

## EDF Resolution

### Prioritising persons with disabilities in the action against inflation and energy costs

20 November 2022

Considering that there are 100 million persons with disabilities in the European Union (EU), representing 15% of the total population, among which the 29 % are in risk of poverty and social exclusion, and the 24 % are at risk of energy poverty;

Bearing in mind that EU and all EU Member States have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and are therefore bound by the principles and obligations enshrined in this Convention, in particular article 28 on adequate standard of living and social protection;

Acknowledging persons with disabilities suffer lower employment and activity rates, and are 50% more likely to be at risk of poverty and social exclusion;

Highlighting that the situation of women with disabilities is even worse, with higher unemployment and inactivity rates and, when occupied, the levels of part-time employment are considerably higher;

Considering that non-professional carers, many time family members, are usually women, and do not have enough social support nor access to external forms of income;

Stressing that persons with disabilities have a higher dependence on social support which is rarely increased according to inflation, making resilience to inflation crisis harder to achieve, and that in some cases, they are subject to cuts and reductions;

Acknowledging that disability-related benefits are rarely compatible with employment, creating a benefit trap that keeps persons with disabilities outside the labour market, due to the risk of losing a social support that sometimes is even greater than the wages they could access;

Understanding that many assistive technologies tend to become more expensive in inflation periods, and that the current production crisis is soaring this increase;

Considering there are many different reasons why persons with disabilities depend more on energy resources, such as the high energy consumption of certain assistive technologies or the specific necessities related to heating and cooling of public and private places;

Underlining that mobility limitations and higher inactivity and unemployment imply that many persons with disabilities spend longer periods of time in their households;

Recognising that there are at the same times persons with disabilities relying more on private means of transportation, in particular those living in remote and non-densely inhabited areas, while others need to use public transportation systems in a higher routine than persons without disabilities;

Acknowledging that many persons with disabilities are users of personal assistance, and they often require private services to cover, fully or partially, basic needs not fulfilled by the public sector, and in high inflation periods they are most likely to suffer a greater loss in their household spending power, and even face the impossibility to afford these basic services;

Considering that entities providing services for persons with disabilities, professional caregivers, as well as organisations of persons with disabilities (DPOs), and NGOs are struggling to maintain their financial sustainability given the rise in energy costs; in some cases reduced working hours are being put in place to reduce costs.

The Board of the European Disability Forum urgently calls the European Union and all Member States to:

1. Incorporate the disability perspective and meaningfully consult persons with disabilities and their representative organisations when planning future actions to tackle the risk of energy poverty.
2. Increase efforts for the eradication of poverty and exclusion of persons with disabilities, through direct public support, social services, public housing programmes, minimum income schemes, active employment policies, investments in inclusive education, training and activation, and/or social inclusion awareness raising projects, amongst others.
3. Together with energy pricing caps, Member States must launch public programmes oriented at ensuring access to basic energy consumption at home for lower-income households, either through direct public support, tax deductions or a combination of both.
4. Prioritise energy access to households of persons with disabilities who are users of energy-consuming assistive technologies, when covering related costs through public programmes.
5. Develop further public support for the access and affordability of assistive technologies. Consider the additional electricity needs of these technologies when developing programmes oriented at energy-efficiency and reduction of the general energy use.
6. Secure the provision of affordable personal assistance for persons with disabilities and support the financial sustainability of disability service providers, DPOs and NGOs coping with increases of energy and service provision costs.
7. Ensure price reductions for public transport, and the access to rate reductions for persons with disabilities on fuels for private vehicles.
8. Consider public support for the acquisition of electric vehicles for persons with disabilities and ensure the accessibility of recharging stations and the affordability of recharges.
9. Develop public programmes for the installation of efficient heating and cooling systems, as well as appliances, for households of persons with disabilities.
10. Ensure the correct heating and cooling of educational environments, workplaces and public service buildings and installations.

11. Guarantee that disability support is increased according to inflation, and remove the element of risk associated with the transition towards the labour market by enabling persons with disabilities to retain their disability allowance when in employment, and to be able to regain it fully should they lose their job.
12. Secure the accessibility and affordability of healthcare systems and health insurances for persons with disabilities.

Following the recommendations above, the Board of the European Disability Forum is ready to cooperate to ensure that European and national policies and programmes aimed at tackling inflation and the rise of energy costs consider the specific needs of persons with disabilities.