



Enhancing the Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities up to 2030

Input to the European Commission's public consultation

February 2026



UNITED NATIONS
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By United Nations Human Rights – Regional Office for Europe

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The United Nations Human Rights – Regional Office for Europe (OHCHR) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to enhancing the Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities up to 2030 through the consultation process launched by the European Commission in November 2025.

The Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities (hereinafter ‘Strategy’) is an important tool for the EU’s implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). OHCHR recommends that the Strategy’s updated actions are explicitly aligned with the CRPD and the Concluding Observations issued by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in March 2025.¹ Building on these Observations, OHCHR has the following recommendations for the Commission’s consideration.

Leverage EU funds to implement the CRPD

The availability of EU financial instruments creates a unique opportunity for Member States to invest in accessibility, inclusion and equality of persons with disabilities; and for the EU to support its Member States in implementing their human rights obligations. As party to the CRPD, the EU should make sure that EU funds actively contribute towards those goals, while – at the same time – ensuring that EU funded interventions do not violate the Convention. OHCHR recommends the Commission to address this by:

- Aligning the future National and Regional Partnership Plans framework with the CRPD: The Plans should aspire to advance Member States’ commitments under the CRPD, as well as other UN human rights treaties which Member States have ratified, and the assessment of fulfilment of the Charter horizontal conditionality should take into account information from human rights bodies and monitoring mechanisms, such as the CRPD Committee. OHCHR also holds that it is essential that the mechanisms that Member States shall put in place to ensure compliance with the Charter,² include independent human rights institutions and CRPD monitoring mechanisms, and that complaints procedures for cases of non-compliance must be established.
- Ensuring policy coherence: The increased importance of the European Semester process in identifying MFF investment priorities urgently calls for a more social and rights-based European Semester that systematically integrates recommendations by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to EU Member States. The Strategy should also ensure consistency with other EU policies seeking to advance equality and the realization of economic and social rights, such as the Gender Equality Strategy and European Anti-Poverty Strategy.

¹ CRPD/C/EUR/CO/2-3

² See COM/2025/565 final, Article 8(1)

Promote independent living and community inclusion

Ensuring that persons with disabilities can live independently and be included in the community is a central goal of the CRPD,³ and it is considered one of the widest ranging and most intersectional rights of the Convention.⁴ It requires a whole of society approach - all areas of life must be accessible and inclusive of persons with disabilities to achieve social inclusion, including transportation, education, healthcare, housing and labour market. This means moving away from a system of segregation and reliance on institutional care, while investing in community and family-based care and support systems that support autonomy, individualized approaches and social inclusion. Community-based services benefit not only persons with disabilities but also children, older persons, homeless persons, informal carers and families of persons with disabilities – and indeed the society as a whole.

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has, however, expressed concern at the continued use of EU funding for institutions, rather than for genuine community and family-based services.⁵ The Strategy should aim to address this by:

- Framing desegregation of persons with disabilities and the transition from institutional to community-based care as priorities, including in the context of EU funding.
- Promoting the Commission's *Guidance on independent living and inclusion in the community of persons with disabilities in the context of EU funding*, building capacity of Member States to implement it and embedding it into the future National and Regional Partnership Plans framework.
- Establishing an “EU Knowledge Exchange in Deinstitutionalisation Practice”, as *proposed by the European Expert Group on the transition from institutions to community-based support* (EEG), and which would bring together practitioners of deinstitutionalization reform and public authorities to provide guidance and technical assistance to design, finance, and monitor CRPD and CRC-compliant reforms
- Adopting specific measures, supported through EU funding, to address the lack of accessible and affordable housing for persons with disabilities.
- Collecting data on the situation of persons with disabilities, including those living in institutions. Data should also be collected on persons leaving and entering the institutional care system.

³See Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-19-living-independently-and-being-included-in-the-community.html>

⁴UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, *General comment No. 5 on living independently and being included in the community* (CRPD/C/GC/5), 2017

⁵ CRPD/C/EU/CO/2-3, para 48

Enhance multi-level cooperation to support CRPD implementation

The Disability Platform was established as part of the existing Strategy to support the implementation of the CRPD and the Strategy, and to facilitate cooperation between the European Commission, Member States, and civil society. OHCHR stands ready to engage with the Platform by contributing information and expertise from the international human rights system. To this end, OHCHR recommends that the Commission:

- Extend the membership of the Disability Platform to include international and national bodies mandated to promote and protect human rights, such as OHCHR, National Human Rights Institutions and CRPD Independent Monitoring Mechanisms⁶.

⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/crpd/crpd-independent-monitoring-mechanisms-imm-repository>