

European Disability Forum Submission to the European Union Ahead of the EU–Brazil Human Rights Dialogue

Brussels, 5th November 2025

The [European Disability Forum](#) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the preparations for the upcoming European Union–Brazil Human Rights Dialogue on 7th November 2025. This submission highlights key priorities concerning the rights of persons with disabilities in Brazil, with particular attention to inclusive disaster risk management, accessibility, education, employment, and independent living.

Our recommendations aim to ensure that disability inclusion remains central in the EU–Brazil partnership and that the dialogue promotes full implementation of the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD) and Brazil’s domestic legislation aligned with it.

Background

Brazil is home to approximately 14.4 million persons with disabilities, representing 7.3% of the population. Disability prevalence is higher among women (8.1%) than men (6.4%) and reaches its highest levels in the poorer Northeast (8.6%) and North (7.1%) regions. These figures illustrate how disability intersects with poverty, gender, race, and geography to compound exclusion ([PNAD 2022](#)).

Brazil [incorporated the CRPD and its Optional Protocol into its legal system](#) in 2008 with constitutional status, making it a global reference for elevating disability rights to the highest level of domestic law. In 2015, Brazil adopted Law 13.146/2015 – the [Brazilian Law on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities \(LBI\)](#), which operationalizes the CRPD’s principles.

Despite this robust legal framework, implementation gaps persist, particularly in education, accessibility, employment, disaster risk reduction and deinstitutionalisation. Persons with disabilities continue to experience high poverty rates, limited access to services, and underrepresentation in decision-making processes.

People with disabilities and extreme weather events

People with disabilities are disproportionately affected by climate-related disasters and extreme weather events. Their participation in discussions and actions at all stages—prevention, preparedness, mitigation, rescue, recovery, and post-rescue psychological support—remains limited ([UNDRR, 2024](#)). Inclusive disaster risk management must be a core human rights concern in the EU–Brazil dialogue, ensuring that climate action and emergency response measures systematically involve organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs).

Accessibility and public awareness

Despite Brazil's progressive legal framework, limited public awareness and accessibility barriers continue to hinder the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Brazilian Law on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (LBI) ([UN CRPD Committee, 2015](#)). Information on these instruments often remains inaccessible to large segments of the population, including people with disabilities themselves. Official communication materials and legal texts are frequently produced in complex or technical language, and rarely made available in accessible formats, such as audio description, subtitles, plain language versions, or sign language interpretation. This lack of accessible information undermines public understanding of disability rights as human rights and limits people's ability to claim their rights or hold institutions accountable.

Barriers to accessibility also persist across multiple domains, reflecting both systemic neglect and fragmented implementation of existing laws.

- Digital barriers, including inaccessible public websites, e-governance tools, and the growing use of artificial intelligence systems that exclude people with disabilities, limit participation in the digital economy and public life ([Cetic Br, 2024](#)).
- Attitudinal barriers, such as persistent stigma and misconceptions, continue to reinforce exclusion and discrimination in education, employment, and community participation ([Minority Rights Group, 2025](#)).
- Architectural, physical, and communicational barriers restrict access to transportation, public buildings, and essential services, particularly in rural and low-income areas ([Cienc Cuid Saude. 2025](#)).
- Methodological, instrumental, and programmatic barriers remain widespread across public programs and services, where accessibility and reasonable accommodation are often treated as optional rather than as legal obligations.

Education, employment and living conditions

- **Education:** The illiteracy rate among people with disabilities stands at 19.5%, whereas that among persons without disability was 4.1% in 2023. Among people aged 25 and over, 63.1% of those with disabilities did not complete primary education, compared to 32.3% of those without disabilities. At the other end of the spectrum, only 7.4% of people with disabilities attained higher education, while the proportion was 19.5% among persons without disabilities ([PNAD 2022](#)).
- **Employment:** Despite existing employment laws, more than 12 million people with disabilities remain outside the labor force ([PNAD 2022](#)). The employment gap is double that of people without disabilities, reflecting structural discrimination, lack of accessible transport, limited vocational training, and inadequate support for entrepreneurship.
- **Intersectional inequalities:** Black and Indigenous persons with disabilities face deeper exclusion, with worse outcomes in education, housing, and income ([UN CRPD](#)

[Committee, 2015](#)). Territorial disparities exacerbate marginalization in rural and remote regions ([Minority Rights Group, 2024](#)).

- **Living conditions:** Around 16% of Brazilian households include at least one person with a disability, many in precarious housing without bathrooms or running water ([PNAD 2022](#)), exposing structural barriers to full inclusion in society.

Deinstitutionalization and Independent Living

One of the most urgent human rights challenges in Brazil concerns the slow and often non-existent deinstitutionalization process. Despite CRPD's Article 19 and the guidance of [General Comment No. 5](#), many persons with disabilities remain institutionalized due to the lack of community-based services and accessible housing. Public policies promoting independent living exist but remain largely unimplemented. Families often resort to legal action to secure a place in supported living programs, revealing systemic failures in upholding the right to live independently and be included in the community.

As noted by [Human Rights Watch \(2018\)](#), the persistence of institutionalization underscores the need for stronger national and international cooperation to support inclusive living arrangements and personal assistance services.

Recommendations

Ahead of the EU–Brazil Human Rights Dialogue, the European Disability Forum urges the European Union to:

1. **Promote Disability-inclusive disaster risk management:** Ensure that climate and disaster response cooperation with Brazil includes the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and OPDs in prevention, response, and recovery efforts.
2. **Support awareness and accessibility campaigns:** Collaborate with Brazilian authorities and civil society to launch accessible public campaigns on the CRPD and the LBI, using all media formats and ensuring full linguistic and technological accessibility.
3. **Advance accessibility across all aspects of life:** Encourage the inclusion of accessibility standards in AI systems, public infrastructure, communication platforms, and educational settings, aligned with Articles 9 and 21 of the CRPD.
4. **Address inequalities in education and employment:** Support initiatives improving access to inclusive education, vocational training, and decent work for persons with disabilities, especially women, Black, and Indigenous people.
5. **Foster deinstitutionalisation and independent living:** Promote policies and funding for community-based support services, personal assistance, and independent living programs in line with Article 19 of the CRPD.
6. **Strengthen disability data and disaggregated statistics:** Support improved data collection and analysis on disability, disaggregated by gender, age, race, and region, to guide effective policy design and monitoring.

Contact Information

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More about the European Disability Forum:

Similarly, the European Disability Forum (EDF) acts as the regional forum for people with disabilities in Europe, advocating for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). EDF actively supports the inclusion of individuals with disabilities and OPDs in all EU-related external action initiatives.