

The disability movement demands further action towards facilitating the mobility of persons with disabilities. One concrete proposal by EDF³ is the adoption of a **European Mobility Card**. Such a card could permit EU nationals with disabilities, visiting another EU Member State, to receive the same services and benefits provided by this State.

However, a number of additional, but important issues also need to be tackled through improved **cooperation and commitment of EU Member States**, such as the transferability of the right to personal assistance, sign language interpretation and social security, when persons with disabilities take up a job abroad, or simply visit another country.

On the other hand, many EU programs and instruments were created with the intention of fostering the mobility of EU nationals. Among them there are the Erasmus programme, to facilitate mobility of students and the Leonardo Da Vinci and Grundtvig programmes, funding internships for young people, encouraging their mobility and life-long learning schemes for adults. Additionally, the European Voluntary Service addresses the mobility of young workers and volunteers. The EURES portal also functions as an efficient platform to promote the mobility of workers. These opportunities must be reshaped in order to enable persons with disabilities access to them. This requires accessible information and application processes, specific support services to persons with disabilities before and during the programmes and additional financial resources included in the scholarships and grants to cover the disability-related extra costs. It is therefore absolutely necessary to dedicate substantial funding and ensure political will to realise this aim.

Finally, unless more general non-discrimination legislation is adopted at European level, covering all areas of life, Freedom of movement will never become a reality for persons with disabilities in practice. There are still too many aspects that need to be considered before a person can decide to make use of his or her right to Freedom of movement and discover another country, whether this is to work, study or for leisure activities.



What the following articles are about...

The European Ombudsman, Mr P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, opens this second part of the Freedom Guide by reporting on his achievements in safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities within the EU. His article highlights how his decisions and actions indirectly contribute towards enabling the Free movement of persons with disabilities. A relevant example is his call for enhancing the accessibility of EU schools as the suggested improvements would impact positively on, not only on the right to inclusive education of pupils with disabilities, but also on the right to Free movement for parents of a child with disabilities, who might otherwise face difficulties in taking up a job abroad (**The European Ombudsman: helping to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities**).

Furthermore, the assessment provided by Mr John Evans, EDF Board member, Advisory Board member of the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL), indicates the long road ahead towards the enjoyment of the right to Free movement for persons with disabilities under the same conditions as any other EU citizen. He also identifies further, additional priorities desperately needed to be taken account of, such as the portability of disability benefits (**Where is the 'Europe for the people'?**). Fortunately, despite the challenging situation for persons with disabilities, some did not have to give up their rights, as shown in the very interesting Erasmus experience of Luigi, a student with Down Syndrome (**Studying without borders**). Bringing voices from the industry to the debate, such as that of the Austrian railways company ÖBB, demonstrates the benefits to be had of tools such as a European Mobility Card for passengers with disabilities and transport operators alike (**Towards a European mobility card**). Finally, Mr Ivor Ambrose, Managing Director of the European Network for Accessible Tourism argues that the private sector is missing out on a business opportunity by excluding persons with disabilities, thus considering accessible tourism as a business case (**Let's make Europe a tourism destination for all**).

“We,
persons with disabilities, do
not have the same access to information
as other EU citizens, not even to information
coming from public services.”
Eliisabet, 39, Estonia

“I did
not take up a great job
opportunity in another Member State as
the school did not agree to accommodate for
the specific needs of my son.”
Antti, 45, Finland

The European Ombudsman: helping to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities



European Parliament ©

Mr P. Nikiforos Diamandouros

The European Ombudsman deals with complaints about maladministration in the activities of the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union. Among the issues that have been brought to the Ombudsman's attention, since my Office started work in 1995 is the failure of the EU administration to ensure full respect for the rights of persons with disabilities.

Over the years, the Ombudsman has completed a range of inquiries in this area: from the accessibility of the institutions' buildings to special measures taken in order to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in selection procedures organised by the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO).

Of particular interest is the own-initiative inquiry I carried out into the integration of persons with disabilities by the European Commission. On the basis of my review, I concluded that the Commission had made a genuine effort to integrate persons with disabilities, even if certain aspects of its policy did not appear to have met public expectations. Among the areas in which I acknowledged that progress had been made were: i) the employment of persons with disabilities (in terms of non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation); ii) accessibility of information on the Commission's website; and iii) efforts to make the Commission's services more attuned to the difficulties encountered by persons with disabilities. I further pointed out that action was still needed in other areas including: i) lack of transparency relating to the measures adopted to promote the recruitment of persons with disabilities; ii) insufficient accessibility to Commission information, including on its website, for certain disabled persons, and iii) the situation of pupils with disabilities in the European Schools.

These issues are clearly relevant to the question of Freedom of movement: a parent, for example, may be less likely to make use of his/her right to Freedom of movement if s/he feels that his/her child will not have access to the appropriate educational facilities.

More recently, in response to a complaint from a participant in Parliament's Pilot traineeship programme for persons with disabilities, I called on the institution to improve its performance in the future. It is worth quoting in full the recommendation I made in this case, as it is of relevance to the entire EU administration. Specifically, I stated that, “[a]s well as taking action to ensure that disabled people are not



denied opportunities by reason of their disability, Parliament and the other EU institutions should also be conscious of the need to respect their dignity. This includes avoiding the impression that employment and analogous opportunities, such as traineeships, have been offered to a disabled person only because of disability and not because of his or her merits and qualifications. Failure to act in this way could seriously damage the public image of the European Union.”

Following my re-election in January 2010, I adopted a strategy for my new mandate which aims to help the Union deliver on the promises made to citizens in the Treaty of Lisbon. The strategy also takes account of the, now legally binding, Charter of Fundamental Rights and of its Articles 21 on non-discrimination and 26 on the integration of persons with disabilities. These provisions shall continue to serve as the basis on which I shall continue to hold the EU administration to account with respect to the rights of persons with disabilities.

Complaints to the European Ombudsman can be lodged by mail, fax or email. The Ombudsman has worked hard to ensure that the electronic complaint form on his website is as accessible as possible.

www.ombudsman.europa.eu

“My Freedom of movement is subject to considerations related to personal assistance. This means that when travelling, I have to pay for his/her expenditures such as flight tickets, hotel accommodation and expenses such as food and beverages. This is a heavy financial burden. Special arrangements are mostly restricted to nationals and mainly on a temporary basis. Subject to these conditions, taking up a job in another Member State remains an illusion for me.”
Alexio, 32, Greece

“I would have been very interested in leaving my country and moving abroad but social protection measures in other EU countries are, in general, not available for foreign citizens. I think that these measures should be harmonised in order to ensure equal opportunities for all.”
Monica, 34, Italy

Where is the ‘Europe for the people’?



Mr John Evans

EDF Board member, Advisory Board member of the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL)

We are told we live in a ‘Europe for the people’, Free to move from country to country, but this is not true for the millions of persons with disabilities, living in Europe, who remain trapped in their own countries.

Disabled people remain invisible compared to their nondisabled compatriots who have the Freedom to move around Europe to work, study or travel and to access social security systems if necessary in whatever country of their choosing whenever they want!

Where is the equality of opportunity and harmonisation to enable disabled people this Freedom of movement and expression to make the life decisions, choices and chances to create new opportunities?

This is blatant discrimination that I, as a disabled person, am denied the choice to accept a job position in another country because I would not be allowed to take my personal assistance package of support with me, which is essential in order for me to live and work in another country. Exportability of personal assistance, as well as other benefits and support must therefore be made possible, and Member States must cooperate to find sustainable solutions to these barriers. My life and work requires the support of personal assistants to support me in all my daily living tasks and duties because of my severe impairment. Persons with disabilities who are successful in getting a job in another Member State are all too often obliged to decline the offer due to these practical barriers.

Freedom of movement is therefore only a theory for us, not a reality.

We want to have the same freedom, to be able to live and work in another country of our choosing, as any other EU citizen has. We want to overcome this social exclusion and discrimination that inhibits us from doing this. This does not give a positive message for social inclusion.



This restriction and the lack of Freedom of movement to live and work in another EU Member State is a violation of my rights and contradicts the UN Convention which provides for the protection and promotion of disabled people's rights.

I, as do other disabled people, want to be able to enjoy the freedom of liberty to live and move to where we want. This situation must change.

One of the most extreme barriers towards benefiting from Freedom of movement is the institutionalisation of disabled people. The European Union needs to continue to promote the development of universal, community-based services to achieve de-institutionalisation across Europe before 2020, through the stipulation of independent living in the EU budget and Structural Funds and with the ear-marking of funding for independent living. No funding should go into the support of traditional or institutional forms of living for disabled people. If funding is spent in such a way, sanctions must be applied.

European Member States and the European Commission should fully implement the UN Convention to ensure that the rights of Free movement for persons with disabilities can be fully realised.

“As a deaf person, studying abroad is nearly impossible, since sign language interpretation is often only provided when studying in your home country (if that). The big differences between Member States concerning the provision and financing of sign language interpretation³ needs to be harmonised.”
Daina, 20, Latvia

“I had the pleasure of doing an Erasmus year. However, due to the lack of portability of personal assistance, my mother came to stay with me for the whole semester. Although I was lucky to have her, this is clearly a barrier to the Free movement of students and means that many students with disabilities will not be able to study abroad at all.”
Abdel, 24, Denmark

Studying without borders

Going abroad for a period of time is not always easy for young people, especially if it is the first time away from their familiar environments. It is even more difficult in the case of young people with disabilities, as they face inaccessible environments and disability-related stereotypes.

It is obvious that Europe needs to drastically improve the supports offered to young persons with disabilities. Although some interesting programmes already try to improve the situation (i.e. Exchangeability), according to the data from the European Commission, the Erasmus Program participation rate is very low when it comes to its take up by students with special needs (only 0.17% in 2008-2009).

Film maker, Susana Pilgrim, followed the first student, with intellectual disabilities that studied abroad within the Erasmus programme. The documentary **Ci Provo (Try I will)** shows that with the help of the right support network every student can do an Erasmus year.

Twenty-three-year-old Italian Luigi Fantinelli studies at a university in Bologna, Italy and applies for a one year placement in Murcia, Spain within the framework of the Socrates Erasmus programme. Of the more than two million students that have already participated in this programme, he is the very first exchange student with Down Syndrome. This determined young man's only dream is to obtain a university education like any other student. Two academics involved with disability issues from Bologna and Murcia University supported Luigi and helped to make this experience a success.



We asked the main protagonists of the project about this intense experience:



Questions to Professor Nicola Cuomo, Head of Special Education, University of Bologna, Italy

- **Is Freedom of movement for persons with disabilities a reality for students with disabilities?**

In theory everyone is in favor of the mobility of students with disabilities, but in practice there are no concrete projects and resources available for universities. The EU needs to create the opportunities to promote and ensure their inclusion. The support Nuria Illan Romeu from the University of Murcia and I provided to make Luigi's Erasmus year possible, proved to be really effective.

- **According to you, what are the main obstacles preventing students with disabilities from doing an Erasmus year?**

The biggest obstacles are not the students or the language but the lack of support offered to universities and teachers.



Questions to Professor Nuria Illan Romeu, Doctor of Education at University of Murcia, Spain

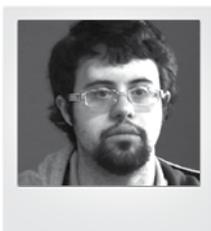
- **What are the main lessons to be learnt from Luigi's experience?**

The most important lesson we all learnt is that with the adequate support from the universities coordinators, an Erasmus exchange can be a real success for persons with special needs:

if every student is granted the same opportunity to study abroad, then that includes students with Down Syndrome.

- **According to you, what are the main obstacles preventing students with disabilities from doing an Erasmus year?**

If students with special needs do not receive adequate support from both sender and host universities and there is only minimal coordination between the two, it will be extremely unlikely that the student will successfully finish their Erasmus year. To increase the likelihood of success, setting up a network among the teachers, with an experience in integration, from the different European universities involved, is essential. Equally important here, is that this network is recognised and supported with the appropriate funds.



Questions to Luigi Fantinelli, Erasmus student

- **Were there any barriers for you during your Erasmus year in Spain?**

The opportunity barriers, such as the language.

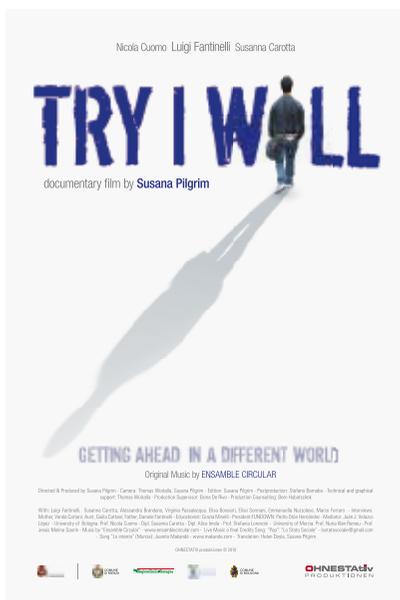
- **What were the benefits of this experience for you?**

The opportunity to learn a new language, to meet new people and make new friends. It's also an experience that made me much more independent.

- **What advice would you give to persons in a similar situation as you?**

Just do it!

Professor Nicola Cuomo, Professor Nuria Illan Romeu and Mr Luigi Fantinelli, were interviewed in October 2011 by Mr Aurélien Daydé, EDF Communication Officer (with the support of Ms Simona Giarratano)



More information:

The documentary 'Ci Provo (Try I will)': <http://ohnestativ.wordpress.com/category/try-i-will>

Exchangeability: www.exchangeability.eu

International exchange Erasmus student network: www.esn.org

Network of Universities from the Capital of Europe: www.unica-network.eu



“A
colleague of mine from another
Member State visited me, we are both
disabled. I felt so uncomfortable when I was
charged less for public transport and entrance to
museums than my colleague.”
Amalija, 41, Lithuania

“ ‘Shop
mobility’ is a UK service that
helps all people who consider themselves to
have mobility problems (either because of disability,
illness or injury) to continue to get around city and town
centres independently. To enjoy this service, you do not have
to be registered as disabled, have a blue badge, or be in
receipt of disability benefits. It is available also for
non-UK citizens and visitors.”
Ágota, 66, Hungary

Only 14.8% of interviewees with disabilities really feel comfortable using public transport when in another Member State.

Towards a European mobility card



Mr Christian Schwarzl

*Responsible for “barrier-free travelling” within
“Customer service” of ÖBB Personenverkehr AG*

One of the main goals of the Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) is to facilitate travelling by train and/or bus for all customers. More than one million people in Austria are either temporarily or permanently disabled regarding their mobility. Therefore, ÖBB has been investing in accessibility for some time already.

Another way to facilitate the use of public transport, for persons with disabilities, is the ‘VORTEILScard Spezial’. This card entitles travellers to concessionary fares on ÖBB trains and buses and costs EUR 19.90 per year. There is no requirement for a photo. However, potential customers have to prove their status, by showing an identity card that confirms their degree of disability to be at least 70 %.

The ‘VORTEILScard Spezial’ is also available to non-Austrian citizens. The eligible degree of disability (at least 70 %) has to be evidenced by a valid ID, equivalent to the Austrian disability card. The price is the same as for Austrian citizens. However, take-up has been minimal (out of over 37,000 cards issued in 2010, only 240 went to non-Austrian citizens).

One reason for this is recognition. ÖBB’s front line staffs need to be able to recognise an eligible degree of disability before issuing a ‘VORTEILScard Spezial’. They must rely on documents presented. German travellers carry disability cards written in the same language, however, even though travellers from (e.g.) Italy, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic may carry valid documents, it will be in a language that the frontline staff will probably not be able to read.

Here, a European Mobility Card would simplify the issuing of the ‘VORTEILScard Spezial’, both for the railway undertaking (e.g. staff training) and for the traveller, which could lead to much higher levels of take-up.

This kind of card would be a great support for persons with disabilities when making use of their right to Freedom of movement in the European Union.

The Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) provides an overall mobility package which includes clean, safe and sustainable transport for passengers and freight. The ÖBB group employs approximately 44,000 staff and generated revenues of about 6.1 billion EUR in 2010. Therefore, the Austrian Federal Railways are considered as an important economic player and one of the biggest employers in Austria. In 2010, the ÖBB group carried 460 million passengers and handled 132.9 million tons of cargo.





“Persons with disabilities do not have the same opportunities as any other persons when planning their travels or holidays, regardless of the destination. The choice is dramatically restricted. Everything must be planned far in advance and cheap tours such as last-minute are precluded. Too often, one has to depend on occasional - though welcome - help.”
Jessica, 76, UK

“All tourist attractions should have standardised requirements in order to offer accessible and high quality services. Environments need to be accessible, as well as transport services, excursions and entertainments.”
Sven, 40, Germany

56.4% of interviewees with disabilities consider transportation between EU Member States uneasy to use.

Let's make Europe a tourism destination for all



Mr Ivor Ambrose

Managing Director of the European Network for Accessible Tourism asbl.

European Lift Association ©

Freedom of movement includes the possibility for every disabled person to be a tourist! It is all too clear, to disabled travellers, that the vast majority of tourism destinations and venues in Europe are simply not accessible. Travel is made difficult – or even impossible – firstly, by a lack of information about accessibility and by the many barriers in transport, in the physical environment, at hotels and in attractions and services.

In general, the larger part of the European tourism industry is not familiar with the needs of customers who make up the accessible tourism market. The needs and requirements of visitors who need good access are generally unknown or misunderstood; accordingly investment costs are exaggerated. And with a dominating focus on “compliance” with laws and regulations, access is seen mainly as a problem for businesses, rather than a golden opportunity. This is a communication issue and a cultural issue, as well as being an economic and technical one. Tourism businesses are hesitant about this market and most of them do not have the knowledge and confidence to serve customers with access needs. Fundamentally, there needs to be a change of attitude that recognises that guests with access needs are part of every tourism segment and that they can be an attractive and profitable target group, like any other. With better information, training and a more open dialogue with disabled customers, the European tourism market can improve its access, so providing better services for customers and tapping into new revenue streams. Essentially, Accessible Tourism is not meant to be a new kind of tourism, offering segregated travel only for people with disabilities. Accessibility must be integrated in every kind of tourism experience, allowing all people to take part in cultural, rural, gastronomy, adventure tourism, or whatever other experience may be on offer.

Accessible tourism as a business case

Accessibility will become a priority for business as the legal requirement of making reasonable adjustments to customers' access needs comes into force. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires equal access to leisure, sport and tourism. But besides meeting their legal obligations and recognising the equal rights for persons with disabilities, tourist providers need to be aware of the demographic ageing of society which enlarges the market of people with access needs.

People with disabilities also want to travel and enjoy their independence. We can already see that the growing numbers of active, senior tourists are helping to tip the balance in favour of accessible tourism venues. In 2005, a research study by the University of Surrey estimated the total market of tourists that rely on good access, (with their travel companions), at more than 133 million visitors, with a value of 80 billion Euros per year. Statistics have emerged, more recently, showing that, 'domestic' disabled travellers in the UK made up 11% of all overnight stays in 2009, contributing 2 billion pounds (2.3 billion Euros) to the economy. Disabled travel expert and educator, Dr. Scott Rains, has also noted: "American adults with disabilities or reduced mobility currently spend an average of 13.6 billion dollars a year on travel. Creating accessible cruise ships, accessible ship terminals, accessible ground transportation, and accessible tourist destinations is not charity – it is just good business".

Private tourism enterprises that have made a commitment to accessibility are already reaping the economic rewards. They have gained a competitive edge which others envy and are now seeking to emulate.

ENAT now works in cooperation together with the UN World Tourism Organisation, public authorities, tourism operators, NGOs, training institutions and suppliers, to ensure that information on 'best practices' in accessible tourism reaches the tourism industry. Through collaboration with industry and NGOs new tools, guidelines and standards will be developed, enabling all players to deliver accessible tourism services to their guests. ENAT hopes that this will contribute to further realising Freedom of movement for persons with disabilities.



Ivor Ambrose ©



Joseph Grosso ©



Marleis Vergote ©



7. Persons



6. Above and beyond

"I often wonder why it is possible to fly to the moon but so difficult to access public buildings and public transportation."
Klara, 29, Sweden

"It is outrageous that persons with mental health problems can still be denied travel insurance in my country!"
Victor, 42, Belgium

"It frequently happens to me that I am barred from entering a café, theatre, cinema, hair dresser, pharmacy, supermarket, doctors, taxis, and swimming pools (etc.), because of my guide dog. I always face the same, unfounded arguments from the owners: allergies, carrier of infections and illness of every possible kind, food legislations etc. There must be an exception for guide dogs as their assistance is comparable to that of a wheelchair for somebody with reduced mobility. Whenever I am denied access with my dog I feel discriminated and humiliated."
Gabriele, 63, Italy

All across the inclusive universe **ABOVE**



Mr Stig Langvad

EDF Executive Committee member, CRPD Committee member, Chairman of the Disability People's Organisations Denmark (DPOD)

AND **BEYOND...**

Seen from the disability perspective, today's society is divided into two universes: the so-called 'normal universe' for citizens without or with minor disabilities and the so-called 'special universe' for those with more complex disabilities. If you think of it, how often do you see us on the street, in schools, in restaurants or in public functions? Many of us with more complex disabilities too often still live and function in a parallel world with special schools, special housing, special workplaces, special transport, etc. Living in a parallel world means we are far from living in the world of inclusion where we all belong and are respected despite the differences.

UNCRPD as a tool for enabling Free movement for persons with disabilities

The 2007 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was adopted to stop the segregation of persons with disabilities and provide us with opportunities to realise their rights and obligations on an equal basis with others. "On an equal basis with others" is a concept so central to the Convention that it is mentioned about 20 times.

The Convention emphasises the principles of individual autonomy, independence of persons and the full and effective participation in society, the realisation of which is only possible if the 'special universe' is abandoned in favour of a single 'inclusive universe' that treats all persons with equal dignity and respect, regardless of their disability, gender, colour, race, sexual orientation, social origin or other.



“I often wonder why it is possible to fly to the moon but so difficult to access public buildings and public transportation.”
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The UNCRPD quickly gained the title of the “universal consensus” on the need to protect persons with disabilities against discriminatory treatment. The speed of its ratification was and is remarkable: open for ratification in March 2007, two-thirds of the EU Member States have ratified it as it stands today, together with the historically unprecedented ratification by the European Union.

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the international expert body that oversees the implementation of the UNCRPD, sees the Convention not only as a binding legal tool made up of solid juridical instruments, but also as an opportunity to offer guidance on its practical implementation in different countries, while respecting the cultural contexts and financial circumstances, simultaneously unwrapping the meaning of the rights and obligations contained in it.

Sensing that dismantling physical, communicational and attitudinal barriers is one of the main challenges we as persons with disabilities face in all countries, the Committee dedicated its second open debate, in 2010, to accessibility (based on the content of Article 9 of the UNCRPD). The debate clearly demonstrated that we are nowhere near reaching the true Freedom of movement for persons with all disabilities. We still stand looking upon stairs as if they were Mount Everest, confusing sign posts and Websites remain an unobtainable gulf that constitute an impenetrable chasm to our screen reader. The cause of the slow progress is, perhaps, the worst barrier of all: the lack of understanding and respect for our needs. Seriously listening to disabled people and accepting that they know best which accessibility solutions are necessary, is a virtue that the decision-makers have not yet cultivated sufficiently, even at the European level.

Since the beginning of 2011, I have been serving as member of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that oversees the respect for the UNCRPD in the countries that have ratified it. Meeting twice a year in Geneva has been an interesting experience for most members who have personally experienced the barriers they are working to dismantle. The buildings, transport and communication systems of the city that hosts the headquarters of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights are anything but accessible. We are all hoping that the large presence of disabled people and supporters in Geneva for the UNCRPD Committee meetings will serve as a catalyst to improve its accessibility and increase the visibility of disability!

Liberty of movement and reasonable accommodation

Article 18 “Liberty of movement and nationality” of the Convention is explicit in recognising the right of persons with disabilities to leaving any country, re-entering their own country and choosing their place of residence – all on an equal basis with others. Reading this article together with other provisions of the Convention, in particular, Article 5 on the obligation to prohibit all discrimination on the basis of disability, I would like to remind us all about the central importance of reasonable accommodation– a right that the Convention sets in stone. Liberty of movement and choice of residence are hardly possible if the only thing that the States Parties do is passively respect this right. Instead, they should be proactive and imaginative in making sure that persons are actually able to benefit from this right under the Convention. “Reasonable accommodation” may include measures, such as concluding bilateral agreements with third countries to facilitate the transferability of personal assistance and disability entitlements; fund cross-border projects to improve accessibility; providing information about accessible housing and employment to enable persons with disabilities to settle in another country. I urge governments to take the required initiative and not sit on their hands any longer.

Personal mobility for a more prosperous Europe

Another UNCRPD article of relevance is Article 20 on “Personal mobility” which obliges countries to take “effective measures to ensure personal mobility with the greatest possible independence for persons with disabilities.” This article addresses the practical obstacles preventing many persons with disabilities from exercising their rights under the Convention. Personal mobility of persons should be facilitated by provision of mobility aids and devices, providing training and incentive measures for enterprises to become more accessible. Importantly, the measures to facilitate mobility must be effective, affordable and of good quality offering a range of choice to the person with a disability. Taking the example of transport – an essential tool for the Free movement of persons across EU borders – the Convention provides for



much room for improvement, given the current situation in Europe. The many European initiatives that have been proposed to make transport more accessible to persons are to be applauded, but can they really be considered 'effective measures' for the purpose of the Convention? No, they cannot, not until every person with a disability can enjoy seamless travel in and between all 27 EU Member States! And this is an indignation, since mobility – for studies, employment or tourism - is a useful tool for creating a better and more competitive workforce, which leads to a more prosperous Europe. One must understand that the lack of a skilled workforce and the 'brain drain' governments often complain of, can only be prevented by creating adequate and respectful working conditions for all workers! Theoretically, workers with disabilities have the same right to obtain qualifications and export them across the EU as their non-disabled peers, and it's high time to give this right a practical meaning!

It is a given that the EU today does not yet meet the high standards imposed by the UNCRPD. But there is hope. The Convention has been ratified, and the role of the disability community in it is significant! The most important condition for getting things right, is to work hand in hand with the organisations representing people with disabilities. Have politicians got the message, do they realise that the parallel worlds will continue to exist if they don't? Let's see!

CONCLUSION



7. Conclusion

The articles and examples presented in this publication have illustrated that a number of barriers to Freedom of movement prevent persons with disabilities from equal participation in, and contribution to, society. Moreover, persons with disabilities face limited access to mainstream goods and services as products can be produced and marketed in the EU without respecting principles of Design for All.

The discrimination of persons with disabilities is therefore omnipresent in our society – despite the fact that the Lisbon Treaty requires the EU to combat discrimination based on disability when defining and implementing its policies and activities, also providing for the power to adopt legislation to address such discrimination. Therefore, a number of radical, complementary and coordinated actions are necessary if we are to achieve inclusiveness and justice.

The UNCRPD grants persons with disabilities equal rights, and the fact that the EU has concluded this Convention, and that most Member States have ratified it, means there are a number of essential obligations to respect.

When it comes to the rights under the UNCRPD, relating to Freedom of movement, it is worthwhile mentioning that Article 5 of the UNCRPD states that all persons are equal before and under the law and are entitled, without discrimination, to the equal protection and an equal benefit of the law. It also guarantees reasonable accommodation for the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Accessibility (Article 9) of goods, services, information and transportation is another indispensable right, as it is the material basis for persons with disabilities to be able to benefit from their human and civil rights. Liberty of movement (Article 18) and Personal Mobility (Article 20) touch upon the very essence of Freedom of movement of persons, as these articles grant persons with disabilities the right to choose the place of residence and to leave their country, to go abroad, at the time of their choosing and at an affordable cost, with the assistive devices they need. Article 19 is another core obligation, which enables persons with disabilities to live independently and to be included in the community on an equal basis with others.

EDF'S CONCLUSION

EDF therefore rightly expects that the EU and Member States will take these responsibilities seriously and adopt the adequate legislation, coupled with strong enforcement mechanisms and the necessary funding. Considering the current financial climate, it is more urgent than ever to take wise and sustainable budgetary decisions, which lead to social inclusion and participation, incorporating the suggestion for solutions made by persons with disabilities. As the European Commission Disability Strategy 2010-2020 highlights, full economic and social participation of people with disabilities is essential if the EU's Europe 2020 Strategy on growth is to succeed.

Some specific EU legislation has also already been adopted, which include accessibility criteria, with positive outcomes. The requirements under the EU directive on urban buses 2001, have allowed for an increase in the circulation of more accessible buses in Europe's cities, to everyone's benefit. Moreover, EU passenger rights regulations aim at guaranteeing equal access to air, rail, bus and maritime transport and have lead to an increased number of clients with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility using these services.

Nevertheless, unless more general non-discrimination legislation covering all areas of life is adopted at the European level, many problems for persons with disabilities will remain unsolved.

Consequently, there is a need for a non-discrimination directive that covers accessibility to the built environment, ICT, transport, access to public and private services against remuneration, education, social protection and social security, media, etc. So far, the only non-discrimination legislation that exists, at EU level, covers employment. However, even this legislation has been unsuccessful in ensuring that workers with disabilities have equal opportunities in relation to access to employment, even more so when it comes to working in another EU Member State. Recruitment procedures are often not transparent and job adverts are sometimes only available on inaccessible websites. Work premises and facilities are often inaccessible, and reasonable accommodation is not always provided for, whether during the interview stages, or once (if) the candidate has been chosen for the job. Misperceptions of disability often make employers hesitant to choose a disabled candidate, despite the relevant qualifications.

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Moreover, positive actions must complete and be compatible with non-discrimination legislation, in order to ensure full equality in practice. Special attention must be paid to women with disabilities, young persons with disabilities, persons with disabilities who require more intensive support and their families, and people with disabilities at risk of facing multiple discrimination.

Lack of exportability of benefits, personal assistance services or sign language interpretation are specifically important areas that must be addressed if Freedom of movement is to become a reality for persons with disabilities.

Member States have to cooperate more and better in relation to policy harmonisation. The exchange of best practices is also important for ensuring that existing, positive experiences are shared and used.

A **European Mobility Card** could limit or even eradicate a number of obstacles faced by persons with disabilities visiting another country. Potentially, a scope for attaching additional rights to a European Mobility Card could be incorporated, thus addressing some of the more important barriers to Freedom of movement of persons with disabilities listed above.

In relation to Freedom of movement of products, it has become clear that the market has failed to adapt sufficiently to the needs of 80 million persons with disabilities, who are potential customers of goods and services, provided they are accessible. Persons with disabilities often have to rely on adapted products at an excessive price, faced with restrictions and limitations in terms of choice.

This is neither fair nor economically viable and highlights the need for **an ambitious and legally binding European Accessibility Act**, which would set accessibility as a condition for placing products on the internal market. Such legislation should take the form of a framework directive, and be underpinned by European Standards and/or more directives outlining the detailed technical accessibility specifications. In the absence of such specific specifications, a generic definition of accessibility must be included in the European Accessibility Act, in order to ensure that manufacturers and service providers can only market products that respect some basic principles of Universal Design. Should manufacturers and providers fail to meet these obligations, enforcement actions must be taken.

All aspects of a service, such as the building in which the service is provided, information about the service, and the equipment and facilities used, must be accessible and provided by people who have been trained to meet the needs of customers/citizens with disabilities. To the same extent, public and private services should be covered by the European Accessibility Act, if they are provided for against some kind of remuneration, whilst services provided for free should be covered under non-discrimination legislation.

Concerning accessible goods, these must be available at a reasonable price, where quality and choice are guaranteed. It goes without saying that assistive technologies will remain indispensable, however, it must be regarded that these only complement, not substitute, mainstream products. In order to achieve affordability and innovation of assistive technology and mobility equipment, a European market for these products must also be guaranteed.

In relation to access to information, it is also important to note that in our increasingly digitalised society, more and more essential information and services are available online. For persons with disabilities it is therefore essential that websites are designed according to **Web accessibility standards**, so that they operate properly with the use of their assistive technologies. EDF therefore calls on the European Commission to propose binding legislation that delivers web accessibility for all, as promised to be delivered by 2015, first through its Europe 2020 Strategy and now the Disability Strategy.

Disability awareness and disability equality training at all levels, starting from childhood, and continuing throughout all stages in life, is a precondition for tackling the stereotypes and prejudices linked to disability. Article 8 of the UNCRPD is instructive on the measures to be taken. Fear and misperceptions of disability are the greatest obstacles for persons with disabilities today, and have been the cause of most other barriers in society. Without a change in mentality we will not achieve the radical change of laws and practices needed. Therefore, national educational programmes, university courses and training curricula must address disability rights, Design for All and accessibility.



Huge investments have been made towards the creation of inaccessible services, goods and infrastructure. EDF believes that there must be clear deadlines for ensuring access to the built environment, as currently persons with disabilities are excluded from education, work, leisure, travelling and otherwise benefiting from their Freedom of Movement due to the lack of physical access to the relevant premises.

As shown by the US experience, the cost of accessibility remains negligible when weighing up the positive outcomes and effects for not only, persons with disabilities, but for the market as a whole.

The EU should therefore reinforce its analytical capacities and efforts to promote and disseminate evidence of the economic benefits to be had by delivering a barrier-free Europe. In order to do so, the EU should continue and strengthen its efforts in carrying out impact assessments, cost-effect analysis and ex-ante analysis of the potential results. It should also conduct comparisons of the different Members States' legislations and facilitate exchanges with the relevant US authorities, such as the US Access Board, to share their experiences.

Furthermore, **EU funding instruments**, such as the structural funds, research programmes, the transport infrastructure funds, etc., must include accessibility as an essential requirement for supporting projects. It is unacceptable that public money is spent on projects that lead to further exclusion and segregation of persons with disabilities. The same thinking applies to **public procurement**: when public money is spent at the national, regional and local level, it must be ensured that the whole community can benefit from these investments. Therefore, the EU public procurement directives must include accessibility as an obligation for the contract performance, whatever the area (public transport, built environment, services on hospitals, schools, public administration, etc.).

Finally, our motto **"Nothing about us without us"** must be the guiding principle throughout all policy discussions and actions in relation to Freedom of movement. Do not hinder us in being a part of our own liberation. We want Freedom and we have the right to be Free, along with, and under the same conditions, as all other EU citizens.

WHAT IS EASY-TO-READ?



8. Easy-to-read



Easy-to-read is one of the accessible information formats along with large print, Braille and audio recordings. It is mostly used by people with intellectual disabilities, as well as other groups like older people and speakers of other languages. Sentences are short and simple, using words that are easy to understand. The design is clear and avoids complicated page settings.

This easy-to-read version of the text was prepared by Inclusion Europe following the European Standards for Easy-to-Read Information.

More information :

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WHAT IS THE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT?



The European Union is a group of countries in Europe that came together to make life easier for people who live in these countries.

In the European Union, people have many rights and chances.



One of these rights is the Freedom of movement.

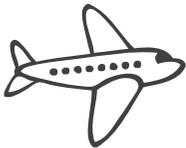
Freedom of movement means that in the European Union, there is:



- Free movement of persons

This means that you are free to travel to any country of the European Union.

You also have the right to move, work, study and live in any country of the European Union.



- Free movement of goods

This means that companies can sell their goods in any country of the European Union under the same terms.

- Free movement of services

This means that you can sell and buy a service in any country of the European Union under the same terms.



WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?



8. Easy-to-read

It is often difficult for people with disabilities to enjoy the Freedom of movement.

For example, people with disabilities often find it hard to:

- study abroad
- find a job
- buy goods and services
- travel

There are many reasons why people with disabilities find it hard to move freely in the European Union.



For example:

- Things, places, information and services are not accessible to people with disabilities.
- Laws do not help people with disabilities to move freely in the European Union.
- Other people think that people with disabilities are not able to enjoy all their rights.



WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?



These things need to happen so that people with disabilities can move freely in the European Union:



- Transport, information, places and services must be accessible to everyone.

- We need to fight against negative images of people with disabilities.



- People with disabilities should get the same support in all countries of the European Union.

- People with disabilities should be able to travel with their support person.



- The EU should make a law about making things, places, goods and services, accessible to people with disabilities.



The European Union accepted the Convention of the United Nations on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

This means, that the European Union has to do what the Convention says.



It is time to act!

WHAT DOES THE EDF WANT?



8. Easy-to-read



The European Disability Forum is an organisation of people with disabilities in Europe. In short, we call it “EDF”.

EDF makes sure that people with disabilities in Europe have the same rights and chances as anyone else.



In 2011, the EDF works to help people with disabilities to move freely from one country to another in the European Union.

EDF wrote this brochure to tell people:

- why people with disabilities find it hard to enjoy the Freedom of movement
- what should be done to help people with disabilities to enjoy this right.

At the moment, the EDF wants the European Union to do 2 things:

- The “European Mobility Card”

This card will make it easier for people with disabilities to travel across the European Union and enjoy the same rights as people in the visited country.

- A law called the “European Accessibility Act”

This law will make sure that people with disabilities have access to services, things and places everywhere in Europe.



AGE PLATFORM EUROPE

"AGE strongly supports EDF Freedom of movement campaign, an initiative that is fully in line with AGE's objective to achieve an age-friendly European Union by 2020 and with the aim of the upcoming European Year 2012 for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations which seeks to foster older people's active participation in society and promote independent living in old age."



AIRPORTS COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL

"ACI EUROPE is delighted to support this campaign, rooted as it is in one of the most fundamental European rights – the Free movement of people. European airports are already heavily engaged in ensuring facilitation of passengers with reduced mobility, part of our contribution to building a more inclusive European society."



MR ANTONIO CANCIAN, MEP (EPP, ITALY)

"The reason why I decided to support this campaign is straightforward. My support is the direct consequence of the positive collaboration I had with EDF while drafting the regulation on passengers' rights in bus and coach transport. Thanks to EDF, that gave me a better knowledge and understanding of the barriers faced by persons with disabilities. I decided to support the Freedom of movement campaign. I believe that this initiative needs our support in order to allow everybody to enjoy the same rights."

PARTNERS' SECTION



CENTRE FOR DISABILITY LAW & POLICY, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY

"The Centre for Disability Law & Policy at the National University of Ireland, Galway is proud to support this initiative from the European Disability Forum. European citizenship is in danger of becoming a mockery unless genuine Freedom of movement is assured to all citizens including those with disabilities. And our much vaunted European social model only invites cynicism, unless it extends tangible support to make citizenship rights real for all. We salute EDF for taking this initiative and for being, as always, to the forefront in making the dream of a borderless Europe of benefit to all."



CENTRE FOR DISABILITY STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

"Freedom of movement is essential to the exercise of European citizenship rights for all, yet this fundamental right is denied to many because of physical, social and administrative barriers that can be changed. The evidence collected by researchers at Leeds has consistently shown this and many of our past students have gone on to challenge such barriers with that knowledge. Although research and education carried out in Universities can contribute to policy evidence and to raising awareness, the disabled people's movement remains the vital energy and force from which greater freedom and change can be advanced in Europe. We wish you every success in your campaign." Dr Alison Sheldon and Professor Mark Priestley



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“The Centre for Disability Law & Policy at the National University of Ireland, Galway is proud to support this initiative from the European Disability Forum. European citizenship is in danger of becoming a mockery unless genuine Freedom of movement is assured to all citizens including those with disabilities. And our much vaunted European social model only invites cynicism, unless it extends tangible support to make citizenship rights real for all. We salute EDF for taking this initiative and for being, as always, to the forefront in making the dream of a borderless Europe of benefit to all.”



CENTRE FOR DISABILITY STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

“Freedom of movement is essential to the exercise of European citizenship rights for all, yet this fundamental right is denied to many because of physical, social and administrative barriers that can be changed. The evidence collected by researchers at Leeds has consistently shown this and many of our past students have gone on to challenge such barriers with that knowledge. Although research and education carried out in Universities can contribute to policy evidence and to raising awareness, the disabled people’s movement remains the vital energy and force from which greater freedom and change can be advanced in Europe. We wish you every success in your campaign.” Dr Alison Sheldon and Professor Mark Priestley



CENTRO REGIONALE DI INFORMAZIONE SUL BENESSERE AMBIENTALE

“CRIBA ER supports the Freedom of movement campaign launched by EDF. A serious effort is needed to dismantle all the barriers that impede the mutual recognition of disability benefits and to assure the right to Free movement, particularly for persons with disabilities.

Considering the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, CRIBA ER believes in the principle of liberty of movement and in the right of persons with disabilities to participate in society on equal terms and basis with other citizens. CRIBA ER supports the right to provide and receive services in another State, the right to move, live, travel, work, study, purchase goods and services and access to any kind of information.

A wide support of the campaign will signify another important step for spreading an inclusive culture, based on values of active participation, accessibility and human rights.”



DESIGN FOR ALL FOUNDATION

“We want to offer our support to the new campaign launched by EDF and their Freedom Guide, since we have always considered it essential to assess the current situation with regards to Freedom of movement for people with functional limitations. This will help us to identify ways to achieve Free movement for anybody, regardless of their gender, culture, ethnicity or ability, and so be able to participate on an equal basis in social, economic, cultural and leisure activities, as well as use and understand any part of the environment with the greatest possible independence.”



DISABILITY INTERGROUP

“Disability transcends political boundaries! In order to become European citizens it is enough for us to change our outlook, but if we want to change the way European society thinks we need a lot of people to join us in looking at things differently. For me, Europe can only be considered complete when it includes people with disabilities as well!” Mr Ādām Kōsa, MEP, President of the Disability Intergroup



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

“EASPD fully supports EDF’s campaign ‘Freedom of movement’ as persons with disabilities still cannot fully enjoy their Freedom of movement and have difficulties accessing mainstream goods and services, under the same conditions as any other EU citizen. EASPD believes in the equalization of opportunities for people with disabilities through effective and high quality service systems. Therefore EASPD calls for provisions granting the right to access support services for people with disabilities. These services should be made available and accessible for all who need them, and provisions should be taken to promote the training and professional development of staff working with people with disabilities so as to better provide the assistance and services needed for people to enjoy their rights fully (see Article 4, (1.i) UN Convention).”



EUROPEAN CONCEPT FOR ACCESSIBILITY

“The European Concept for Accessibility Network – EuCAN – supports the Freedom of movement campaign because the fundamental basis of a European philosophy for accessibility is the recognition, acceptance and fostering - at all levels in society - of the rights of all human beings, including people with activity limitations.” Mr Silvio Sagramola, Coordinator



EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE



EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

“The European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) applauds EDF Freedom of movement campaign and is pleased to give its support to EDF’s demands for equal access to goods and services and the recognition of disability entitlements across national boundaries. By joining EDF campaign, we are saying to all tourist destinations and businesses: Make yourselves accessible to disabled visitors and they will come!”



EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR REHABILITATION

“EPR holds the view that people with disabilities, in each EU Member State should receive, without any obstacles, the services they need and are entitled to. Service providers and their professionals have, in this respect, a responsibility to support and inform people with disabilities of the existing opportunities.

EPR also believes that a sector-specific European quality label for disability-related health and social services will guarantee a satisfactory quality to people with disabilities that make use of such services in another country, and allow them to make an informed choice of service provider.” Mr Jan Spooren, Secretary General



EUROPEAN WOMEN’S LOBBY

“While many advances have been made over the past decades, equality between women and men is still a far cry from reality in the EU today. Women’s rights are still lacking in many areas of their lives: freedom to live a violence-free life; freedom to earn the same salary as men; freedom to live a dignified life; freedom to care for and be cared; freedom to share political decision-making with men. For women with disabilities, these barriers are more entrenched and that is why the European Women’s Lobby (EWL), in solidarity with all women, supports the EDF Freedom of movement campaign.

Together we can make a gender difference.” Mr Brigitte Triems, EWL President



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L’AUTOMOBILE

“The FIA’s guiding principle is to ensure safe, affordable and clean mobility for all. Mobility is one of the most important pre-conditions to social inclusion as it enables citizens to remain independent and active in their local communities. Bearing this in mind, we compiled a comprehensive online Guide on parking concessions for disabled drivers to foster mobility. We fully support EDF Freedom of movement campaign: in our view, persons with disabilities should face no additional burdens in their day to day mobility.” Mr Christian Scholly, Chairman of the Legal & Consumer Working Group



IMPROVING SEAMLESS ENERGY-EFFICIENT MOBILITY CHAINS FOR ALL

“ISEMOA supports EDF Freedom of movement campaign, since the ISEMOA project aims to improve accessibility of public spaces, public transport and day-to-day services for all people - Accessibility of the whole transport chain is a precondition for greater mobility for all.”



MAASTRICHT CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

“The European Union is now a party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is vital that people with disabilities are able to enjoy the full range of rights guaranteed by the UN Convention and EU law. The Maastricht Centre for Human Rights supports EDF’s campaign, which draws attention to barriers hampering the exercise of some of those rights.”



ONCE FOUNDATION

“The mobility of any citizen, whatever their functional capacity, is a right.” Mr Jesus Hernandez, Director Accesibilidad universal



SOCIAL PLATFORM

“Social Platform supports EDF Freedom of movement campaign as it complies with two main objectives of our work:

- Enforcing fundamental rights for all in society to remove barriers to inclusion: unless goods and services are not fully accessible for people with disabilities and the existing barriers to the built environment, transport, education, employment, social security etc persist, people with disabilities will not have the possibility to enjoy their right to work, study, visit and move to another country;
- Guaranteeing access to quality and affordable services which are universally accessible: we advocate for the EU and Member States to amend existing legislation or adopt new laws or other measures to ensure the right to access to services of general economic interest enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU (art. 36) for all, including people with disabilities and people at risk of social exclusion.”



***EDF
WELCOMES
FURTHER SUPPORT
SHOULD YOU
OR YOUR
ORGANISATION
WISH TO BECOME
A CAMPAIGN
PARTNER***

